



An investigation into Privately Managed Public Spaces in popular Urban Neighborhoods in City of Johannesburg

Submitted by

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A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment, School of Architecture and Planning at the University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Masters of Sciences in Development Planning

24 October 2025

Table of Contents

List of Figures	4
List of Tables	5
Declaration.....	6
Acknowledgement.....	7
Abstract	8
Chapter 1 – Setting the Scene: The Story Behind the Study	10
1.1. Introduction to the Study	10
1.2. Context of the Research.....	13
1.3. Problem Statement and Rationale	13
1.4. Research Aim.....	14
1.7. Research Objectives and Motivation	15
1.8. Location and Motivation of selected study area and Case Studies.....	15
1.9. Laying the Groundwork: How the Study took Shape	21
1.10. Relationship to Discipline	27
1.11. Outline of chapters:.....	28
Chapter 2 – Literature Review “Voices & Perspectives guiding the Study”	31
2.1. Introduction to key concepts guiding the study.....	31
2.1.1. Conceptualization of Public Space	34
2.1.2. The ideal Public Space.....	35
2.1.3. Dimensions of Publicness in Public Space	36
2.1.4. Benefits and contributions of Public Space to Society	37
2.1.5. How is space created?.....	38
2.1.6. Emergence of Private Public Space through Privatization	40
2.1.7. Public Space and the emergence of Private Space in South Africa	42
2.1.8. Placemaking as a Tool for change.....	46
Chapter 3 – Unfolding the Evidence: Interpreting the Spatial Data	50
3.1. Placemaking Attributes Applied in the Field – Nelson Mandela Square, Sandton.....	52
3.1.1. Placemaking Attributes – Access & Linkages, Nelson Mandela Square	52
3.1.2. Placemaking Attributes – Comfort & Image, Nelson Mandela Square.....	53

3.1.3. Placemaking Attributes – Users & Activities, Nelson Mandela Square	54
3.1.4. Placemaking Attributes – Sociability, Nelson Mandela Square.....	55
3.2. Placemaking Attributes Applied in the Field – Monte Casino, Fourways	57
3.2.1. Placemaking Attributes – Access & Linkages, Monte Casino.....	57
3.2.2. Placemaking Attributes – Access & Linkages, Monte Casino.....	58
3.2.3. Placemaking Attributes – “Users & Activities,” Monte Casino	59
3.2.4. Placemaking Attributes – “Sociability,” Monte Casino.....	60
3.3. Summaries and Findings of user experiences	61
Chapter 4 – Voices of Experience: Unpacking Professional Inputs from Practice.....	66
4.1. Interpretation of data collected from semi structured interviews in response to the research sub – questions	67
4.2. Addressing the Research Question.....	73
4.3. Concluding Themes.....	76
Overview of the Study.....	78
Limitations of the Study	80
Concluding remarks	80
References	81
Appendices.....	86
Appendix A: Participant Information Sheets.....	86
Appendix B: Consent Forms	87
Appendix C: Sample Interview Schedule.....	88
Appendix D: Hard Copy Interviews copies.....	89
Appendix E: Placemaking Manual.....	90
Appendix F: Field Work Journal	91
Appendix G: Ethics Clearance	92

List of Figures

Figure 1: Application from Fieldwork Journal (Cassim, T)	10
Figure 2: Application from Fieldwork Journal (Cassim, T)	16
Figure 3: Locality Plan illustrating location of Nelson Mandela Square	17
Figure 4: Application from Fieldwork Journal (Cassim, T)	18
Figure 5: Locality Plan illustrating Monte Casino in the City of Johannesburg.....	19
Figure 6: Data collection tools applied to case studies from Fieldwork Journal (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal)	20
Figure 7: Criteria for selecting Interviewees	23
Figure 8: Application from Fieldwork Journal (Cassim, T)	24
Figure 9: Interview process from Fieldwork Journal (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal).....	26
Figure 10 Conceptual Frameworks	33
Figure 11: Structure of Literature Review (Cassim, Fieldwork Journal)	34
Figure 12: Definitions of Public Space in the urban context	36
Figure 13: Spatial Triad (Lefebvre, 1991, p.404)	39
Figure 14: Project for Public Spaces. (2009). What is Placemaking? Retrieved from https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking	47
Figure 15: Project for Public Spaces. (2009). What is Placemaking? Retrieved from https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking	48
Figure 16: placemaking attribute of "Access & Linkages," (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal)	52
Figure 17: placemaking attribute of "Access & Linkages," (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal)	52
Figure 18; placemaking attribute of "Comfort & Image," (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal)	53
Figure 19: placemaking attribute of "Comfort & Image," (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal)	53
Figure 20: placemaking attribute of "Uses & Activities," (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal).....	54
Figure 21: placemaking attribute of "Uses & Activities" (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal)	54
Figure 22: placemaking attribute of "Sociability" (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal)	55
Figure 23: placemaking attribute of "Sociability" (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal)	55
Figure 24: placemaking attribute of "Access & Linkages" (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal)	57
Figure 25: placemaking attribute of "Access & Linkages" (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal)	57
Figure 26: placemaking attribute of "Comfort & Image" (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal)	58
Figure 27: placemaking attribute of "Comfort & Image" (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal)	58
Figure 28: placemaking attribute of "Users & Activities" (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal)	59
Figure 29: placemaking attribute of "Users & Activities" (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal)	59
Figure 30: placemaking attribute of "Sociability" (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal)	60
Figure 31: placemaking attribute of "Sociability" (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal).....	60
Figure 32: Factors that attract users to public spaces	63
Figure 33: Interesting insights from an Urban Designer from the Fieldwork Journal, (Cassim, T) 70	
Figure 34: Interesting insights from a Private Sector Town Planner from the Fieldwork Journal, (Cassim, T).....	71

Figure 35: Interesting insights from a National Government Official from the Fieldwork Journal, (Cassim, T).....	72
Figure 36: Interesting insights from an Urban Designer from the Fieldwork Journal, (Cassim, T).....	73
Figure 37: Key Themes and Relationships summarised from the Interviews from the Fieldwork Journal, (Cassim, T)	74
Figure 38: Concluding remarks from the interviews from the Fieldwork Journal, (Cassim, T).....	75
Figure 39: Final Thoughts from the Fieldwork Journal, (Cassim, T)	76

List of Tables

Table 1: Property Particulars of Nelson Mandela Square, City of Johannesburg	16
Table 2: Property Particulars of Monte Casino, City of Johannesburg	18
Table 3: Data Collection, Research methods, Application from Fieldwork Journal (Cassim, T)	24

Declaration

I hereby declare that this research report is my original work and all information used from other sources have been acknowledged throughout the report and in the reference section.

This dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree or examination at any other higher education institution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Debyler', is positioned below the declaration text.

Acknowledgement

This Journey has been one of the most difficult tests for me as student and professional.

I would like to thank the village that made this possible...

My Family.

My Sister, Tlou.

My Friends.

My Community.

My Doctor.

My Team. ...

There were many hands, minds and role models who inspire me on a daily – I am who I am as a Professional in the Built Environment because of who you have been on my Journey.

Abstract

This study investigates the growing trend of privatisation in urban environments, focusing on the emergence of privately managed public spaces (PMPS) and their role in achieving public space objectives through placemaking design principles.

As urban governance increasingly shifts towards public – private partnerships, PMPSs have become a defining feature for contemporary city making. These spaces pride themselves in offering well –maintained, aesthetically appealing and economically viable environments. However, these spaces are often critiqued about their inclusivity, accessibility, and the erosion of the democratic function of public space – that is, fostering community, promoting social and economic interactions, and facilitating cultural exchange through providing physical spaces where people of diverse backgrounds can gather and interact.,,,.

This study intends to investigate the growing trend of privatisation in urban environments, specifically looking at privatisation from a management lens and how the role of privately managed public spaces is achieving the objectives of public space through placemaking principles and design tools. Through case studies, spatial analysis and policy review, this research evaluates how design – led placemaking strategies can either reinforce or challenge the exclusionary tendencies of privatisation.

The research report, is guided by the inquiring question – *What attracts users to privately-owned public spaces in Johannesburg? .*" Subsequently, making reference to the case studies of two private public spaces, within the City of Johannesburg, namely, Nelson Mandela Square in Sandton and Montecasino in Fourways. For this qualitative research study, the participants selected for research report is built environment professionals in national, provincial and private consulting roles as well as architects, urban designers in the planning and design of privately managed public spaces, and an official from the Central Improvements District who privately manage public spaces.

The fieldwork data was collected through document analysis, semi – structured interviews and on – site contextual analysis to examine how privately managed public spaces contribute to, or conflict with the broader objectives of public space using placemaking design principles as an evaluation framework. The outcomes recorded in the fieldwork journal reveal a critical tension at the heart of the research problem: while users express a preference for traditional public spaces, they consistently choose to spend more time in privately managed public spaces due to their higher standards of cleanliness, safety, and service delivery. On-site observations and participant feedback highlight that these privately managed spaces offer qualities that are increasingly absent from public spaces—namely, a sense of care, relevance, and consistent user experience. Participants also pointed to the deterioration of public spaces, citing a lack of maintenance, inadequate safety measures, and poor alignment with current community needs. These findings underscore the urgency for rethinking how public spaces are planned and maintained, and highlight the value of placemaking as a strategy to bridge the gap. The research seeks to contribute to the ongoing debates about privatisation of public life and how private entities are influencing the future design and function of public spaces

Key concepts: Public Space, Private Managed Public Space, Privatisation, Placemaking

ONE.

Chapter 1 – Setting the Scene: The Story Behind the Study

1.1. Introduction to the Study

The characteristics and role of public spaces have evolved drastically over time, influenced by physical access, the agency of the public to use the space and the motivation behind the organizations responsible for the planning and design of public spaces and interest of who these spaces are prioritizing (Benn & Gaus, 1983). Taking into account the historical background of planning human settlements and the elements that would form part of these settlements, the evolution of improving living conditions inspired the need for public spaces (Madanipour, 2003). The public spaces that were initially dedicated to the public were intentionally planned and designed for political and / or cultural use. Similar to cities in developed countries, public urban spaces in emerging economies have undergone significant changes due to shifting political, economic, and cultural conditions, which have affected their structure and purposes (Mitchell, 1995).

Public Spaces such as squares, streets, historical museums, heritage sites, and waterfronts are the living rooms, and gardens of urban areas in the city (Zukin, 1995). These spaces played and continue to play an important role in the serving communities from various economic backgrounds, and social groups. They inspire social interaction, corridors for movement, and social grounds for unplanned interactions, while aiding the attraction of tourism and preservation of local culture.

Public spaces are a valuable communal resource that significantly influences the quality of life for everyone. As such, the introduction of policy and legislation was established for the planning and design to guide Professionals in the Built Environment working with public spaces. Public Space policies intended on formalising the importance of these spaces in society, in the city and to the people that use them, while ensuring quality design, planning their role and contribution the spaces they were developed in and to ensure a sense of place was created to represent local communities.

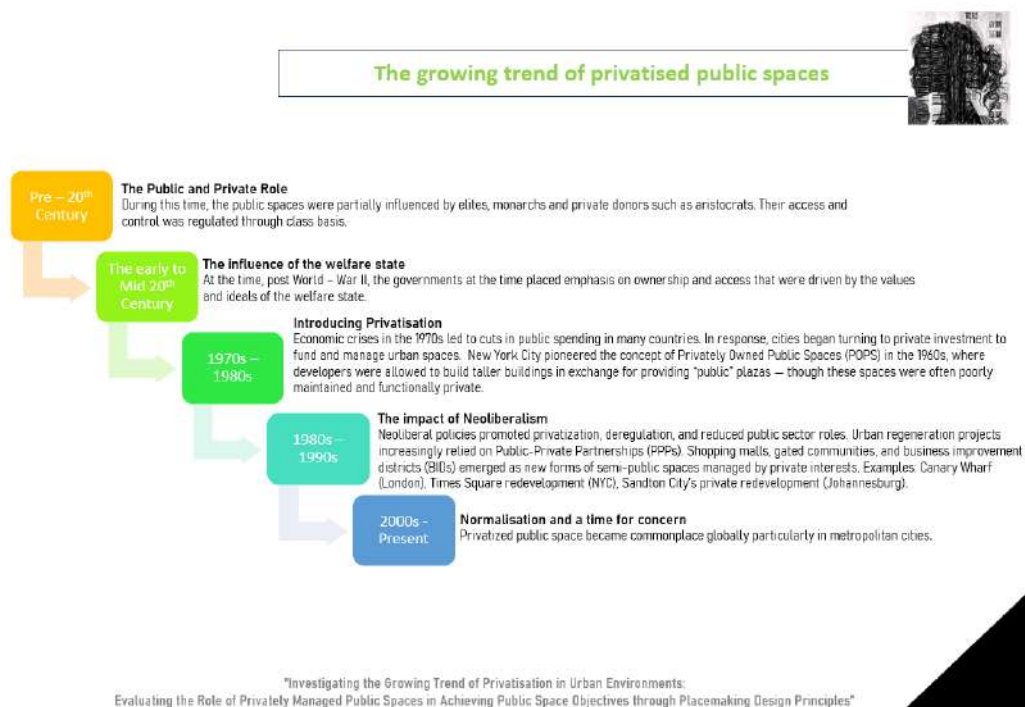


Figure 1: Application from Fieldwork Journal (Cassim, T)

Over the recent years, cities across the globe have witnessed a growing trend the privatisation of public space, driven by neoliberal urban policies, increasing urban densification, and the evolving demands of city dwellers. This has resulted in a shift from traditionally government managed public spaces towards Privately Managed Public Spaces (PMPS) (Purcell, 2014). These Privately Managed Public Spaces (PMPS) are public spaces that are publicly accessible but governed, maintained, and designed by private entities. In addition to the provision of public spaces being considered as part of the planning and design of human settlements, the development, and differentiation of privately managed public spaces and publicly managed spaces has significantly transformed the quality of public spaces, similarly influencing the quality of design of these spaces and the prioritized interest of the people using these spaces.

In the context of South Africa's post – apartheid urban transformation, public spaces had become critical arenas for promoting inclusivity, agents of spatial justice, and physical places for democratic engagement at the time. Public spaces are a valuable communal resource that significantly influences people's quality of life, and are transformed by the lives of people as well. Consequently, as people's demands, needs, desires and wants change, *"so does the design, meaning and function of public space."* Since the end of apartheid in 1994, the design of public spaces in South Africa has undergone a significant transformation, in attempts to reflect efforts to redress historical injustices foster inclusivity and create spaces that meet the transforming needs of the public.

Considering South Africa's history from 1994, to the present year, 2025, there are key trends and factors that have impacted the design of public space in post – apartheid South Africa, namely,

- **Democratisation, a time for inclusivity**
This was inspired by the shift from exclusion during the Apartheid era, in which public spaces were segregated and often only served white minorities, to the Post – 1994 era, of conscious efforts being made the government and planning systems to design spaces that were welcoming of all citizens. The introduction of Democracy as the country's guiding principles of governance, there was an emphasis of making public spaces accessible to people of all ages, abilities and socio – economic backgrounds.
- **Redressing and ensuring Spatial Justice**
A time of reclaiming space, in which the democratic government of South Africa, had to reimagine elements of the cities, towns and suburbs that were previously created by apartheid era – planning. This included, re – signifying public spaces such as streets, parks, monuments to reflect the current government's welcoming of equality for all and honouring its diverse heritage.
- **Designing for Informal Economies**
The shift towards representation of the principles of democracy called upon urban planning as a tool for incorporating space for informal trading, and recognising the vital role of the informal economy as part of the urban environments of the city. These were often multi – functional spaces in which public spaces in these areas supported a mix of trade, transit and social activity.
- **Involving communities and creating spaces together**
The introduction of the bottom – up design processes in land use planning policies and legislation placed great emphases on the involvement of communities in the planning and design processes of the spaces and development thereof, impacting them. The initiative played a role in reflecting democratic principles through community participation by allowing residents to create their spaces together. Furthermore, placemaking and design principles reflecting local identities and needs became the way forward for public spaces to serve the communities specific needs. This shift further inspired "Placemaking," in Public Spaces as a global design tool for approaching public space design led by community input to represent local identity, cultures and history.

- **Introducing urban regeneration**
As government and the planning system embarked on reflecting the democratic principles and values, the importance of bridging urban design and social divides became critical for reconnecting cities and towns that were formally divided by white and black signs pre – apartheid. For example, the City of Johannesburg undertook the responsibility of revitalizing decayed inner cities with the aim of saving poorly maintained urban spaces from further decay and disconnection. This planning strategy was a drive towards regenerating poorly maintained spaces, and reconciling these spaces for dignified use.
- **Representing our Heritage**
The responsibility to represent the country's heritage and celebration of African identity in our public spaces such as parks, public art and murals began to recreate spaces that visually reflected the new democratic government's principles and values.
- **Environmental and Sustainable Development**
With reference to the global challenges of climate change, South Africa's planning and development policies and legislation partnered with the world's global leaders to join the battle. The movement include “going – green,” planning and design strategies for public spaces such as green public spaces with increasing attention on parks, green spaces in between built-up cities and provision for design for conservation and environmentally friendly development practices such as urban farming.
- **Safety and the call for surveillance**
In recent years, the planning and design of public spaces have been centralised around safety as this played a consequence and attraction from and to public spaces for citizens. This shift required planning and design to be minimise crime in public spaces through increased lighting, visibility and activity. This was possible through Crime Prevention techniques and design tools from placemaking.

Considering the above trends, and factors of influence on the planning, design and purpose impacting public spaces in South Africa, since the call for surveillance has risen, the introduction of privatisation as the solution. Privatisation stems from the global trends that have affected public space design as both a driver and a response to urban changes.

For the purposes of this research report, “privatisation,” specifically focuses on management in public spaces.

Privatisation effects are embedded in how public spaces are funded, managed, accessed and experienced, as mentioned above. This doubled – edged trend, supports urban improvement from a management point of view through investment and innovation and place a cross-cutting forces as well that shapes how other trends are implemented.

In the context of South Africa's post-apartheid urban transformation, public spaces have become critical arenas for promoting inclusivity, spatial justice, and democratic engagement. However, a growing trend toward the privatisation and private management of these spaces—through business improvement districts, gated parks, and commercial precincts—raises concerns about access, control, and the erosion of publicness. Privately Managed Public Spaces (PMPS) are often framed as solutions to municipal capacity constraints and urban decay, yet they may also reproduce patterns of exclusion, securitisation, and spatial inequality. Despite their increasing presence in cities like Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban, the planning processes, governance models, and socio-spatial implications of PMPS remain under-examined within South African urban scholarship.

There is a lack of comparison into how privately managed public spaces conceptualised, why these spaces are attractive to people, who influences their development, and how their management aligns—or conflicts—with the principles of placemaking. Privately Managed Public Spaces (PMPS) are associated with their cleanliness, safety and surveillance, aesthetic appeal while alarmingly raise concerns about access, control and the potential deconstruction of the democratic nature of public space. However, considering the growing trend in privatisation, there is also a growing movement towards placemaking (Silberberg, 2013). This design and planning approach have emerged as a guiding framework for creating meaningful and responsive public spaces. As a result, this study aims to investigate how privately managed public spaces contribute to, or conflict with the broader objectives of public space using placemaking design principles as an evaluation framework.

1.2. Context of the Research

“Investigating the Growing Trend of Privatisation in Urban Environments”

In the City of Johannesburg, the rise of privately owned public spaces such as precincts, mixed used developments and lifestyle districts reflecting broader global trends of urban privatisation. These spaces are often designed and managed by private entities that create privately managed public spaces to attract diverse users. This attraction is created through security and surveillance, cleanliness, and curated experiences through art, entertainment and diverse activities and uses – that traditional municipal governed public spaces struggle to provide. Despite the critique of privately managed public spaces, popularity these spaces popularity continue to rise and this gives rise to important questions about what draws people to them? There are various factors such as promise of safety and surveillance, quality of design and variety of amenities, the accessibility to free Wi-Fi and / or the convenience of having it all in one space?

1.3. Problem Statement and Rationale

Despite the essential role that public spaces play in fostering community interaction, engagement, and a shared sense of identity, many urban areas—particularly in South African cities—are experiencing a decline in the quality, accessibility, and utilization of these spaces. While some public spaces thrive, others face decay due to limited investment, poor design, and disconnection from the needs of their users. In contrast, privately-managed public spaces (PMPS) in cities like Johannesburg appear to be flourishing, often better aligning with user preferences and offering higher quality environments.

The growing shift towards the privatisation and private management of public spaces, both globally and within South African cities. This phenomenon—often manifested through Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), gated parks, privately maintained plazas, and commercial precincts—is typically justified by municipalities and private actors as a response to urban decline, limited state capacity, safety concerns, and the need for economic revitalisation. These Privately Managed Public Spaces (PMPS) are characterised by forms of management where private entities are responsible for maintenance, security, and rules of access, often with limited public oversight.

While PMPS can bring about improvements in urban aesthetics, cleanliness, and perceived safety, they also raise critical questions about public access, control, and democratic accountability. In many cases, these spaces are governed by logics of profit, exclusivity, and surveillance, which may contradict the inclusive ideals of public space. In the South African context—where cities are still grappling with spatial fragmentation, social inequality, and deeply divided urban geographies—the proliferation of PMPS introduces new challenges to post-apartheid urban transformation.

Despite their growing presence in cities like Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban, the planning and governance processes that produce PMPS remain underexplored. There is limited empirical research on how these spaces are conceptualised, who the key decision-makers are, how planning policies facilitate or restrict them, and what their long-term implications are for spatial justice and democratic urban governance. Understanding the dynamics behind PMPS is therefore crucial for assessing their role in shaping South African cities and their alignment with the broader goals of urban inclusion and equity.

This discrepancy highlights a critical gap between theoretical frameworks on public space design and the realities of urban planning and implementation. The challenge lies in understanding why private managed public spaces attract more users and investment compared to traditional public spaces and what these reveals about the current planning and design practices.

1.4. Research Aim

“Evaluating the Role of Privately Managed Public Spaces in Achieving Public Space Objectives through Placemaking Design Principles”

The aim of the research is to investigate and understand what are the factors that attract users to privately owned and managed public spaces in popular neighbourhoods in the City of Johannesburg, with a core focus on the impact of management on the design and quality of space. This investigation will examine the relationship between placemaking principles, user experience and the planning and design of these spaces by built environment professionals to evaluate whether privately managed public spaces effectively meet public spaces objectives of public spaces in rapidly transforming urban landscapes.

1.5. Research Question

“What attracts users to privately-owned public spaces in Johannesburg?”

1.6. Research Sub – questions

Further to the main research questions, an analysis of the differences of planning and design of public spaces and private spaces affect their representation of the end – user and the communities they intend to serve, similarly what are the driving factors that motivate built environment professionals to ensure that the planning and design of the end – user is represented in private public spaces, “What do they gain?” These sub – questions are as follows:

- What are the similarities and differences between public and private public spaces?
- What are the driving factors for the planning and design of private public spaces?
- From a professional point of view, what characteristics of private public spaces in the city of Johannesburg are designed with the user in mind?
- From a professional point of view, how are the successes of the planning and design tools of placemaking in Johannesburg revealed in private public spaces?

1.7. Research Objectives and Motivation

Through the abovementioned research question, and sub – questions, the research seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- To describe the purpose and objectives of public space
- To investigate how privatisation impacts public space.
- To explore how the planning and design tools of placemaking are used in privately managed public spaces
- To provide an outcome of whether Privately Managed Public Spaces are achieving the objectives of Public Spaces through placemaking design principles.

As development patterns change, designing cities and towns that are relevant to the user's needs, wants and tailored to their daily lives is imperative for cost effective practice, good governance and long-term sustainability of the city as a whole. In order for development towards a more equal city to take place, planning and design need to work hand in hand to ensure that contributing elements of the city such as public space, transport and mobility, housing and basic services delivery are tailored for the needs, wants and relate to the sense of identity of the people to be using them. For the purposes of the research scope, public spaces, specifically private public spaces, will be the object of the study as a contributing element of development in cities and town.

The research report's overarching perspective, is to provide insight into why some public spaces function, and are utilised more than others. This is to bridge the gap of not only the design and planning of public spaces but also to contribute to why we see in development patterns the growing popularity of some regions and not others.

In its entirety, the findings to be highlighted in this research report, seeks to reflect the importance of placemaking as the “wool” for sewing the gaps between “design” and “actual use” in public spaces to ensure their long-term function.

The field of planning and design of public spaces being guided by placemaking principles will be the focus of the study. Considering the important role public spaces play in the vitality and overall wellness of the public, designing these spaces in the interest of the user is imperative for the success of these spaces contributing to the needs of the people and countering the negative conditions that arise when they are poorly maintained. As a result, an intervention has taken place – the rise of private public partnerships heeding the call to design and plan public spaces which has promoted private public spaces as spaces that reflect the interest of the users. From public private partnerships increasing their participation in the planning and design of public spaces, the placemaking tools and processes followed by professionals in the built environment are key lessons to be considered for Development Planning going forward.

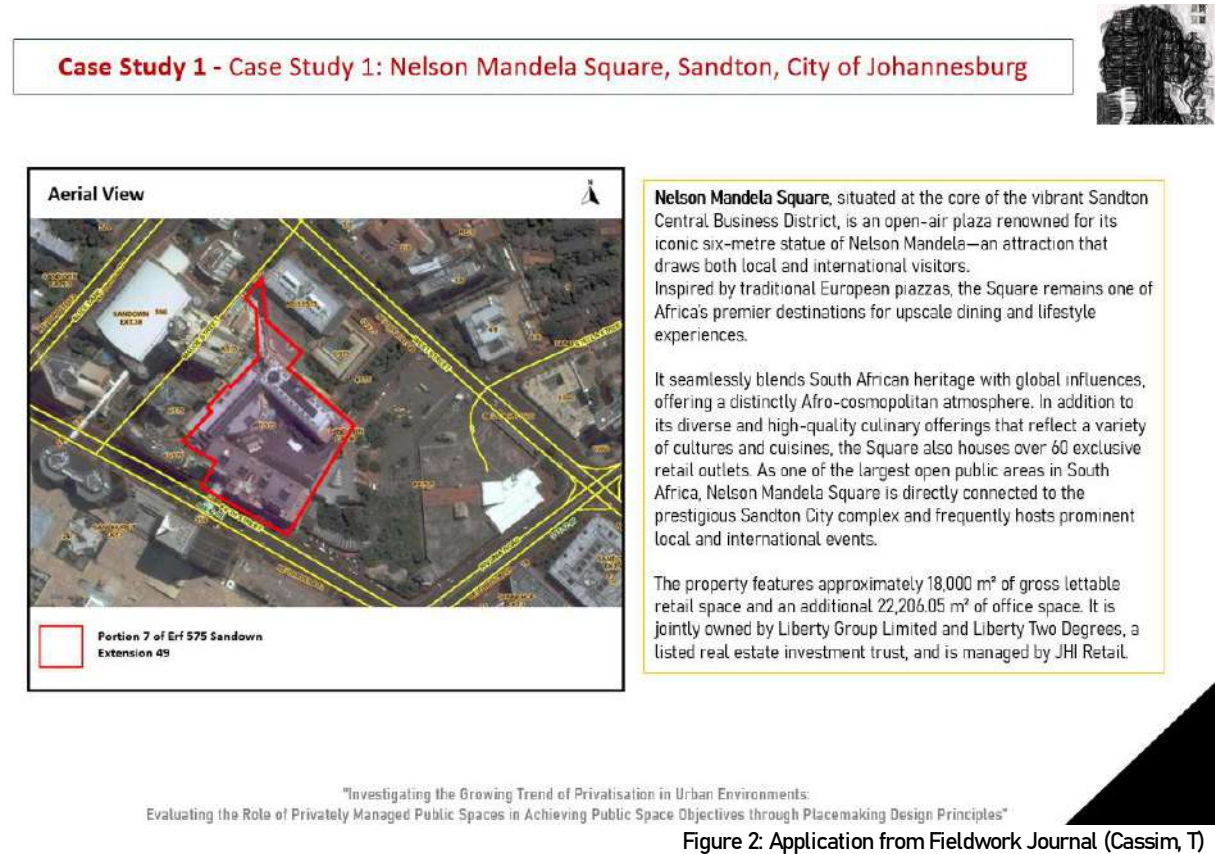
In summary, the aim of the research is to investigate how privately managed public spaces contribute to, or conflict with the broader objectives of public space using placemaking design principles as an evaluation framework.

1.8. Location and Motivation of selected study area and Case Studies

The study is based in the City of Johannesburg, situated in the Gauteng Province. Considering the city's complex socio – spatial dynamics, the transformation of post – apartheid development patterns and the rise of privatized urban governance are a few reasons for the study area selected. The City of Gold, has played a significant role in the country's economic growth and development pre and post – apartheid era.

In order to exercise the research aim, “to explore the driving factors behind this trend and to investigate the growing trend of privatisation in urban environments and evaluating the role of Privately Managed Public Spaces in achieving public space objectives through Placemaking Design Principles,” two popular privately managed public spaces were selected for this study, namely,

1.8.1. Case Study 1: Nelson Mandela Square, Sandton, City of Johannesburg



Legal Framework

The property is legally registered in the following property particulars:

Table 1: Property Particulars of Nelson Mandela Square, City of Johannesburg

Study Area	Property Description	Ownership Type	Zoning	Owner	Size of the Property
Nelson Mandela Square	Portion 7 of Erf 575 Sandown Extension 49	Privately Owned	Special	Liberty Group Ltd and the listed real estate entity, Liberty Two Degrees, and managed by JHI Retail	21878m ²

Property Locality

The property is situated at 68 Maude Street, Sandown in Sandton City in the hub of the metropolitan central business district.

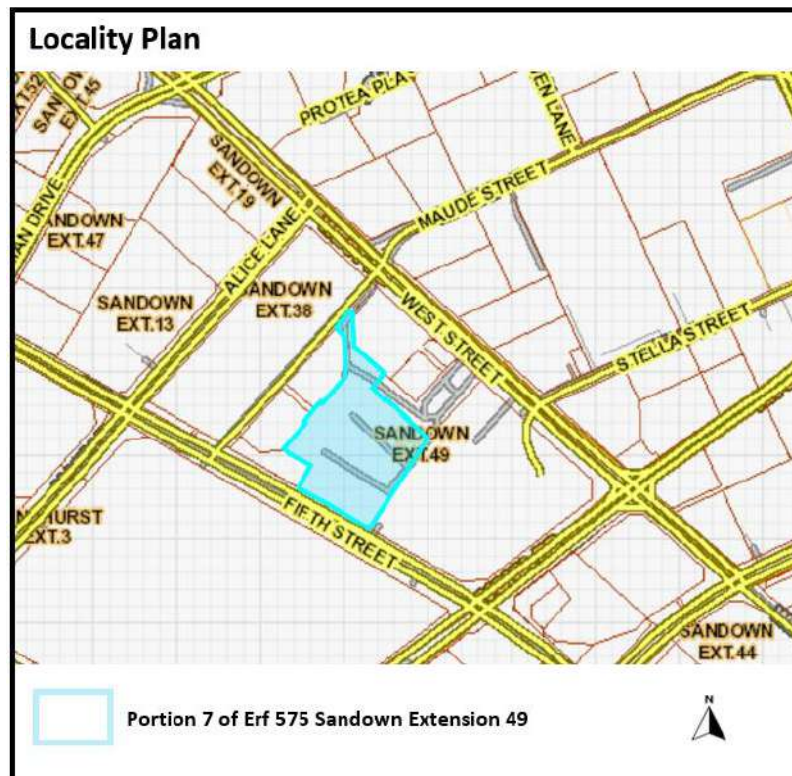


Figure 3: Locality Plan illustrating location of Nelson Mandela Square



1.8.2. Case Study 2: Monte Casino, Fourways, City of Johannesburg

Case Study 2: Monte Casino, Fourways, City of Johannesburg



Montecasino is a themed entertainment complex located in Fourways, northern Johannesburg. Opened in 2000 and owned by Tsogo Sun, it features:

- A casino
- Theatres (e.g. Teatro, Pieter Toerien Theatre)
- Hotels
- Shops and restaurants
- A faux-Italian village layout with cobblestone streets and an artificial sky

While it mimics a public town square, all space inside Montecasino is privately owned and tightly controlled. Tsogo Sun Limited (Tsogo Sun) is the largest Casino, Hotel and Entertainment company in South Africa. The Group is listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) and has a market capitalisation of approximately R14bn. It is ranked among the 80 largest companies listed on the JSE. All of Tsogo Sun's complexes incorporate ancillary offerings, including accommodation in more than 1700 rooms, conferencing facilities, a theme park, theatres (with the Teatro at Montecasino being the largest), cinemas (under the house brand movies@), restaurants and event spaces.

"Investigating the Growing Trend of Privatisation in Urban Environments:
Evaluating the Role of Privately Managed Public Spaces in Achieving Public Space Objectives through Placemaking Design Principles"

Figure 4: Application from Fieldwork Journal (Cassim, T)

Legal Framework

The property is legally registered in the following property particulars:

Table 2: Property Particulars of Monte Casino, City of Johannesburg

Study Area	Property Description	Ownership Type	Zoning	Owner	Size of the Property
Montecasino	Remaining Extent of Portion 475 Magaliessig Extension 37	Private Owned	Special	Tsogo Sun Casinos PTY LTD	236 319m ²

Property Locality

The property is situated at 68 Maude Street, Sandown in Sandton City in the hub of the metropolitan central business district.

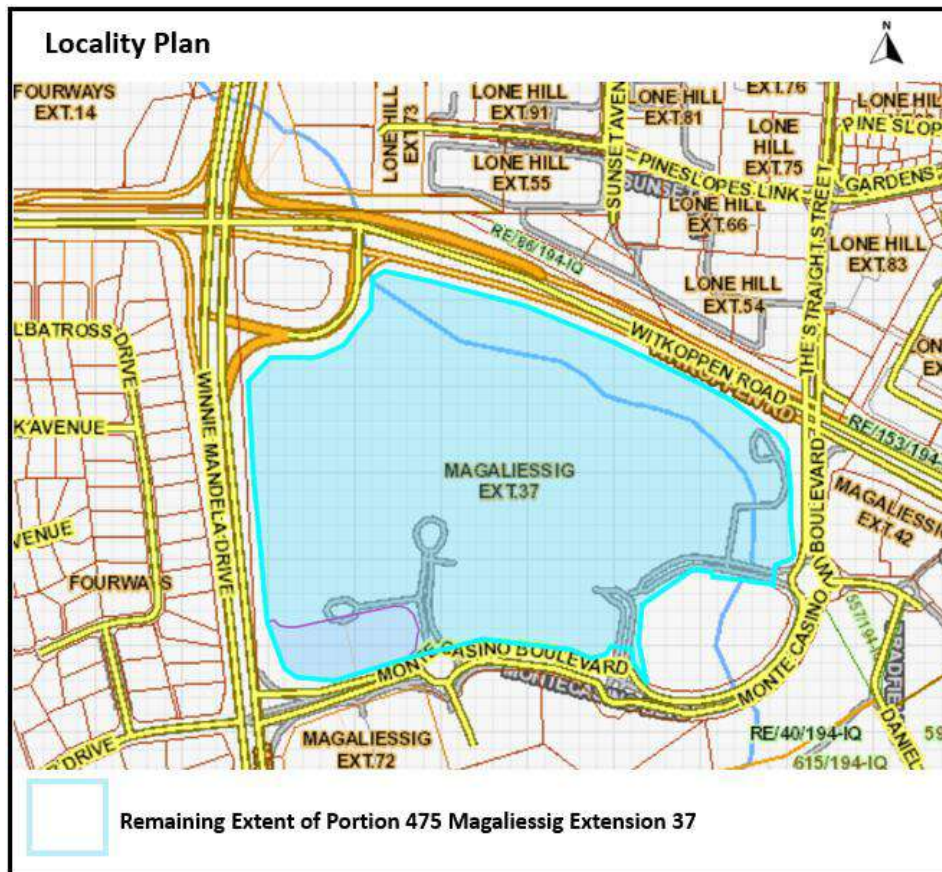


Figure 5: Locality Plan illustrating Monte Casino in the City of Johannesburg



The abovementioned selected case studies are strong for studying privately managed public spaces because they represent two very different yet complementary models of privately controlled urban environments in popular Johannesburg neighbourhoods. These PMPs both function as public spaces that are owned, designed and managed by private entities, offering valuable insights into how placemaking, governance being shifted to private entities and design influence users experience and accessibility. In terms of location, Sandton is one of South Africa's affluent and premier financials hubs, which showcases a high – intensity urban precinct where one can observe how private management extends to streets, plazas and transport nodes, ultimately reflecting a fusion of commerce and public life predominantly privately managed and owned. In contrast to Montecasino which operates as a contained, themed leisure park. This PMPs illustrates how atmosphere, design and control are used curate social behaviour and create a sense of place. These PMPs highlight complex relationships between economic motivations, social inclusion and urban design, which can demonstrate how private management can both enhance and limit the publicness of shared spaces. Their contrasting typologies, diverse user groups, and evolving roles within the city make them ideal case studies for examining how **placemaking tools** and private governance shape meaningful, sustainable, and user-oriented urban environments.

1.8.1. Assessing the Case Studies

The Fieldwork Journal was inspired by the works of Jan Gehl and Birgitte Svarre who wrote the book – “How to study Public Life.” The book shares a behind the scenes experience of a variety of tools from the Public Life studies toolbox that can used to understand Public Life and Public Spaces. Considering the research reports theme is on “investigating,” and “evaluating,” public spaces, privately managed public spaces - it was imperative to adopt a toolbox that studies and guides those involved in city planning and others responsible for the quality of life of our cities. I as the researcher, adopted tools from the “Public Life Toolbox,” as guiding methods to obtain my data for my case studies.

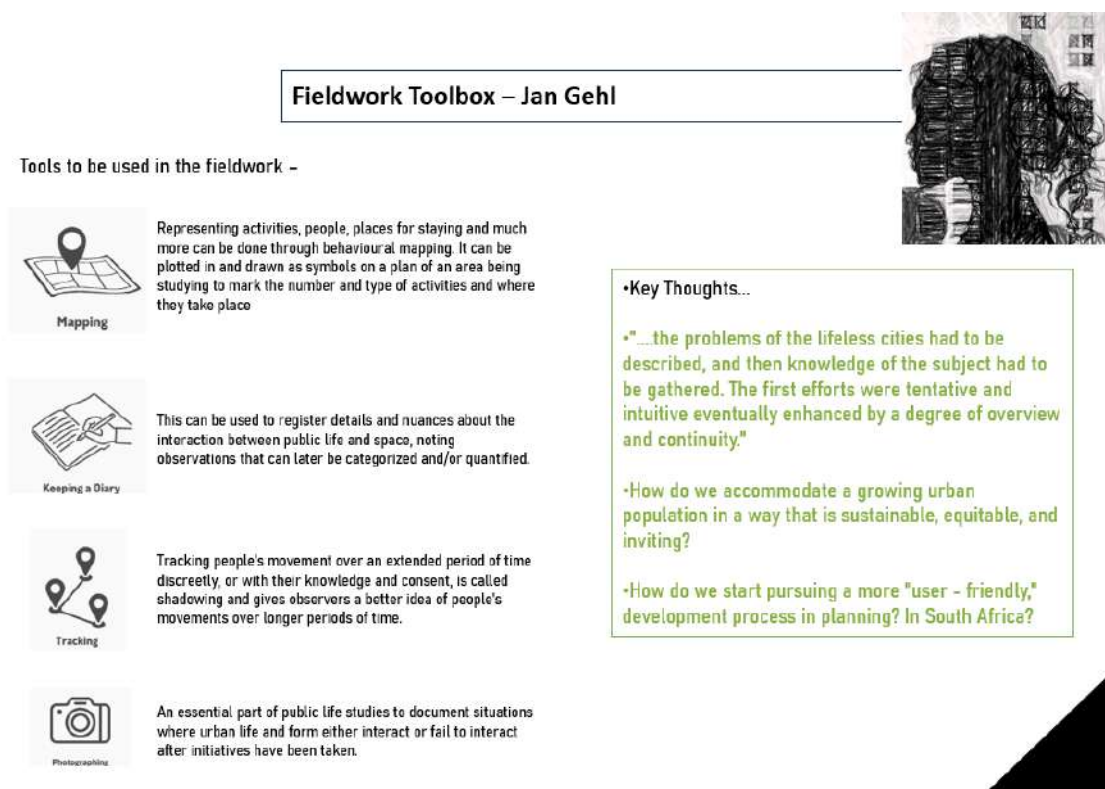


Figure 6: Data collection tools applied to case studies from Fieldwork Journal (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal)

1.9. Laying the Groundwork: How the Study took Shape

This section outlines the methodology applied in this research report to investigate and explore possible findings to the research question, - “What attracts users to privately-managed public spaces in Johannesburg?” This chapter serves to systematically explore the findings to address the concerns highlighted in the research problem. The research process is the foundational basis for the selected research design, methods of data collection, instruments and sources, and data analysis deployed as well as the validation, limitations, delineation, and ethical consideration of the study.

Research Design for studying Privately Managed Public Space

The study focuses on a combination of qualitative analysis and design elements in which characteristics of public space and privately managed public spaces are the subject of interest. This requires the research design approach to the study of space, and place in the city utilize a variety of research tools that will encompass the analysis of design characteristics in comparison to qualitative data collected in the field.

Considering this is a qualitative study, the researcher selected tools that would assist in investigating individual's beliefs, and experiences, and human nature and individual behaviour of the subjects in the study areas. Furthermore, these design tools helped understand how the wider structural, cultural, political and traditional conditions influence people's perspectives, experiences, and choices. With reference to the fieldwork conducted, a research design is established as a strategy for collecting, and analysing the data. This study employed a single research methodology approach which focused on qualitative methods applied in the field work to source the data. As part of the qualitative methods, the following research instruments were selected for the purposes of achieving the objectives of this study and respond to the guiding research question and sub – questions:

- Document analysis;
- Hard copy questionnaires;
- Semi – structured interviews (close ended and open – ended questions)
- Online Instruments (Microsoft Teams, Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint)
- Photographs and on-site observation

These abovementioned research instruments assisted in sourcing primary data to gather in – depth responses from users of private public spaces, and record their preferences for choosing to spend time in these spaces. The table below outlines the summary of the research design process, and this will be followed by detailed

1.9.1. Research Design

In order to ensure alignment, the research design referred to in this research report is the overall strategy and analytical approach that is selected to approach the data collection, evaluation and outcome process to be reflected in Chapter 4. This method is a combination of practical design work alongside systematic investigation. Phases of Research

There were three phases in the research process for this study. These are briefly described below.

- The first phase
The conceptual phase is characterised by formulation of the research aim, the objectives and purpose of the study. Then a literature review is done to become familiar with the content of the literature.
- The second phase
This involves the research design and planning of the study. The researcher is the tool used to gather data and the sample is the participants who met the criteria. A non-probability sampling design and purposive sampling were used.
- The third phase
The empirical part of a research study involved actual data collection, analysis and interpretation of data. The particulars of the data collected from the semi-structured interviews with each of the participants are recorded

1.9.2. Sampling Methods

The primary goal for the sampling methods selected for this qualitative study is to obtain a representative sample from a larger population, that will produce an understanding of the theoretical basis of public spaces and investigate how privately managed public spaces contribute to, or conflict with the broader objectives of public space using placemaking design principles as an evaluation framework.. For the purposes of this study, targeted sampling methods were used to source the participants.

1.9.3. Sampling Technique

Multiple sampling strategies were considered; however, qualitative research typically relies on a relatively small, purposively selected sample. In this study, participants were chosen based on their capacity to provide rich, descriptive accounts of their lived experiences and their willingness to communicate these narratives (Morse & Field, 1996). A criterion-based sampling approach is employed, with inclusion criteria focused on access to the research site, residence or employment within the local area, and individuals present in the mall environment. With reference to the interview schedule below, the researcher made field notes during the interview and electronic interviews were also incorporated to accommodate participants unable to meet in person. Data analysis started as soon as the first interview had been obtained. Considering the study is based on “investigating,” and “evaluating,” - *Evaluating the Role of Privately Managed Public Spaces in Achieving Public Space Objectives through Placemaking Design Principles* the abovementioned participants were selected specifically for their contributions to public space as follows:

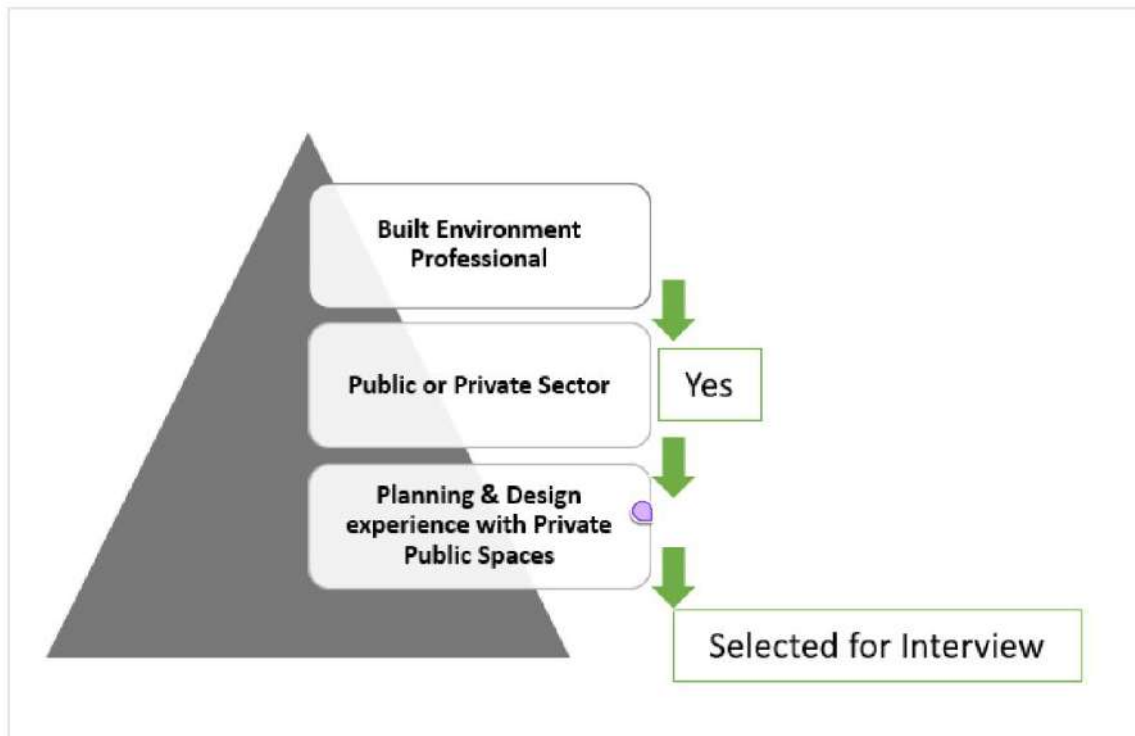


Figure 7: Criteria for selecting Interviewees

Participants: Urban Designer / Development Planners working in planning and design of Public and Private Public Spaces. For the purposes of this study, the sampling process used to identify the set of respondents to participate in the study, purely focused on the following criteria:

- Legal Consent age – 18 to 65 years
- Professional works in planning and design of Public Spaces
- Professional's willingness to participate and share their experiences

Subsequent to the above, the researcher used targeted sampling in which the respondents (Professionals working in the Built Environment with Public Spaces) were chosen based on their accessibility and willingness to voluntarily participate in this study. The participants groups are selected between the legal ages of 18 to 65. This ensured that the participants are able to provide consent on their own legally. The data sample as mentioned above is 20 participants, however the outcome of the number of respondents interviewed were 7.

1.9.4. Population and Sampling

The participant pool had to be reviewed in which the researcher is guided by the supervisor to choose one targeted sample, namely, between the users in public spaces or the built environment professionals who work with the planning and design of public spaces. This instruction is provided as both samples could create confusion," thus the two groups of participants initially selected had to be reconsidered. Subsequent to the above, Participant 1s, initially the Users of Public Spaces in the City of Johannesburg, which were selected on the following criteria; Legal Consent age – 18 to 65 years, User of Public Spaces in the City of Johannesburg, and; Users' willingness to participate and share their experiences had to be *withdrawn* from the sources of research. This change placed sole focus on the data collected from the Professionals.



"Investigating the Growing Trend of Privatisation in Urban Environments:
Evaluating the Role of Privately Managed Public Spaces in Achieving Public Space Objectives through Placemaking Design Principles"

Figure 8: Application from Fieldwork Journal (Cassim, T)

1.9.5. Research Design Tools and collection methods applied

information on sampling methods, data collection and instruments used for this study.

Table 3: Data Collection, Research methods, Application from Fieldwork Journal (Cassim, T)

Objective	Data Collection Method(s)	Instrument (s)	Sampling Method
Main Research Question <i>What attracts users to privately-owned public spaces in Johannesburg?</i>			
To determine what factors of private public spaces responds to people's interests and needs.	Interviews, participant observations	Hard Copy Questionnaire, semi - structured interviews, online survey, photographs on site	Targeted Sampling(Age group of participants between 18 – 65 years of age)
Sub – question 1: What are the similarities and differences between public and private public space?			
To define and determine what elements make these two types of spaces unique to serve their purpose	Document analysis, interviews, participant observations	Theoretical Analysis, Hard Copy Questionnaire, semi - structured interviews	Targeted Sampling(Age group of participants between 18 – 65 years of age)

Sub – question 2: What are the driving factors for the planning and design of Private public spaces ?			
To understand how development professionals plan, and design public spaces.	Interviews, participant observations	Hard Copy Questionnaire, semi – structured interviews, online survey	Targeted Sampling (Age group of participants between 18 – 65 years of age)
Sub – question 3: From a professional point of view, what characteristics of private public spaces in the city of Johannesburg are design with the end – user in mind?			
To understand why people, use public spaces, and how they can be improved to enhance user experiences and prevent the decaying of public spaces overtime.	Interviews	Hard Copy Questionnaire, semi – structured interviews, online survey	Targeted Sampling (Age group of participants between 18 – 65 years of age)
Sub – question 4: From a professional point of view, how are the successes of the planning and design tools of placemaking in Johannesburg revealed in private public spaces?			
To determine why private public spaces are increasing in development interest and investment more than public spaces.	Document analysis, interviews, participant observations	Theoretical Analysis, Hard Copy Questionnaire, semi – structured interviews	Targeted Sampling (Age group of participants between 18 – 65 years of age)

In summary, the research methodology utilized is considered best suited as the research involves the users directly experiencing and impacted by the design of public spaces. While the document analysis will be useful in drawing meaningful understanding behind conceptualisations of public space, private public spaces and the role of attraction in the longevity or decay of these spaces. Thus, further, supporting the findings of the sub – research questions to achieve the objectives of the study.

1.9.6. The interview process

As the researcher commenced the fieldwork phase of this study, insights into how certain public spaces have, over time, transitioned into *privately managed public spaces* as a result of poor maintenance, lack of funding and investment. The outcome of poor maintenance and outsourcing of management to private entities stemmed from challenges faced by government to maintain and manage these public spaces. Additionally, the researcher unravelled discrepancies between the theoretical principles of public space planning and design and how these are applied in practice—particularly in relation to ownership structures and governance models. The fieldwork aimed to investigate how privately managed public spaces contribute to, or conflict with the broader objectives of public space using placemaking design principles as an evaluation framework. The researcher conducted interviews with key industry experts who have been actively involved in the development, management, or evaluation of public spaces. These individuals have been purposefully selected due to their significant contributions to the field and their practical insights into the realities of public space planning. The 7 interviewed participants play a role in the planning and design of public spaces in various ways, namely –

- Provincial government Policy – maker
- Private Sector Town Planners working in Land Use planning with public spaces
- Architect / Urban Designer who work with the design elements of public space
- A Manager from a Private Managing company, managing Public Space.

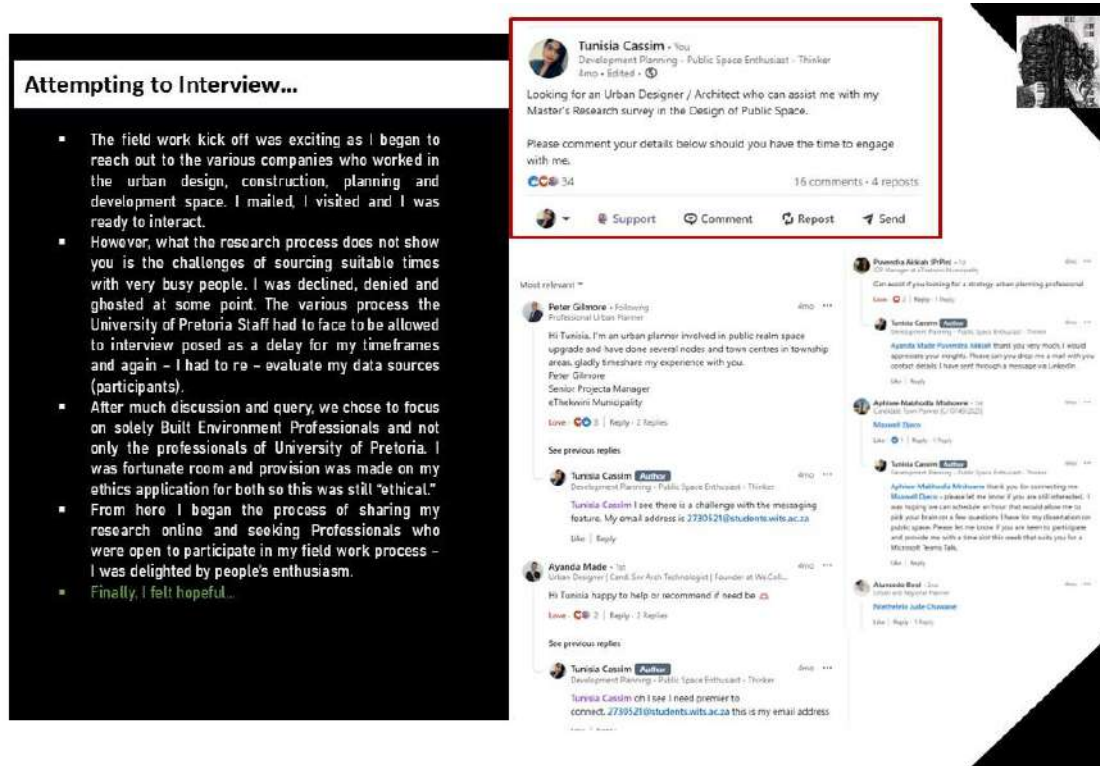


Figure 9: Interview process from Fieldwork Journal (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal)

The semi-structured interviews, provided key insights into how privately managed public spaces are achieving the objectives of public spaces and highlighted identified practical lessons that could inform the future design and planning of public spaces, ensuring they are more context-specific and better aligned with the actual needs and behaviours of users. The engagement with practitioners provided practical inputs from role players in the development space, offering a more grounded and comprehensive understanding of how privatisation from a management point of view is achieving the objectives of public space through placemaking principles and design tools or – conflicting thereof.

In addition to the above, the semi-structured interviews with the built environment professionals provided primary data, as this allowed the researcher to explore the participants' perspectives, experience in the field within the key themes of the research. This method provided a deeper understanding of design and planning of public space, the outsourcing of private entities and the maintenance and management of privately managed public spaces from a practice point of view. The interviews with the designers, policymakers and town planner created a triangulation of viewpoints that contributed to a broader understanding of the rise in privately managed public spaces.

The dialogues and spatial analysis captured unexpected insights through the open dialogue, that may not have been highlighted in more rigid quantitative approaches. Potential limitations included the interviewer bias, and the subjectiveness of responses which are addressed through reflections in the interview and careful focus on the key themes.

In conclusion the abovementioned data collection, sampling models and application thereof provided a suitable framework for this qualitative study as it allowed a diverse and in-depth analysis of the complexities of social, spatial and managerial dynamics that define and impact privately managed public spaces in two popular neighbourhoods in Johannesburg. The two case studies provided a contextual understanding of how design, management and user experience intersect within a specific site, which

allowed the researcher to uncover the nuanced ways in which publicness and attraction are produced in spaces as per Lefebvre's theory. This approach created the alignment between literature and practice through the conception of space as socially constructed.

1.10. Relationship to Discipline

As people's needs and demands of society evolve, so should the city and the elements of space that make up the city. The work presented in this study, is inspired by the current trends around the "Placemaking Approach" and "The City at Eye Level," planning practices for designing public spaces that meet the needs of the users and ensures longevity of these spaces' relevancy and survival over time.

The inputs from Built Environment Professionals who implement placemaking tools in private public spaces are imperative pointers to learn and incorporate for the overall improvement in the planning and design of public spaces. The challenge lies in understanding why private public spaces attract more users and investment compared to traditional public spaces and what these reveals about the current planning and design practices.

This research seeks to explore the driving factors behind this trend and to investigate how principles of placemaking and "design for actual use" are applied—or poorly maintained—in both types of spaces, using Nelson Mandela Square and Montecasino as comparative case studies. In order to ensure professionalism and integral practice, public space design and planning should promote user – driven planning and design practices through placemaking for the development of public spaces to meet the needs and desires of the community's they are situated in. In contrast, privately managed public spaces (POPS) in cities like Johannesburg appear to be flourishing, often better aligning with user preferences and offering higher quality environments.

This discrepancy highlights a critical gap between theoretical frameworks on public space design and the realities of urban planning and implementation. The voices, cultures and heritage of the communities of the poor and impoverished should hold equal importance as the affluent when it comes to their representation in the public spaces planned and designed for them.

1.11. Outline of chapters:

Chapter 1 Introduction: This chapter outlines the background to the research problem, by stating the problem, specifying the research objectives, introducing the study location and laying out the research approach. The proposed methods and structure of the research were described.

Chapter 2 Literature Review: The review of the literature is presented in this chapter, introduction to Henri Lefebvre's theory of Production of Space, thereafter the conceptions of public space and private public space, these concepts in the South African context. Thereafter the historical background of Public Space and the ideal characteristics thereof were revealed in theory. What constitute public through the concept of publicness that assess a spaces differentiation between public and private. Thereafter the emergence of private public space as an urban element in theory and the South African context. This section highlighted the misconceptions of private public spaces in theory and in the South African context. Lastly the chapter summarizes the tool of placemaking as a solution for transforming public spaces.

Chapter 3 Methodology: The chapter discussed the process for how the research will be approached, data collection process and data analysis techniques. The research methodological considerations set the scene of the research study and insight into the literature study and research design was discussed. Considering the study was a qualitative approach, the design tools consisted of epistemology studies, theoretical perspectives, phenomenology studies, ethnographical studies and post-colonial critical theory. The research methodology provided the background to the research problem, research aim, research question and objectives. Lastly, the data collection process and data analysis tools were described. In providing validity to the study, the reliability and ethical considerations were presented.

Chapter 4 Findings & Interpretations: The chapter provided a Fieldwork Journal inspired by Jan Gehl as evidence work in the field and as a result produced results to address the main research question and sub – questions.

Chapter 5 Summary, Recommendations & Conclusions: The research is further summarised by providing the findings based on the questionnaires completed by participants and interviews with participants. Thereafter the limitations pertaining to the study were discussed. Lastly, the chapter concludes with the outcome for – *“Investigating the Growing Trend of Privatisation in Urban Environments” - Evaluating the Role of Privately Managed Public Spaces in Achieving Public Space Objectives through Placemaking Design Principles*”

Field Work Journal

Reflecting on the ever – changing development trends, Public Spaces and Public Life continue to be the common thread in between the mega residential and commercial developments. Their roles and meanings have changed with time, and new mutations of a variety of types of public spaces has evolved. The growing competition between cities and towns to attract citizens and investment, often overlook the quality of life of the people living in, working in and passing through.

For the purposes of the practicality and reflecting the application of the various research concepts, methods, and tools used to compile the research report, the “Fieldwork Journal,” was created by the researcher to physical show the journey of the search process.

The Fieldwork Journal, illustrates the researchers' thought processes, in class discussions and activities as well as the methodologies for how the researcher will be compiling each chapter of the research report.

Conclusion

In order to structure my argument for the for-research report, I had to acknowledge my positionality as an insider and partially an outsider through the course of the research process. With reference to the research question- “What attracts users to privately-owned public spaces in Johannesburg?” Conceptualising the research over time became a journey. Throughout the course of formulating the argument, my influences have always been interdisciplinary as I can look at Development Planning in isolation and / or separate too. However, I have looked at Planning and Development as the cells to a greater organism, being:

- The way of life of living creatures and human beings;
- The functioning of the natural environment and the built environment;
- The influence of development on people, and their way of life;
- Lastly, the relationship people have with places and spaces designed and developed through Development Planning.

I have always been drawn to conversations where I can “plant a seed,” and the discussions grows from there. Similarly, with this research report, I hope it would form part of a larger conversation regarding Private Public Space, and the factors of attraction that draw users to these spaces. Furthermore, the structure of the research report, and the argument placed from the beginning is to highlight that the Development Planning of Public Spaces and Privately managed public spaces differ in terms of planning, management and functionality. With reference to the abovementioned research inspiration, designing and planning public spaces for the publics “actual” use and not “desired” use attracts users to public spaces.

The difference in Public Spaces and Privately managed public spaces can be observed by the number of users in these various public spaces, and their popularity amongst users. For instance, attractiveness of public spaces such as parks, and squares are declining as they are becoming unsafe due their neglect. Consequently, resulting in illegal invasion of these areas. This illustrates the significance of planning and designing public space with the user in mind. The argument is structured from understanding the existing theoretical perspectives of public space and the influence of placemaking theory and principles on countering the negative conditions that arise as a result of poorly managed public spaces.

The lens of the Built Environment Professionals interviewed will guide the researcher’s argument by outlining how planning processes and factors of attraction speak to each other. Within the broader discourse, this research is positioned from a dual perspective—both as a practitioner in the built environment and as an active user of public space. It is my contention that privately managed public spaces increasingly tailor their design and development planning strategies to reflect the needs and preferences of end-users, thereby enhancing their attractiveness and contributing to their growing prevalence in urban development. This trend appears to contrast with the slower rate of investment and development in publicly managed spaces. Furthermore, the absence of effective management and maintenance in many public spaces has contributed to negative urban conditions, including increased crime, land invasions, and declining property values.

TWO.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review “Voices & Perspectives guiding the Study”

The literature review chapter will review the existing academic journals on the history, meaning and function of public space, as well as provide a transformation of these spaces overtime, the introduction and evolution of privatisation and the influence of management by private entities on public spaces, and the application of placemaking principles in shaping the design and function of privately managed public spaces. Considering the study is situated in the Johannesburg area, the review aims to identify why are privately managed public spaces attracting users in popular neighbourhoods to understand how these spaces contribute to or challenge the objectives of public space in urban environments.

2.1. Introduction to key concepts guiding the study

The evolution of the meaning and role of public space has led to the emergence of a variety of types of categories of public spaces in the city. These adaptations are as a result of the changing trends, needs, desires, aesthetic and wants of the people in the communities they are meant to serve. The conceptual framework describes the intersectionality's between the core themes of the research report. This analytical framework acts as a compass to navigate the paradox of the misconceptions of private public spaces and private public spaces being an outcome of poorly maintained public spaces.

The “subject of the study” is the topic that is currently being investigated, while the “object of the study” is the specific “things” that is being observed or analysed. For the purposes of this research report, the following is defined in terms of deafferenting the subjects and objects of study.

Public Space

Public Space refers to the areas that are publicly owned and accessible to all members of a community, this is not defined by their background, and are typically characterised by their openness, inclusivity, and capacity to facilitate social interaction, civic engagement and democratic expression. (*Low & Smith (2006), Mitchell (1995), and Carr et al. (1992)*)

Privatization

"Privatization is the process by which functions, services, or assets that were previously under public ownership or control are transferred to private ownership, management, or influence. This process often reflects broader neoliberal policies aiming to increase efficiency, reduce government expenditure, and expand market logic into public sectors." *Savas (2000), Harvey (2005), and Peck & Tickell (2002)*. In urban contexts, privatization refers not only to the sale of land or services but also to the outsourcing of management, surveillance, and regulation of spaces that are nominally public. This can result in Privately Managed Public Spaces (PMPS) or semi-public areas governed by corporate interests, where access and behaviour are tightly controlled.

Public Space in the context of Privatisation

"Public space is traditionally understood as publicly owned and accessible urban areas where individuals can gather, express themselves, and engage in civic life. However, in the context of increasing privatization, these spaces are often subject to private control, surveillance, and exclusionary practices that challenge their openness, reduce democratic potential, and transform them into pseudo-public or controlled environments." — *Adapted from Mitchell (2003), Zukin (1995), and Minton (2009)*.

Privately Managed Public Space (PMPS)

"Privately managed public spaces are urban areas that, while publicly accessible, are owned or controlled by private entities. These spaces often resemble traditional public spaces in appearance and function but are governed by private rules, security, and surveillance, which may restrict access, behaviour, and expression in ways that challenge the democratic and inclusive ideals of public space." *Kayden (2000), Minton (2009), and Madden (2010)*. Jerold Kayden (2000), in his landmark study on POPS in New York City, defines these spaces as "publicly accessible spaces created through agreements between private developers and municipalities, where public access is exchanged for zoning bonuses or other incentives

Placemaking

Placemaking is the process of planning, designing, and managing public spaces with the goal of creating vibrant, accessible, and community-centred places. It focuses on:

- Activities and Linkages, Uses & Activities, Comfort & Image, Sociability

There are different approaches to placemaking, such as strategic placemaking, creative placemaking, and tactical urbanism, but they all aim to improve the quality of life through the physical and social fabric of a place. Wyckoff (2014) describes placemaking as "the deliberate shaping of an environment to facilitate social interaction and improve a community's quality of life," distinguishing between strategic placemaking (long-term goals like economic development) and creative placemaking (arts and culture-driven approaches) *Wyckoff, M. A. (2014). Definition of placemaking: Four different types. In Planning & Zoning News, 32(3), 1-10.*

The relationship between the abovementioned subjects and objects is the intersectionality between planning and designing public spaces that evolve and transform through ensuring the end – users need is being met. This promotes spatial resilience, spatial sustainability and spatial justice specifically in the South African context. Considering the negative conditions faced by communities formed as a result of poorly maintained public spaces, planning and designing for the needs of the user promoting placemaking is a counter mechanism to inspire transformation in development approaches to public spaces.

The relationship between the abovementioned subjects and objects represents the intersectionality between planning and designing public spaces that evolve and transform through ensuring the users of private public spaces needs are being met. In planning practice and principle, this promotes spatial resilience, spatial sustainability and spatial justice specifically in the South African context. Considering the negative conditions faced by communities formed as a result of poorly maintained public spaces, planning and designing for the needs of the user through placemaking principles is a counter mechanism to inspire transformation in development approaches to public spaces. In summary, undressing the paradox of the preconceived perceptions of private public spaces aims and role in the city.

Considering the current development trends and articles about public space and the planning and design thereof, the importance of developing spaces that cater to the needs of the people that use them is a growing concern due to various factors and changes taking place on earth today. The changing climate, limited developable land available, depleting scarce resources and restricting funding – we cannot afford to "get it wrong," in the development sector. The development sector is an interconnecting space of the various industries, livelihoods and employment hubs, and determining actors of the future of cities and countries. As such the alarming rate of change taking place in our natural environment calls for the best possible solutions to be presented. For South Africa, the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act 13 of 2016 speaks to the guiding principles that need to be upheld for the future development of our country.

Considering the literature review analysis, the processes of planning and design public spaces require greater involvement between role players and the public to ensure that public space represents its people. As such the literature highlighting the preconceived ideas, theories and perceptions of private public space, reflect a negative perception however, there are lessons that can be learnt from their planning and designs processes.

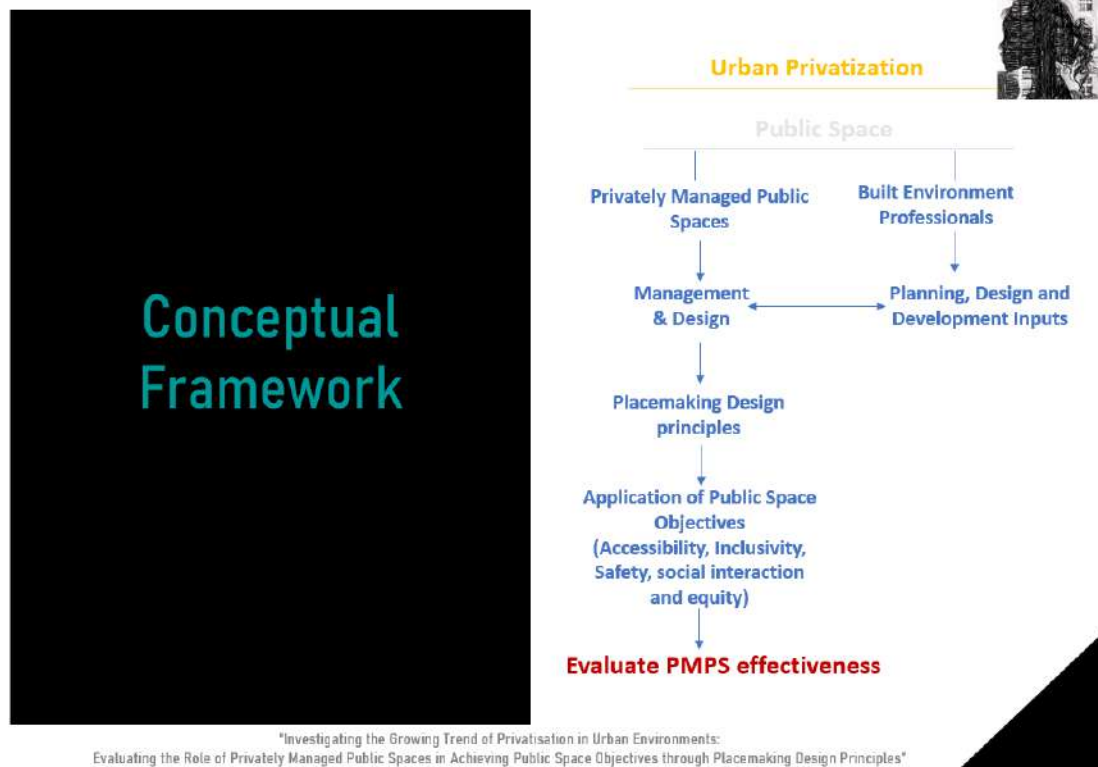


Figure 10 Conceptual Frameworks

The purpose of the Literature is to provide the reader with an understanding of the theory and theorisation of public space from a postmodernist view, with specific focus on the emergence of private public space and the evolution of the planning, design and integration of these spaces in society. Thereafter an Lefebvrian analysis of public spaces and private public spaces applied to the City of Johannesburg as a Case Study for the basis of the theory comparison to the practical field work to be conducted in Chapter 4.

This will highlight the production of these spaces and how the neglect of public spaces has impacted communities and the conditions that cause people to travel to private public spaces. Lastly, the conceptualisation of placemaking, and how its principles for planning and design represent the users and communities of the space which is the connecting factor to unboxing the paradox of the misconceptions of private public spaces solely being profit driven. Furthermore, how these tools can be applied in practice to counter the negative conditions of neglecting public spaces.

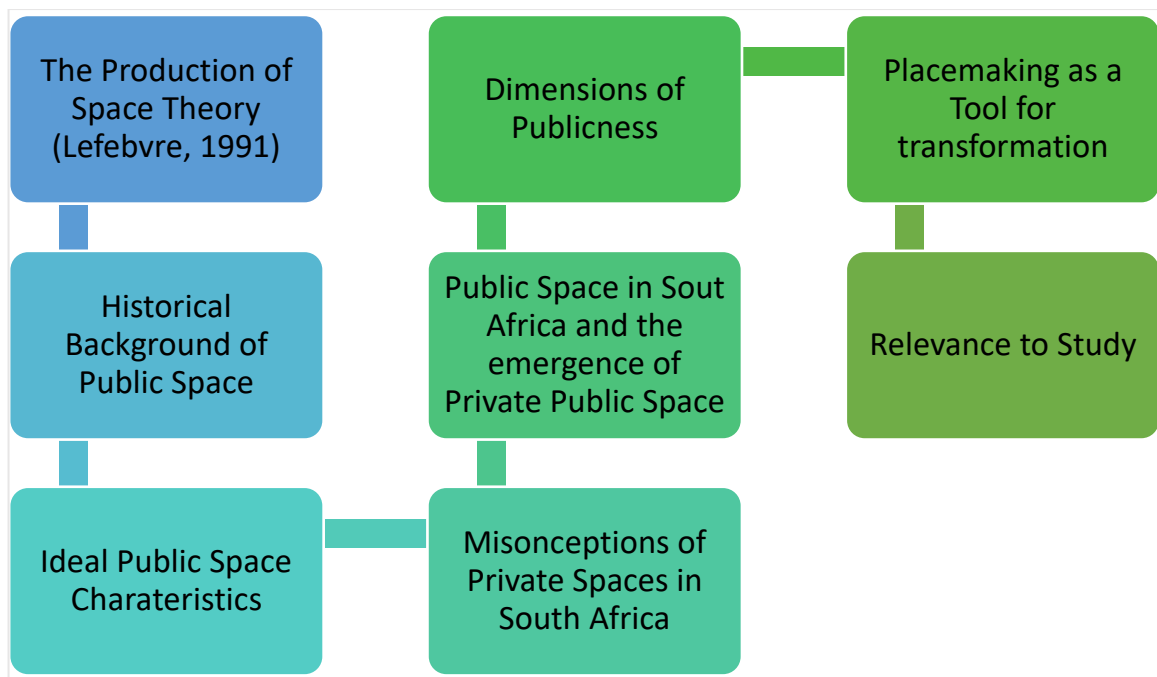


Figure 11: Structure of Literature Review (Cassim, Fieldwork Journal)

2.1.1. Conceptualization of Public Space

Historical Background

The understanding of public space and what contributes to publicness is multidimensional in nature and relative to the perceptions of the user. Reference to the characteristic of publicness was historically defined as “unplanned contact with others.” This was observed and studied through the streets evolving into the quintessential centre of public life, and the expectations of public spaces becoming more inclusive and accessible began (M. Carmona, C. De Magalhães, L. Hammond, 2008). This evolution positioned public spaces to be a place of unplanned contact with others (M. Carmona, C. De Magalhães, L. Hammond, 2008). Németh & Stephen, 2011, argues that the assumption that “public space is the place for public activities, private space for private activities,” however, with the evolution of public space, birthed a variety of public spaces that depended on their meaning, function and service to people. The theorisation between public space and private public space. Considering there is no physical boundaries that define the differences between public and private spaces, but rather this is created through the characteristics of publicness as mentioned above. The public realm continues to be privatized and commercialized due to the prevalence of neoliberal capitalism (Wang, 2019). This connects the dynamic relationships that are established between property and the people who inhabit them, and use them (Staeheli & Mitchell, 2008). A such, the diversity and dynamic features for conceptualization of public space between publicness and the existence of private public space should be interpreted from a multiple dimension point of view.

Considering the historical context of public space, in accordance with, Kohn, M., 2004, traditionally the characteristics of public existed because private spaces began to take shape. The Greek agora was the earliest example of the ideal public space at the time, (Mitchell, 1995). It was in this public space where the Greeks gathered to sell and barter, engage in the matters of the day, surrounded by the architecture of buildings that represented the people such as the council house and tholos (Crossley & Roberts, 2004). The popular / ancient Athenian Agora still remains an idealised form of public space – a vibrant square where the citizens of Greece came together to socialise, relax and trade (Henaff & Strong, 2001).

The Greeks gathered to barter and discuss matters of the day in between residential, business and market structures representing the people such as the council house, the tholos and the law courts (Crossley & Roberts, 2004). As the centuries progressed, scholars have viewed the assessment of the post classical Agora era very pessimistic. The uprising of kingdom and monarch rule, agora's became more monumentalized (Crossley & Roberts, 2004). This saw the construction of numerous honorific statues and it is here the decline of public space begins, these now, "state" agora's were cut off from the rest of the city, thereby limiting the freedom of movement and causing public life to stagnate, human activity reduced/faded away transforming agora's to representations of power (Crossley & Roberts, 2004).

The research into modern public spaces have shown that interactions of different groups in settings such as squares, shopping centres, streets and parks and recreation play an important role in cementing and challenging social and political relations (Minton, 2006). The play on "public" referenced to a second category to life in the agora must be understood, where the agora emerges as a public stage (Crossley & Roberts, 2004). It is herewith the local elite were both actors and audience, constantly judging each other's behaviour and exerting peer pressure to uphold standards of decorum (Crossley & Roberts, 2004). These who felt the obligation to be seen in public in order to justify their privilege political status, remained visible within the agora activities. Public space is the physical representation of the relationship between government / political authorities and policy and how people perceive and experience them. It is in these spaces the "public" which comprises of all individuals/citizens in society including the "undesirables" which consists of the homeless, unsensitized and beggars (Tonnelat, 2010). The general perception of various individuals is supported by the vicinity or space they interact in. As this consists of families, social groupings, associations and gatherings through basic interest and enthusiasm (Crossley & Roberts, 2004). This relation builds the bond between the physical nature of public space and social needs of people, as planners design for.

Lastly, following on from Aristotle, these public spaces allow for the awareness of difference, a place where diverse people converse in the sense of identity (race, gender, class) but also diverse in their actions and choices (Carmona, 2010). This view was important because when people are accustomed to a diverse, multicultural society, people will not act violently when they are challenged by something they've become familiar with (Jensen, 2011). In addition to the comparisons between public space and private space, De Magalhães (2010), clarifies that public space is a relative quality instead of an absolute concept as there will be elements of public space that are more public than others. Subsequently, the defining characteristics between public and private space is the existence of private property through ownership.

2.1.2. The ideal Public Space

The theories of public space are primarily emphasizing the planning and design of public space in the urban context. In addition to, the urban contextualisation of the definitions of public space, there is also a reflection the ideals of this concept. The following broad definitions and associations are made for the definition of Public Space in the urban context:

With reference to Figure 15 below, the fundamental characteristic of public space is its publicness and the extent to which it is public. The essential quality that defines public space as public is its public character (De Magalhaes, 2010; Varna, 2014). Furthermore, public character is classified by its openness and inclusion, which is defined by sociologists Benn and Gaus 1983 as the dimensions of publicness. These dimensions have allowed for public spaces to be analysed and assessed in terms of the relationship between property and people who inhabit them and those that create public spaces. As a result of ownership, and managed access the development field has seen various adaptations and mutations of public space and as outcome differentiates between public and private spaces.

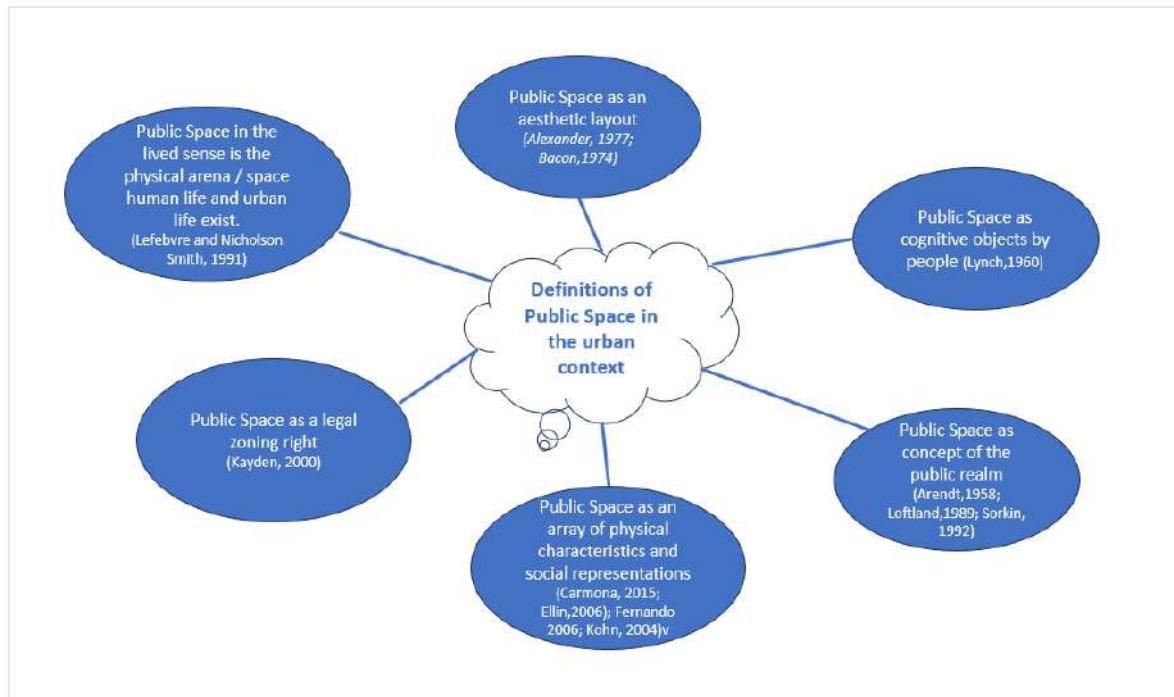


Figure 12: Definitions of Public Space in the urban context

2.1.3. Dimensions of Publicness in Public Space

Considering the multi-dimensional nature of publicness, sociologists Benn and Gaus 1983, conclude three high level distinctions and mutually interacting dimensions of publicness namely; access, agency and interest. In order to achieve social organization in public spaces, these three dimensions were the universal categories to meet. These dimensions that Benn and Gaus 1983, makes reference to are defined as follows:

- Dimension 1 - Access: consists of physical access to space, access to activities and interaction, access to information and access to resources, with specific reference to whether the control of access is public or private.
- Dimension 2 - Agency: investigates the motivation of agents, and whether these agents act in their own interest or for public benefit.
- Dimension 3 - Interest: Benn and Gaus's specifically make reference to the motivational status of agents therefore directly determines the beneficiaries of their decisions, which is the concern of the dimension of interest.

As De Magalhães (2010) has explained: "Most people would expect of a public space that it should be provided and managed in a way that secures a relative openness of access to most members of society, allows them to use that space without other restrictions than those dictated by broadly accepted social norms of behaviour, and guarantees them some say over key decisions regarding the running of the space." In accordance with Low and Smith, rules over public spaces are the key factors affecting their freedom of use, freedom of access, use without restriction. The abovementioned dimensions shape the extent in which public space is designed and access by the public is influenced by the agents being the owners, and managers that guide their design. Furthermore, the emergence of private public spaces has now become a common element of development planning and private development continues to thrive in the planning and design of private public spaces for the public while integrating them in existing developments.

2.1.4. Benefits and contributions of Public Space to Society

In theory, the value and significance of Public Space is diverse and vast across various schools of thinking, namely,

- Political Sciences: Public Spaces as places of representation of political manifestos, laws and constitutional rights of people. Considering the ending of various historical revolutions, and the uprising of equal rights such as democratization, public spaces were the grounds in which people protested and voiced their concerns and celebrated their victories.
- Geographers: Public Spaces as a sense of place and placeness connecting people to their birth rights and cultural heritage.
- Anthropologists and Sociologists: Public Space as a historical construction of social value and subjective value.

With reference to Schmidt, 2008, suggests in order to create a safe, liveable and sustainable environments providing publicly accessible space is imperative as they serve as integrating spaces for civility of humans and morality. Similarly, these spaces encourage a reconnection with the natural environment and support the protection of the environment. In addition, common spaces can play an essential role in economic growth through positively impacting property values and attracting users to the space to interact social and economically with local business in and around the area. However, these attributions are only in the conditions of these spaces being well cared for, maintained and regulated to serve their purposes. In the recent years, public space projects have been increasingly poorly maintained due to various reasons and as result

Concerns and conditions of Public Space

The concerns around the conditions of public space today, are across the social, environmental, economic and political dimensions regarding their planning and design. These abovementioned concerns are alarms to broader issues in urban planning, governance and equity. The following concerns are referenced for the purposes of this study.

- Poor maintenance and negligence
This is the act of lack of cleaning and upkeep which can lead to decay, and reduced public use or interest due to conditions such as broken infrastructure (damaged benches, lights not working in public spaces reducing visibility and creating opportunity for crime. These conditions are as a result of lack of investment of various resources such as funding, labour and management.
- Safety and Security Concerns
Due to the deterioration of the conditions of public spaces, poorly lit or isolated spaces may attract criminal activity. Similarly, from a policy point of view, inadequate policing, and implementation of guiding principles may disproportionately target certain communities.

In summary, the poor maintenance of public space as a result of overstretched, fiscally strained municipal governments. Consequentially, there is an increase in private sector involvement. These private entities heed the call to attend to the maintenance and care of public spaces on behalf of public sector entities. As these private sector developers take on the responsibility, their efforts to ensure urban open space is accommodated for in development, and well – managed, public entities and government organisation encourage collaboration by providing density bonuses and other incentives to the private sector in exchange for the provision and maintenance of such spaces. In the attempts of collaboration to attend to the poorly maintained public spaces two conceptualisations are formed: the existence of private public spaces and private public partnerships.

In the next section the review of “The Production of Space (1991),” by Henri Lefebvre will discuss the production of space with reference to how spaces are created and are product and a producer of social relations. The review will explore how design, governance and social practice interact in shaping the meaning and use of public space in a city marked by inequality and fragmentation. In the reviews engagement of Lefebvre’s theory, the chapter establishes a conceptual foundation for investigating what attracts users to these spaces in Johannesburg and how such attractions are growing popular in urban environments.

2.1.5. How is space created?

For the purposes of this study, it is imperative to note that urban space is not solely a physical space or an aesthetic construct, it is also a social product that has been shaped by political, economic and cultural forces. In “The Production of Space,” by Henri Lefebvre he provides a critical theoretical lens for understand this process, and how spaces are created. The seminal argues that space is actively produced through the interactions between spatial practices, representations of space and spaces of representation. The literature review seeks to highlight this as Lefebvre challenges the notion of space as a neutral container, and emphasizes that its role is both a product and producer of social relations. This is very relevant to contemporary urban contexts where increasing privatisation of public spaces are reflecting power dynamics in the production and control of urban environments.

As public spaces such as streets, squares and parks motivated social interactions and provided physical spaces for people to move in and around the city. In addition, these public spaces held space for unplanned interactions as political riot and representation. Similarly, in historic Johannesburg, public space was used as a political ground for exercising the voices and rights of the marginalised during the apartheid regime. Considering the radical acts of protest between various politically transitioning groups the transformation of the political field from apartheid to democracy - violence, crime, and fear caused many of the white South African to relocate from their inner-city suburbs to live in gated communities. The change in the social structures in the urban areas of the city of Johannesburg challenged the spatial exclusionary measures and segregation of people in the city historically implemented by the apartheid regime. The influx, and migration of people of colour challenged the “white only, black only,” restrictions of apartheid.

These legislated racial segregations at the time ultimately created the spatial differentiation between public space and private public space through access (physical and social structure), interest (representation of the user) and the agency of the public to use the space without the restrictions previously enforced through the apartheid legacy.

From a literature lens these social structural changes, and spatial transformation of public space as a result of being alleviated from the chains of racial restrictions, led to a wave of private public spaces being planned and developed purposefully. For the purposes of this research report, the term “user” is adopted from (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 362), in which Henri defines the user as the underprivileged and marginal, which also includes everyone and no one. This definition has no specific designation of the user having to relate to an economic class, social groups of racial categorisations. These “users” are the people in passing, and within a space at the time, or moving through the space in time.

Considering the global negative preconceptions of private public spaces, this research report seeks to contribute a change in perception through a Lefebvrian theory and analysis of the representations of space and conceptualisations formed by the built environment professionals who work in the planning and design of these private public spaces. For the purposes the theoretical framework of the research report, *The Production of Space by (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 404)*, is significantly recognised for shaping a turn key moment in defining space (Dorsch, 2013; Elden, 2004b). The connection between the science of space is modelled to be interconnected with the “use of space, and thus shapes the lived experiences of the user.

- *Representations of Space / Conceived Space* - This connection is created through the representation of space as conceptualised by planners, architects and built environment professionals which is referred to as Representations of Space (Ronneberger, 2008, p. 137).
- *Representational Space* - "*It is the 'lived space' 'of 'inhabitants' and 'users' but also of some artists and...a few writers and philosophers' (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 39).*" In relation to how space is conceived which is illustrated through what is perceived in comparison to the lived experience (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 38), this is what Lefebvre refers to as "Conceived Space." Thirdly, (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 39), defines these spaces that is directly lived and / or experienced through design, architecture and art etc.
- *Perceived Space* - These are the public spaces in the city that user interact with the sensory elements of the built environment, that form part of their daily lives. Similarly, these spaces are produced and reproduced ensuring continuity and social cohesion.

The below - mentioned spatial triad illustrates the various contributions to the social planning and design of space (Lefebvre, 1991). Concerning the investigative and explorative nature of the research report the Spatial Triad is the guiding theoretical framework of the study. These are key elements of the basis of the "Theory," debate that unlocks the paradox of the preconceived conceptualisations of private public space, and their contributions to their communities. Therefore, when 'space' is evoked through the spatial triad, we must indicate what occupies space and how it does so (Lefebvre, 1991).

The Spatial Triad was exemplary used in Newtown, Johannesburg to understand the organisation and use – politics of the Mary Fitzgerald Square, in which the study addressed the struggle between conceived and lived interests over the public space due to the forming of strict policing and privatisation taking place.

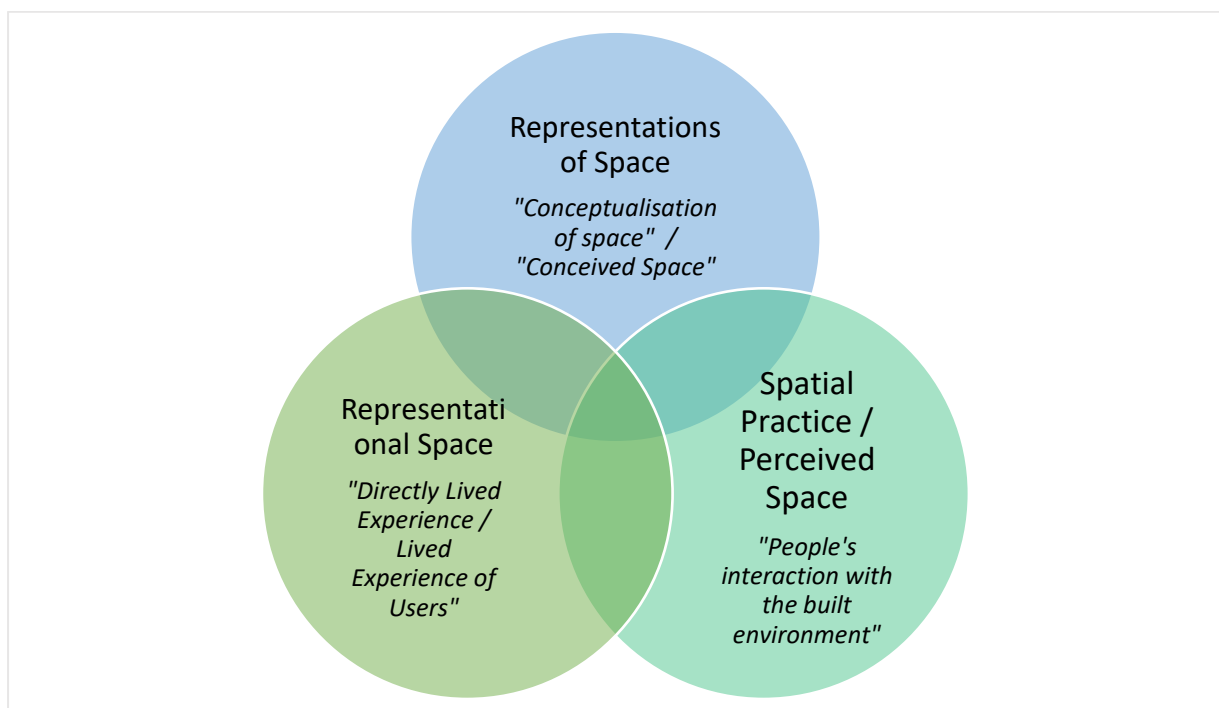


Figure 13: Spatial Triad (Lefebvre, 1991, p.404)

Considering the main research question seeks to be a guiding approach to counter the negative impact of poorly maintained public spaces on its user and communities, and counter the negative preconceived conceptions of private public spaces being planned and design for profits the Production of Space theory critically expresses how the problem statement of the research in theory is reflected.

The theory applies to the study as a foundation for assessing the private spaces and their contributions to the communities that they service. Considering public space is characterised by their dimensions of publicness, private space has placed restrictions, limitations and operational regulations on their accessibility, which has impacted the agency of the user and is motivated by the interest of the management of the space. From a literature point of view, this concept of production of space will be applied in the field of the planning and design of private spaces.

With reference to the case study of Johannesburg, these exemplify the rise of privately managed public spaces and the transformations reflected by Henri Lefebvre's theory on "*The Production of Space (Lefebvre, 1991)*" which explored the manner in which public spaces organised representations, and the representational uses in spatial practice. These spaces are often celebrated for their design, quality of space, variety of activities and safety and maintenance but are critiqued for their accessibility, inclusivity and the right to the city principles. Drawing on the theoretical review of Henri Lefebvre, the production of space under conditions of privatisation influences public life and spatial experience.

2.1.6. Emergence of Private Public Space through Privatization

From the abovementioned theories of the foundation of how public space was historically established, to the adaptations of public spaces to the political regimes, and thereafter their mutations into private and public. The emergence of private public space is not a coincidence, but rather a planned approach to development by means of restricting the publicness of the space through access, agency of the user and design and planning in the interest of the management and / or owners. These private public spaces evolved as early as people were able to buy, own and manage their own property, which were later governed by planning and zoning regulations to ensure the character of the area was respected by all users. In addition to town planning guidelines, spatial development frameworks and policies further designated development zones and development parameters that supported the private and public differentiation.

"Privatization is the process by which functions, services, or assets that were previously under public ownership or control are transferred to private ownership, management, or influence. This process often reflects broader neoliberal policies aiming to increase efficiency, reduce government expenditure, and expand market logic into public sectors."

Savas (2000), Harvey (2005), and Peck & Tickell (2002)

In urban contexts, privatization refers not only to the sale of land or services but also to the outsourcing of management, surveillance, and regulation of spaces that are nominally public. This can result in Privately Managed Public Spaces (PMPS) or semi-public areas governed by corporate interests, where access and behaviour are tightly controlled.

"Public space is traditionally understood as publicly owned and accessible urban areas where individuals can gather, express themselves, and engage in civic life.

However, in the context of increasing privatization, these spaces are often subject to private control, surveillance, and exclusionary practices that challenge their openness, reduce democratic potential, and transform them into pseudo-public or controlled environments."

— *Adapted from Mitchell (2003), Zukin (1995), and Minton (2009)*

Private public spaces are established as a result of lack of control over public space environments, maintenance and care of the spaces by public entities and government organizations. The change in focus towards integrated and collaborative partnerships to improve the conditions of public spaces which through management and the regulations thereof introduce private public space as the outcome thereof. In theory, Private Public Spaces are frequently associated with diminishing the publicness of public spaces and the social value and vitality of the intention of public space.

With reference to overarching literature, management practices in privately managed public spaces are viewed as more exclusionary and not as transparent and accountable than those in publicly owned spaces. However, the same concerns can be considered for the poorly maintained parks, squares and pedestrian movement routes managed by public entities. Further to the above, these critiques of private public space, generally fall short on two counts (Kohn, 2004; Staeheli and Mitchell, 2008).

- *First, they tend to interpret the 'publicness' of publicly accessible spaces along ownership lines only. Critics often characterize publicness as existing somewhere along a continuum from completely private ownership at one end to completely public ownership at the other (Kohn, 2004; Staeheli and Mitchell, 2008).*
- *Second, there has been little in the way of formal, empirical, comparative analysis that would substantiate or refute such claims regarding differing management styles in publicly and privately owned spaces.*
- *Most existing work is limited to outlining broad theoretical or institutional differences between management approaches in the two types of spaces (Kohn, 2004; Staeheli and Mitchell, 2008).*

Misconceptions of Private Public Spaces

Private public spaces are associated with high levels of security that are perceived to restrict public access; however, these high levels of security are for the purpose of adhering to mandates of safety commitments promised by management of these spaces. These locations are free for the public to enter, however there are designated times, perhaps a fee charge or a specific access to be used dependent on pedestrian or vehicle access requirements. These may seem like critique; however, these measures are in the intentions of ensuring users are safe on the premises. The concrete threat to the environment, the balance of natural features has seen a growing integration of these features through urban design principles guiding new development, as well as the global shift towards protecting the environment. Considering the straining pressures to manage and maintain public spaces which are designated by planning policies and practice, a gap between organisations has led to the incentives being granted to private developers to provide public space on their private developments, which remains under the original ownership, but is managed and maintained by a private authority.

Considering there aren't any physical demarcations of public and private, on the contrary these private public spaces are deemed public but are restricted privately by the rules and regulations of the management company, landowners and / or private developers. Similarly, these rules differ from place to place. In summary, Privatised Public Realm concept - perhaps these spaces are planned and designed based on the user's and community's needs, desires and wants and as result make a profit because they are tailored for the people they serve.

For the purposes of the study, the privatization of public space considers the transfer of ownership, control, or access of public spaces to private entities. These spaces can be:

- Public-private partnerships (PPPs) where management is contracted out
- Increased surveillance and restricted access
- Commercialisation of space (e.g., sponsored parks, branded spaces)

2.1.7. Public Space and the emergence of Private Space in South Africa

Considering the experiences in public spaces faced by many South African's during the apartheid era, these spaces were weaponized and controlled by the regulations placed by the government at the time (Spocter, 2005). The use of racial segregation which dictated and facilitated how public spaces were allowed to be used, dissolved the extent of publicness in these spaces. Public Space was ultimately a reflection of the powers of government and the principles of their manifestos transpired in how public space was allowed to be used by the various users, differently (Penfold, 2012). This had an impact on the perceptions, sense of belonging and the facilitation of a sense of ownership that connected the user to these public spaces.

The public realm is essential for the life of the public to connect, engage, and participate in public activities. These functions are essential for the quality of life of cities and towns. Public Space plays a significant role in unity by bringing people together from all backgrounds, races, and income groups to actively participate planned or unplanned within these spaces. Subsequently, public spaces should play a part in breaking barriers, prejudices and any social stereotypes that obstruct unity and harmony between people and the space.

Public Space is defined by its qualities that promote publicness namely; access, inclusion and ownership. These characteristics differentiate public space's ability to adapt and connect to the users in adversity.

Public spaces in South Africa have been an arena for social division, racial segregation and political interest. These spaces have been stages for expression of frustration, contestation and combat between the public and the government entities that have enforced and ruled against public interest during the apartheid regime. Similarly to the design of the Greek Agora which eventually faded away due to limiting access to women, people who were considered as slaves and any foreigners - public spaces in the South African context were weaponized during the apartheid regime. The access to these spaces were colour coded by White Only and Black Only signs that controlled inclusiveness of these public spaces.

The doctrine of apartheid as legislated racial separation was introduced following the National Party's assumption of power in 1948 (Smith, D.M., 2003). With growing urbanization, at a national scale, the establishment of homelands for the African majority population was an attempt to constrain urbanization. This was implemented by the notoriously known, "pass laws," which controlled the entry to the cities to levels of demands for labour. The pass laws, defined and limited access in the cities for black South Africans (Smith,D.M, 2003). Their duration was dependent on the how long they were required by the white economy at the time. The racial segregation was compulsory, alongside the conformity to the day-to-day indignity of petty apartheid under the legislation which enable the provision of separate amenities for different race groups. With the transformation of our political leadership in 1994, the country of South Africa gained its democracy and newly defined freedoms and rights for its citizens.

With the freedoms of democracy, there has been many changes by the built environment and political powers to improve the quality of public spaces for people over the years. This change took into account the influence of the human rights that were officiated by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. The legislation vastly influenced the development policies that were planned and prepared for the future of development and planning sector thereafter. There was a key focus on improving equal access, spatial justice, spatial efficiency and sustainability in the infrastructure and construction fields to rectify the wrongs of apartheid. In doing - so, the objectives of these spatial planning policies post - apartheid, poorly maintained the managing of public spaces, and the renewal of these public spaces. Consequently, this had led to these "in - between," spaces, which are the spaces in between the housing and residential developments, commercial developments, and industrial areas to adapt, and develop haphazardly or on

their own if they were not connected to an existing development. The apartheid legacy was slowly fading away with newly developed policies that embodied the rights of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1994. This impacted the design of public spaces, as the liberation of people of colour became the core foundation for spatial justice, spatial resilience and spatial efficiency in the South African Planning and Land Use Management Act of 16, (2013).

The public spaces evolved into physical sites that embraced racial differences and challenged the restrictions of privately managed public spaces in a new context. The restrictions of access were lifted, and there was no longer a pass system. Secondly, the agency of the state had its interests changed from racial segregated motivations to democratic manifestos that embodied the interests of the public. In reflection of the literature review, the dimensions of Benn and Gaus, 1983 have changed as the state changed its manifestos which as a result has an impact on the users. In conclusion, the leadership, and attributes of ownership and management evidently define the extent in which public spaces can be used by people. As such the formalisation of private public spaces are shaped by the dimensions of access, interest and agency on their planning and design for the public.



Introduction to the selection of the City of Johannesburg

There have been many successes experienced in Development Planning along the way however, the city's poverty rates continue to remain high and the inequality breeds the need for user – driven development (Council, 2004). We can see this in the substantial difference in the pace of development and longevity between public and public development. Furthermore, the rising of gated communities, increasing urban security measures such as road closures, gating off communities and initiatives taken by residents and developers to fortressing residential and subservient land uses has resulted in further fragmentation of the city and South African cities as a whole. While the rational for these trending closures taking place vary throughout the city, they do not promote the core values and principles of public space (Mitchell, 2003).

Considering Johannesburg has evolved into a post – Fordist phase in which we have seen the decline productivity in the industrial sector, while the service sector rises, the city's spatial structure is transforming alongside this economic shift. The unequal tax base of the city has resulted in the depletion of spatial elements of the city's spatial fabric (S, 1995). Consequently, the city has had to source ways to source business's return on investment and rebuild a residential middle – class footprint. Private Public Partnership initiatives have become the city's saving grace and solution to renewal and upkeep the spatial fabric and in return promoting private public spaces tailored for the civilians they cater too. As a result, there are several public – private sector partnerships managed precincts in and around the city of Johannesburg. The spatial justice transformation has been guided through development planning strategies which has produced well– established precincts. However, this has been socially costly as well, as there is a physical removal of the very poor in and around these areas and social exclusivity brewed through control measures of private regulators of these spaces in Johannesburg.

In order to fully experience social justice in the country of South Africa, Beall et alii (2002) suggests that pockets of social and economic exclusivity need to be fractured at all levels. Furthermore, the change in the political regime of the country afforded the City of Johannesburg the opportunity to evolve and reinvent itself.

However, the volatile economic inequality continues to plague the city's ability to balance harsh fiscal and administrative realities with growing, varying social and economic demands for different population groups situated in different regions of the city. This has left the local government with a low hanging fruit to sought out strategies that can fracture these exclusivities, separation through public space and their potential for creating unplanned interaction (Johannesburg, 2005). The Human Development Strategy, 2005, recognises that civilians are the City's most significant asset and that they need to be supported. Furthermore, the strategy seeks to create more prospectives for social inclusion in the city of Johannesburg. This evidenced by the social inclusion agenda seeking to build social inclusion among all city residents. Similarly, the strategy makes reference to encouraging the tolerance of difference and diversity through establishing social cohesion. For instance, of the four key components for social cohesion, the democratisation of public spaces in the city. Public Spaces played a significant role for the poor whose access to private spaces was previously limited to "race – based access."

The intention to create positive partnerships for social inclusion was birthed for the purposes of creating public spaces that provided comfortable places for the public to interact in its full difference and diversity (Johannesburg, 2006). For example, public spaces should proactively absorb the poor, as currently these "excluded," people continue to live on the peripheries of urban and suburban neighbourhoods which excludes them from the benefits of urban life (Growth and Development Strategy, 2006, p-57). With reference to the, Growth and Development Strategy, 2006, p 58 – 59, strategies formulated to promote fracture social exclusivity of poorer urban people through public space –

- need to make allowances by the built environment regulation and management of public spaces and;
- improve opportunities for people's interaction through attractive and accessible public space (Growth and Development Strategy, 2006, p 93.)

Johannesburg deserves recognition for its focus on public space, especially in the face of increasing privatization, as this is essential for promoting democratic access to the city (M., 2002). However, the city has also pursued the creation of public spaces through public-private partnerships, incorporating the principles of new urbanism or neo-traditional planning into these efforts. There are several such urban renewal initiatives across the city, with notable examples including Constitution Hill, the Newtown Precinct, and business improvement districts in the central business district (Beall, et al., 2002). Additionally, the city has offered various incentives to encourage private investors to lead urban renewal projects. Yet, these investors often bring their own vision for the public spaces they manage or in which they invest (Dirsuweit & Wafer, 2006). As result, the core values and principles of what constitutes to public space being public is influenced by these visions, and the investors objectives for the space.

Similarly, the city has also faced rapid urban transformation since the end of the apartheid regime in 1994. The Local Government continues to initiate policies and frameworks to reverse the spatial segregation in the attempts to support urban renewal. This initiative has open doors to private actors to participate in the management of city's spaces, for the purposes of this study, the privately managed public spaces will be focused on. With reference to the above initiatives, the following strategies were implemented through the City of Johannesburg's Spatial Development Framework –

- The Urban Renewal Initiative such as the Inner-City Regeneration Strategy
- City Improvements Districts (CIDS)

The Urban Renewal Strategy encouraged private investment in public spaces, which later led to the emergence of the CIDS and privately managed precincts to assist formerly declining areas such as Braamfontein, Newtown and Maboneng.

These areas now, are examples of state – led to privately managed urban spaces, including the Metropolitan Sandton City. These key areas are real – life examples for analysing how public space can be transformed, regulated and contested under private management. Considering that much of the academic literature for privately managed public spaces holds a key focus on examples in the Global North (London, New York, Hong Kong etc), which will be later discussed in the findings chapter, Johannesburg offers a significant counterpoint for the Global South study areas (Jennifer Robinson – comparative urbanism, global South perspectives). The two significant counterpoints that Johannesburg illustrates is firstly how neoliberal urbanism is reflecting in a developing, post-colonial context and secondly, a hybrid governance that the city is experiencing between state, private and informal actors such as what is taking place with privately managed public spaces.

The trend of privatisation in the City of Johannesburg

Since the end of the apartheid era, the City of Johannesburg has undergone massive urban transformation in infrastructure, public services, and urban space management. The African National Congress (ANC) led government had inherited a deeply segregated and unequal country and urban planning system. The City of Johannesburg, being the country's economic hub and capital was a key region for neoliberal restructuring to turn the dire circumstances at the time and attract investment and stimulate growth for the province post-apartheid. This particular shift from the welfare – orientated governance of apartheid to the market led development strategies introduced policies from an economic growth viewpoint that impacted planning and thus the introduction of privatisation (Achille Mbembe & Sarah Nuttall – critical takes on Johannesburg's spatial imaginaries).

The examples of these policies include the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy of 1996, Inner City Regeneration and Strategy of the 2000s and various Public – private partnerships (PPP). For the planning and development sector, the trend of privatisation guided by policies for the City of Johannesburg influenced the following sectors:

- Housing and Inner-City Redevelopment strategies initiated by state in which municipal housing was sold or transferred to private developers or social housing institutions for management and development.
- Public Space Management was soon outsourced which gave rise to the City Improvement Districts where businesses paid levies for additional services such as maintenance (cleaning, lighting, security and landscaping) in areas such as Sandton, Rosebank and Braamfontein mentioned above as examples of privately managed public spaces.
- Service Delivery and Infrastructure projects regrading maintenance, upgrading and new basic services were outsourced to private companies due to the pressure and overload faced by municipalities.
- Lastly, the transport infrastructure and management of projects such as the Rea Vaya Bus Rapid Transit system involved Public Private Partnerships as well.

This trend in the City of Johannesburg has sparked great debate and critique between scholars and academics as well as urban activists that argue privatisation reinforces neoliberal urbanism which emanates market logic over social justice (Martin J. Murray – on Johannesburg's "enclave urbanism"). The development and planning in privatisation create privatized enclaves for classes such as middle and upper in urban areas such as Sandton, Braamfontein and Maboneng while marginalising the urban poor. Privatisation in the City of Johannesburg from a planning and development point of view can be interpreted as a strategy for economic growth and urban development. Considering the growing movement towards

positioning Johannesburg itself as a “world – class African City,” and the growing role the private sector is taking in shaping this future of public life, privatisation can play a positive role in contributing to the objectives of traditional public spaces intentions.

The impact of the trend of privatisation on the city directly influenced the abovementioned urban transformations. In the context of the study's broader theme – “Investigating the Growing Trend of Privatisation in Urban Environments” privatisation refers to a few key elements namely, transfer of ownership, management, or control of public assets and services by private actors for example sale of state assets such as land, and private provision / management of public spaces and infrastructure. For the purposes of this study, privatisation focus on management and the outsourcing of public space to privately managed entities.

At most, public spaces can be viewed as areas of tolerance and social interaction, serving as gathering points on certain occasions. However, they are not the foundational environments for the development of hybrid identities or political movements. Similarly, Németh & Stephen, 2011, argues that the assumption of Public Space is as follows: “public space is the place for public activities, private space for activities...” The operational and management failures of public spaces are resulting in the increasing development of private public spaces that is threatening the traditional principles and values of what constitutes to public spaces being public. The major problems for facing mismanaged and poorly maintained public spaces are listed as follows:

- Abandoned and poorly maintained public spaces such as parks, square and community halls are posing a safety threat to the households and neighbourhoods surrounding them.
- When public spaces particularly parks are not maintained they become informal living areas for homeless people, who tend to loiter in and around these areas which can lead to illegal invasion and occupation of the land,
- In addition to the illegal invasion of land, this has an impact on the safety conditions of the area, public spaces such as parks, community halls can draw the wrong kind of interest should they not be monitored leaving civilians vulnerable to criminality.

With an alarming decline in funding provision for the upkeep and management of public space, the rise of privately managed public spaces continues to dominate the social fabrics of the city of Johannesburg. This is further evidenced by the City of Johannesburg Council's Medium-Term Capital Budget for 2024/25 – 2026/27 which was submitted to Council for consideration in terms of section 25 (1 and 2) of the Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003 (MFMA, the Act).

2.1.8. Placemaking as a Tool for change

Placemaking is taking a ‘people first’ approach to urban planning. Rather than just considering the structural layout and buildings needed in a community, placemaking also considers how it feels to live, work, or grow in that area. Furthermore, placemaking, multiple factors are considered to create an area that is meaningful and beneficial to the people who live in its space. Placemaking helps improve social connection and drives a sense of local community which means people are more likely to spend time in, and thus invest, in its infrastructure through use of amenities provided (Silberberg, 2013). With placemaking, multiple factors are considered to create an area that is meaningful and beneficial to the people who live in its space. Placemaking helps improve social connection and drives a sense of local community which means people are more likely to spend time in, and thus invest, in its infrastructure through use of amenities provided.

For the purposes of evaluating the privately managed public spaces in this study, the Project for Public Spaces. (2009). *What is Placemaking?* Retrieved from <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking> provided the following placemaking attributes are considered in literature for achieving the objectives for public spaces purpose:

Placemaking Principles & Design Tools		
Attribute	Definition	Application
1.  Access & Linkages	You can easily judge the accessibility of a place by noting its connections to the surroundings, including the visual links. A great public space is easy to get to, easy to enter, and easy to navigate. It is arranged so that you can see most of what is going on there, both from a distance and up close. The edges of a public space also play an important role in making it accessible. A row of shops along a street, for instance, is more interesting and generally safer to walk along than a blank wall or an empty lot. Accessible spaces can be conveniently reached by foot and, ideally, public transit, and they have high parking turnover	Questions to consider about Access & Linkages: <i>Can you see the space from a distance? Is its interior visible from the outside?</i> <i>Is there a good connection between this place and adjacent buildings? Or, is it surrounded by blank walls, surface parking lots, windowless buildings, or any other elements that discourage people from entering the space?</i> <i>Do occupants of adjacent buildings use the space?</i> <i>Can people easily walk there? Or are they intimidated by heavy traffic or bleak streetscapes?</i> <i>Do sidewalks lead to and from the adjacent areas?</i> <i>Does the space function well for people with disabilities and other special needs?</i> <i>Do the paths throughout the space take people where they actually want to go?</i> <i>Can people use a variety of transportation options—bus, train, car, and bicycle—to reach the place?</i>
2.  Comfort & Image	A space that is comfortable and looks inviting is likely to be successful. A sense of comfort includes perceptions about safety, cleanliness, and the availability of places to sit. A lack of seating is the surprising downfall of many otherwise good places. People are drawn to places that give them a choice of places to sit, so they can be either in or out of the sun at various times of day or year.	Questions to consider about Comfort & Image: <i>Does the place make a good first impression?</i> <i>Are there as many women as men?</i> <i>Are there enough places to sit? Are seats conveniently located? Do people have a choice of places to sit, either in the sun or shade?</i> <i>Are spaces clean and free of litter? Who is responsible for maintenance?</i> <i>Does the area feel safe? Are there security personnel present? If so, what do these people do? When are they on duty?</i> <i>Are people taking pictures? Are there many photo opportunities available?</i> <i>Do vehicles dominate pedestrian use of the space, or prevent them from easily getting to the space?</i>
Placemaking Principles & Design Tools		
Attribute	Definition	Application
3.  Uses & Activities	A range of activities are the fundamental building blocks of a great place. Having something to do gives people a reason to come (and return) to a place. When there is nothing interesting to do, a space will sit empty. That's the best measure that something is wrong. A carefully chosen range of activities will help a place attract a variety of people at different times of the day. A playground will draw young kids during the day, while basketball courts draw older kids after school, and concerts bring in everyone during the evening.	Questions to consider about Uses & Activities: <i>Are people using the space, or is it empty?</i> <i>Is it used by people of different ages?</i> <i>How many different types of activities are occurring at one time—people walking, eating, playing baseball, chess, relaxing, reading?</i> <i>Which parts of the space are used and which are not?</i> <i>Is there a management presence, or can you identify anyone in charge of the space?</i>
4.  Sociability	This is the most important quality for a place to achieve—and the most difficult. When a place becomes a favourite spot for people to meet friends, greet their neighbours, and feel comfortable interacting with strangers, then you are well on your way to having a great place.	Questions to consider about Sociability: <i>Is this a place where you would choose to meet your friends? Are others meeting friends here?</i> <i>Are people in groups? Are they talking with one another? Do they talk to people in other groups?</i> <i>Do people seem to know each other by face or by name?</i> <i>Do people bring their friends and relatives to see the place? Do they point to its features with pride?</i> <i>Are people smiling? Do people make regular eye contact with each other?</i> <i>Do many people use the place frequently?</i> <i>Does the mix of ages and ethnic groups generally reflect the community at large?</i> <i>Do people tend to pick up litter when they see it?</i>

Figure 14: Project for Public Spaces. (2009). *What is Placemaking?* Retrieved from <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking>



Figure 15: Project for Public Spaces. (2009). What is Placemaking? Retrieved from <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking>

In conclusion, the use of placemaking tools in the planning and design of privately managed public spaces (PMPS) plays a crucial role in ensuring that these areas are thoughtfully tailored to the specific needs, aspirations, and behaviours of their intended users or market segments. By prioritizing a user-centred approach, this development strategy shifts the focus from purely aesthetic or economic objectives toward creating spaces that foster authentic community engagement and everyday use. Designing for actual use—rather than abstract ideals—allows planners and developers to ensure that public spaces across neighbourhoods, towns, and cities remain responsive, inclusive, and adaptable to the evolving needs of the communities they serve.

Furthermore, this approach supports the long-term vitality and relevance of public spaces. When people feel a sense of ownership, comfort, and belonging in a space designed around their lived experiences, they are more likely to use, care for, and sustain it over time. This not only enhances the social and cultural fabric of communities but also mitigates the negative impacts associated with neglected or poorly maintained areas, such as social alienation, safety concerns, and visual decay. Ultimately, placemaking within privately managed public spaces represents a proactive, human-centred methodology—one that balances commercial viability with social value, ensuring that public spaces continue to enrich urban life and strengthen community identity well into the future.

THREE

Spatial Analysis

Chapter 3 – Unfolding the Evidence: Interpreting the Spatial Data

This chapter will the findings and outcomes from the fieldwork undertaken to address the research question, “what attracts users to privately owned public spaces in Johannesburg?” This builds on the theoretical frameworks that was established in chapter 2s Literature Review. The fieldwork forms the empirical core of the study, which translates the conceptual ideas about the production of space, publicness and placemaking into observations and lived experiences in gathered in the field. The study, is guided by the “Production of Space, Lefebvre (1991), where this was applied in the fieldwork to explore how spatial design, management practices and user perceptions converge to shape the character and social life of these privately managed public spaces in popular neighborhoods in Johannesburg.

Spatial analysis provides a critical methodological framework for examining the geographic dimensions of urban phenomena. In the context of this study—An Investigation into Privately Managed Public Spaces (PMPS) in Popular Urban Neighbourhoods in the City of Johannesburg—spatial analysis enables a deeper understanding of how these spaces are distributed, how they relate to their surrounding urban environments, and what spatial patterns or inequalities they may reflect or reinforce.

Johannesburg, as South Africa's largest metropolitan area, presents a complex urban landscape shaped by historical segregation, economic restructuring, and contemporary urban regeneration. Within this context, the emergence of Privately Managed Public Spaces—such as privately owned plazas, semi-public courtyards, and commercialized pedestrian zones—reflects broader trends in urban governance and spatial transformation. These spaces blur the boundaries between public and private domains, raising important questions about accessibility, inclusivity, and spatial justice.

Spatial analysis offers the tools to explore these dynamics systematically. By employing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and related spatial techniques, this study examines where PMPS are located within the city, how they cluster in certain neighbourhoods, and their spatial relationship to key urban features such as commercial centres, transport routes, and socio-economic indicators. Through mapping, spatial statistics, and proximity analysis, spatial analysis helps to visualize and quantify the extent to which PMPS contribute to patterns of urban inequality or exclusion.

Furthermore, spatial analysis in this research serves both descriptive and explanatory purposes. Descriptively, it reveals spatial patterns—such as concentrations of PMPS in areas undergoing urban renewal or gentrification. Analytically, it enables the investigation of spatial correlations between PMPS and factors such as land value, income distribution, or accessibility. This spatial perspective is essential for understanding not only where PMPS are situated, but also why they emerge in particular areas and how their spatial logic interacts with broader urban processes in Johannesburg.

Chapter 3 will unpack the spatial analysis conducted during the fieldwork on site and illustrate how the placemaking attributes are applied in the case study sites, how the data collection methods were applied and the practical considerations the field work reflected. This includes the contextual assessment of the two selected case studies; Nelson Mandela Square and Monte Casino, the semi structured interviews with the built environment professionals captures the planning and design from a practice point of view. These methods provide an understanding into what attracts people to privately managed public spaces, and how privately managed spaces influence patterns of attraction in public spaces through placemaking principles.

This section of the Findings Chapter will assess the placemaking attribute of “Comfort & Image,” that utilizes the following guiding questions from the Project for Public Spaces. (2009). What is Placemaking? Retrieved from <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking> mentioned in Chapter 2 to evaluate the case study.

**Placemaking Attributes Applied in
the Field – Nelson Mandela Square,
Sandton City**

3.1. Placemaking Attributes Applied in the Field – Nelson Mandela Square, Sandton

With reference to the fieldwork journal the following findings are presented using the placemaking attributes to assess the success of the privately managed public space of Nelson Mandela Square.

3.1.1. Placemaking Attributes – Access & Linkages, Nelson Mandela Square

Placemaking Attributes Applied – Case Study 1: Nelson Mandela Square



Access & Linkages

1. Connection to Adjacent Buildings

Yes, there is a strong connection between Nelson Mandela Square and the adjacent buildings. The square is seamlessly integrated with Sandton City Mall, one of the largest shopping centers in Africa. Multiple luxury hotels, office towers, and restaurants directly overlook or open onto the square, encouraging a natural flow of people between these buildings and the public space. There are no blank walls or desolate zones immediately surrounding it.

2. Use by Occupants of Adjacent Buildings

The space is heavily used by people who work, shop, dine, or stay in nearby establishments. It functions as a popular meeting place, particularly for tourists, businesspeople, and local residents. Outdoor cafes and restaurants encourage lingering, making it a lively and social environment throughout the day and evening.

3. Walkability and Streetscape

Pedestrian access is generally good, especially from within the surrounding mall and buildings. However, the area outside the square itself, particularly along some major streets like Rivonia Road, can be dominated by heavy traffic, which may feel intimidating or unsafe for pedestrians, especially when crossing roads. That said, Sandton's recent infrastructure upgrades, including wider sidewalks and improved crossings, have helped mitigate some of this. Walkability from within the broader Sandton precinct is improving but still varies depending on the route.

4. Sidewalk Connectivity

There are clearly defined sidewalks that lead into and out of the square from the mall, nearby hotels, and the Sandton Gautrain Station, connecting it to Johannesburg's public transport system. Internal pedestrian routes through the square are well-maintained and visually inviting.

Evaluation:

Is there a good connection between this place and adjacent buildings? Or, is it surrounded by blank walls, surface parking lots, windowless buildings, or any other elements that discourage people from entering the space?

Do occupants of adjacent buildings use the space? Can people easily walk there? Or are they intimidated by heavy traffic or bleak streetscapes?

Do sidewalks lead to and from the adjacent areas?

Does the space function well for people with disabilities and other special needs?

Do the paths throughout the space take people where they actually want to go?

Can people use a variety of transportation options—bus, train, car, and bicycle—to reach the place?



Figure 16: placemaking attribute of “Access & Linkages,” (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal)



Access & Linkages

5. Accessibility for People with Disabilities

Nelson Mandela Square has been designed with universal accessibility in mind. The square includes ramped entries, smooth pavements, elevators, and accessible restrooms within the mall. Most dining and retail areas are wheelchair-friendly. However, navigating the surrounding urban terrain (e.g., uneven curbs or traffic-heavy zones) can still pose challenges for some.

6. Path Layout and Functionality

The paths within the square are logically laid out, leading people directly to key destinations such as restaurants, retail entrances, and the statue. Seating, shade, and open space are well-distributed, allowing for both movement and rest. It supports natural pedestrian flow and spontaneous gatherings.

7. Transportation Options

The square is easily accessible via multiple transportation modes:

- Train: It's within walking distance of the Sandton Gautrain Station, offering fast transit to central Johannesburg and OR Tambo International Airport.
- Bus & Minibus Taxis: Various public and private transport options serve the area.
- Car: Ample parking is available in the connected Sandton City Mall.
- Bicycles: There is some limited infrastructure for cycling, though it's not yet extensive or fully safe, and still developing.

Nelson Mandela Square is a highly functional, well-connected urban space that integrates successfully with its surrounding buildings and transportation systems. While some areas around the square may present challenges for pedestrians due to traffic, the space itself is accessible, attractive, and widely used by locals and visitors alike. Its layout, accessibility, and centrality make it a model public space in an otherwise car-dominated cityscape.

Evaluation:

Is there a good connection between this place and adjacent buildings? Or, is it surrounded by blank walls, surface parking lots, windowless buildings, or any other elements that discourage people from entering the space?

Do occupants of adjacent buildings use the space? Can people easily walk there? Or are they intimidated by heavy traffic or bleak streetscapes?

Do sidewalks lead to and from the adjacent areas?

Does the space function well for people with disabilities and other special needs?

Do the paths throughout the space take people where they actually want to go?

Can people use a variety of transportation options—bus, train, car, and bicycle—to reach the place?

Figure 17: placemaking attribute of “Access & Linkages,” (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal)

3.1.2. Placemaking Attributes – Comfort & Image, Nelson Mandela Square

This section of the Findings Chapter will assess the placemaking attribute of “Comfort & Image,” that utilizes the following guiding questions from the Project for Public Spaces. (2009). What is Placemaking? Retrieved from <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking> mentioned in Chapter 2 to evaluate the case study:

■ Placemaking Attributes Applied – Case Study 1: Nelson Mandela Square



Comfort & Image

1. First Impressions

The square leaves a positive and memorable first impression. As you enter the open plaza from Sandton City Mall or nearby streets, you're immediately struck by the large bronze statue of Nelson Mandela, set against the backdrop of elegant buildings and vibrant cafes. The square feels inviting, modern, and cosmopolitan, often bustling with activity yet organized and orderly.

2. Gender Balance

Yes, there appears to be a fair balance between women and men using the space. Visitors include a wide demographic: tourists, local families, businesspeople, and shoppers. Women feel comfortable and visible in the space, often sitting in the cafes, taking photos, or socializing, which speaks to a perception of safety and inclusivity.

3. Seating Availability and Comfort

There are adequate places to sit, both in the open and shaded areas:

- Seating is offered in the form of benches, planters with ledges, and seating at restaurant patios.
 - People have the choice between sun and shade, especially with umbrellas provided by cafes and some natural shade from trees or nearby buildings.
 - Seating is mostly well-positioned, allowing views of the statue and the overall square.
- However, most free seating is limited, as much of it is connected to restaurants or cafes. More public, informal seating could enhance inclusivity.

4. Cleanliness and Maintenance

The square is generally very clean and well-maintained. Trash bins are placed at appropriate intervals, and litter is minimal.

- Maintenance is likely managed by the Sandton City property management or a private urban management company, ensuring daily cleaning, landscaping, and infrastructure upkeep.
- High standards of cleanliness contribute to the positive experience and visual appeal.



Does the place make a good first impression?
Are there as many women as men?
Are there enough places to sit? Are seats conveniently located? Do people have a choice of places to sit, either in the sun or shade?
Are spaces clean and free of litter? Who is responsible for maintenance?
Does the area feel safe? Are there security personnel present? If so, what do these people do? When are they on duty?
Are people taking pictures? Are there many photo opportunities available?
Do vehicles dominate pedestrian use of the space, or prevent them from easily getting to the space?

Figure 18; placemaking attribute of “Comfort & Image,” (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal)

■ Placemaking Attributes Applied – Case Study 1: Nelson Mandela Square



Comfort & Image

5. Safety and Security

The area feels safe, even during the evening hours, due to:

- Visible private security personnel, stationed at entrances and patrolling the square.
- Security staff are typically on duty throughout the day and into the night, providing both surveillance and assistance.
- Their presence is non-intrusive but reassuring, and they often assist with directions or support for events.

Security is a key feature given the square's location in a high-profile commercial district.

6. Photo Opportunities

Yes, there are numerous photo opportunities, with the Nelson Mandela statue being the most popular. It's common to see:

- Tourists posing with the statue.
 - People capturing shots of the architecture, fountains, or restaurant ambience.
- The space is aesthetically designed, encouraging photography, especially for social media sharing and tourism promotion.

7. Impact of Vehicles on Pedestrian Access

While the square itself is fully pedestrianized, some challenges exist at the perimeter:

- Busy surrounding roads (like Rivonia and West Street) can be barriers to pedestrian access if crossing isn't planned well.
- However, the nearby Gautrain station, pedestrian bridges, and mall access points make it manageable to reach the square without needing to interact heavily with vehicle traffic.
- Drop-off zones and secure parking are also nearby for those arriving by car, creating a balanced integration of vehicle and pedestrian needs.

Nelson Mandela Square is a visually impressive, comfortable, and safe urban space that balances tourism, commerce, and public life. While external traffic can affect access slightly, the interior environment is clean, inclusive, and photo-friendly, with a strong emphasis on security and aesthetics. Its popularity among both locals and international visitors reinforces its success as a welcoming and multifunctional public plaza.



Does the place make a good first impression?
Are there as many women as men?
Are there enough places to sit? Are seats conveniently located? Do people have a choice of places to sit, either in the sun or shade?
Are spaces clean and free of litter? Who is responsible for maintenance?
Does the area feel safe? Are there security personnel present? If so, what do these people do? When are they on duty?
Are people taking pictures? Are there many photo opportunities available?
Do vehicles dominate pedestrian use of the space, or prevent them from easily getting to the space?

Figure 19: placemaking attribute of “Comfort & Image,” (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal)

3.1.3. Placemaking Attributes – Users & Activities, Nelson Mandela Square

This section of the Findings Chapter will assess the placemaking attribute of “Uses & Activities that utilizes the following guiding questions from the Project for Public Spaces. (2009). What is Placemaking? Retrieved from <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking> mentioned in Chapter 2 to evaluate the case study:

■ Placemaking Attributes Applied – Case Study 1: Nelson Mandela Square



Uses & Activities

Nelson Mandela Square is one of Johannesburg's most active public spaces, especially due to its central location in Sandton, its connection to Sandton City Mall, and its attraction as a tourist destination. Here's a reflection based on its usage patterns, diversity of users, and visible management.

1. Are People Using the Space, or Is It Empty?

Yes, people are actively using the space. It is rarely empty, particularly during business hours and weekends. Peak times include:

- Lunch hours, when professionals step out from nearby offices.
- Afternoons and evenings, when tourists, shoppers, and families gather.
- Weekends and holidays, when it becomes a hub for visitors, events, and leisure.

Even in quieter times, a steady trickle of people can be observed walking through, taking photos, or using nearby cafes.

2. Is It Used by People of Different Ages?

Absolutely. The space attracts a wide age range, including:

- Young professionals working nearby.
- Families with children, often visiting from the mall or nearby hotels.
- Tourists of all ages, particularly older visitors interested in the history and symbolism of the Nelson Mandela statue.
- Teens and youth, using the space for socializing or as a transit point.

While the square is not designed with specific children's play areas, families still make use of it informally.

3. Range of Activities

There is a diverse mix of activities happening at once, which adds to the vibrancy of the space:

- Walking and passing through the square from the mall or hotel entrances.
- Dining at the outdoor restaurants and cafes lining the square.
- Taking photos—especially with the Nelson Mandela statue.
- Sitting and relaxing, either on benches or around fountains and planter ledges.
- Business meetings or casual conversations—a common sight at café tables.

While the square is not intended for sports like baseball or large-scale physical activities, it does support low-impact, social and leisure uses.



Are people using the space, or is it empty?
Is it used by people of different ages?
How many different types of activities are occurring at one time—people walking, eating, playing baseball, chess, relaxing, reading?
Which parts of the space are used and which are not?
Is there a management presence, or can you identify anyone in charge of the space?

Figure 20: placemaking attribute of “Uses & Activities,” (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal)

■ Placemaking Attributes Applied – Case Study 1: Nelson Mandela Square



Uses & Activities

4. Which Parts of the Space Are Used, and Which Are Not?

- The central plaza, where the Nelson Mandela statue is located, is the most heavily used.
- The restaurant edges are consistently active, with seating areas drawing people for meals, meetings, or relaxation.
- Planters and shaded corners also see regular use by people seeking quieter spots.
- Perimeter zones that are further from restaurants or not facing the statue may be less used, especially if they lack seating or shade.

There are few truly “unused” parts, but activity is concentrated around visual and functional focal points.

5. Is There a Management Presence?

Yes, there is a visible and effective management presence:

- Security personnel are clearly identifiable and regularly patrol the space.
- Cleaning staff can be seen maintaining the cleanliness of the square throughout the day.
- Mall or property staff, such as concierge or event coordinators, may be present during special events or promotions.

While there's no single person openly “in charge” of the square at all times, the presence of uniformed personnel and maintenance teams indicates organized, consistent management by the property owners—likely Liberty Two Degrees or Sandton City Mall management.

Nelson Mandela Square is a well-used, lively urban plaza that caters to a broad demographic and supports a variety of social and leisure activities. Its central features and commercial edges keep it active throughout the day. Good management, security, and cleanliness contribute to the space's ongoing appeal, ensuring that it remains one of Johannesburg's most iconic and functional public spaces.



Are people using the space, or is it empty?
Is it used by people of different ages?
How many different types of activities are occurring at one time—people walking, eating, playing baseball, chess, relaxing, reading?
Which parts of the space are used and which are not?
Is there a management presence, or can you identify anyone in charge of the space?

Figure 21: placemaking attribute of “Uses & Activities” (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal)

3.1.4. Placemaking Attributes – Sociability, Nelson Mandela Square

This section of the Findings Chapter will assess the placemaking attribute of “Uses & Activities that utilizes the following guiding questions from the Project for Public Spaces. (2009). What is Placemaking? Retrieved from <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking> mentioned in Chapter 2 to evaluate the case study:

■ Placemaking Attributes Applied – Case Study 1: Nelson Mandela Square



Sociability

Nelson Mandela Square is not just a commercial or tourist destination—it also serves as a social and cultural gathering space. Its design and atmosphere make it a suitable location for informal meetings, family outings, and social engagement. Here's a reflection on how the space functions socially:

1. Is This a Place Where You Would Choose to Meet Friends?

Yes, this is a place many would choose to meet friends. It offers:

- Central location in Sandton, easily accessible by public transport and car.
 - Plenty of cafes and restaurants for sitting down and socializing.
 - A pleasant and visually appealing environment with the Nelson Mandela statue as a conversation piece or photo backdrop.
- Many visitors, especially tourists and locals working nearby, arrange to meet here due to its convenience and lively atmosphere.

2. Are Others Meeting Friends Here?

Yes, it is common to see people meeting up in small groups:

- Friends chatting at outdoor tables.
- Business colleagues in informal meetings.
- Families or groups gathering before or after shopping.

It is a natural social hub, especially on weekends or around meal times.

3. Are People in Groups? Are They Talking to One Another?

Yes, most people are in pairs or small groups, and active conversation is common. You'll often see:

- Laughter and animated discussions at tables.
- Families and friends pointing at the statue or sharing photos.
- Occasional interaction between different groups, especially if they're tourists asking for photos or directions.

4. Do People Seem to Know Each Other by Face or Name?

While it's a public and often transient space (especially with tourists), there's a sense that regulars—like nearby workers or mall staff—recognize each other. In the café areas or among security staff and maintenance crews, face recognition is evident through greetings and casual conversation.



Is this a place where you would choose to meet your friends?
Are others meeting friends here?
Are people in groups? Are they talking with one another? Do they talk to people in other groups?
Do people seem to know each other by face or by name?
Do people bring their friends and relatives to see the place?
Do they point to its features with pride?
Are people smiling? Do people make regular eye contact with each other?
Do many people use the place frequently?
Does the mix of ages and ethnic groups generally reflect the community at large?
Do people tend to pick up litter when they see it?

Figure 22: placemaking attribute of “Sociability” (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal)

■ Placemaking Attributes Applied – Case Study 1: Nelson Mandela Square



Sociability

5. Do People Bring Friends and Relatives to See the Place? Do They Point to Features with Pride?

Yes, this is a destination people are proud to show others:

- Tourists bring family and friends for the photo opportunity with the statue.
- Locals often use it as a point of pride, especially due to the symbolic value of Nelson Mandela.
- Visitors regularly take pictures, point out architectural details, or share a bit of history with their guests.

It's a space with strong cultural and emotional meaning, particularly for South Africans.

6. Are People Smiling? Do They Make Eye Contact?

Yes, people often appear relaxed, smiling, and engaged:

- The open design and natural sunlight create a pleasant ambiance.
- Interactions between people are generally friendly, and staff (e.g., in cafes or security) often make eye contact and greet passersby.
- Tourists and families are usually in high spirits, contributing to the positive mood.

7. Do Many People Use the Place Frequently?

Yes, there's a consistent base of frequent users, including:

- Office workers in Sandton.
- Shoppers and mallgoers.
- Hotel guests who return to the square during their stay.

You can often recognize repeat patterns of use—certain tables always full, familiar faces among mall employees or regular diners.

8. Does the Mix of Ages and Ethnic Groups Reflect the Community at Large?

Generally, yes. Nelson Mandela Square attracts a diverse crowd:

- South Africans of various ethnic backgrounds.
- International tourists.
- People of all ages—from toddlers to seniors.

While the surrounding area is a wealthier commercial district, the diversity seen in the square is more inclusive than one might expect from its luxury surroundings. It represents the broader Johannesburg community reasonably well, especially on weekends or public holidays.



Is this a place where you would choose to meet your friends?
Are others meeting friends here?
Are people in groups? Are they talking with one another? Do they talk to people in other groups?
Do people seem to know each other by face or by name?
Do people bring their friends and relatives to see the place?
Do they point to its features with pride?
Are people smiling? Do people make regular eye contact with each other?
Do many people use the place frequently?
Does the mix of ages and ethnic groups generally reflect the community at large?
Do people tend to pick up litter when they see it?

Figure 23: placemaking attribute of “Sociability” (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal)

**Placemaking Attributes Applied in
the Field – Monte Casino, Fourways**

3.2. Placemaking Attributes Applied in the Field – Monte Casino, Fourways

3.2.1. Placemaking Attributes – Access & Linkages, Monte Casino

This section of the Findings Chapter will assess the placemaking attribute of “Access & Linkages,” that utilizes the following guiding questions from the Project for Public Spaces. (2009). What is Placemaking? Retrieved from <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking> mentioned in Chapter 2 to evaluate the case study

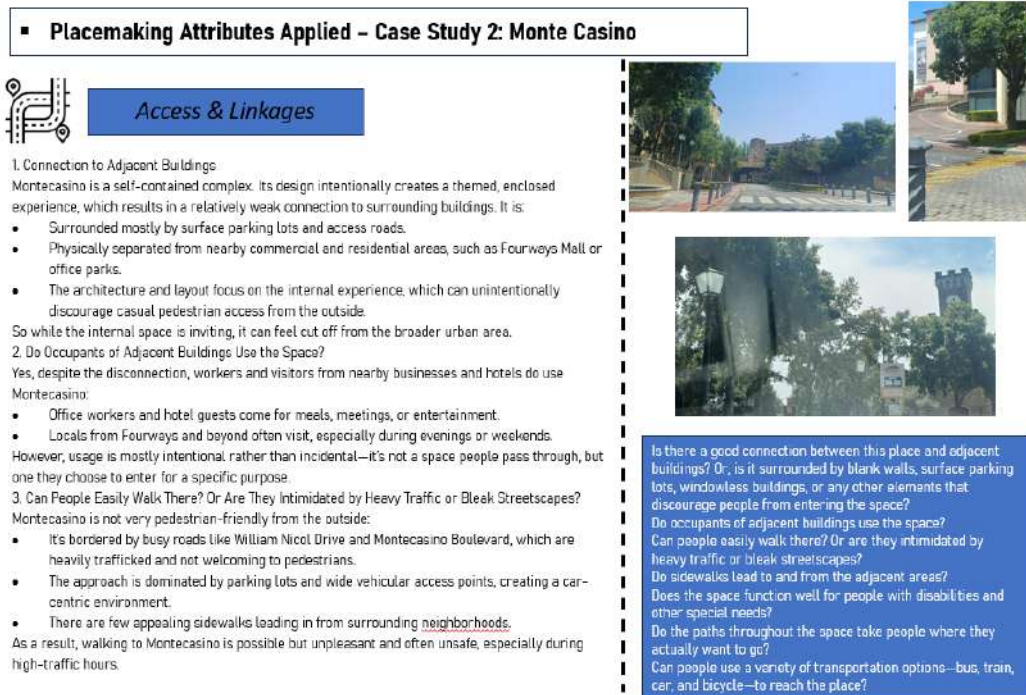
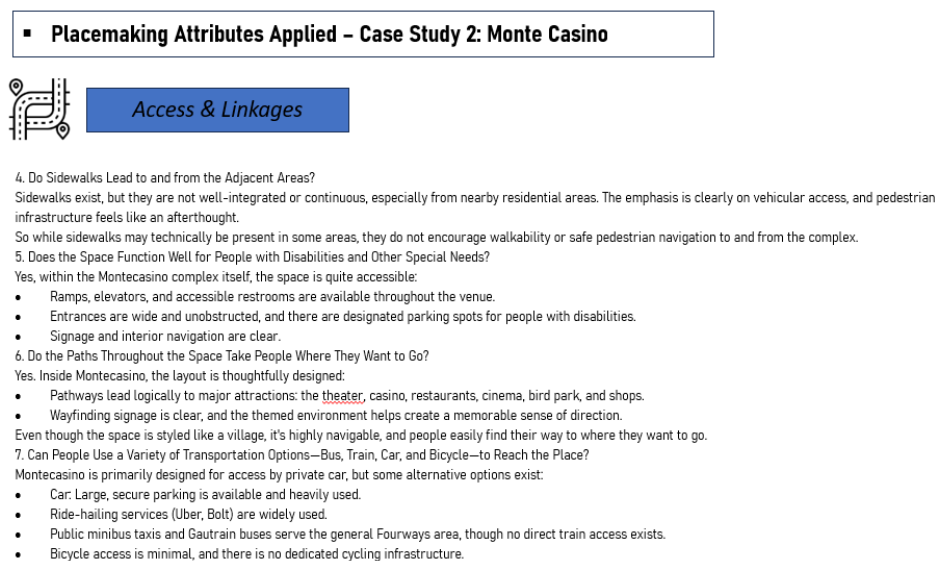


Figure 24: placemaking attribute of “Access & Linkages” (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal)



Montecasino offers a well-designed, accessible, and enjoyable internal space, but it suffers from being inward-facing and disconnected from its surroundings. It excels in functionality for car users and people with disabilities once inside, but access via walking, cycling, or public transport is limited and often uninviting. Improving external pedestrian connections and integrating the space more closely with its urban context would enhance its inclusivity and sustainability.

Figure 25: placemaking attribute of “Access & Linkages” (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal)

This section of the Findings Chapter will assess the placemaking attribute of “Comfort & Image,” that utilizes the following guiding questions from the Project for Public Spaces. (2009). What is Placemaking? Retrieved from <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking> mentioned in Chapter 2 to evaluate the case study

■ Placemaking Attributes Applied – Case Study 2: Monte Casino



Comfort & Image

1. Does the Place Make a Good First Impression?

Yes, Montecasino makes a strong first impression—but this depends on how you arrive:

- If you arrive by car, you're greeted by a grand entrance, well-maintained landscaping, and clear signage. The exterior sets the stage for what's inside.
- Once inside, the artificial sky, cobblestone streets, and ambient lighting immediately create a memorable, immersive experience. It feels like stepping into another world.
- However, approaching the complex on foot from outside does not offer the same charm, as the surroundings are dominated by parking lots and traffic-heavy roads.

2. Are There as Many Women as Men?

Yes, the space appears to have a balanced mix of genders:

- Women and men are equally visible across restaurants, theaters, casinos, and shopping areas.
- Women are present both in groups and individually, which suggests that the space feels safe and welcoming.

The balanced gender presence reflects the fact that Montecasino appeals to a wide demographic, including families, couples, and tourists.

3. Are There Enough Places to Sit? Are Seats Conveniently Located?

Yes, seating is adequate and well-distributed, though most of it is tied to commercial venues:

- Restaurants and cafés offer ample seating—both indoors and outdoors.
- Within public areas, there are benches and sitting areas (especially in the central courtyard and corridors).
- Choice between sun and shade is available, particularly in the Tuscan-style outdoor courtyards.

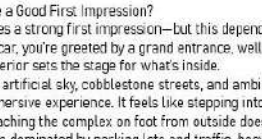
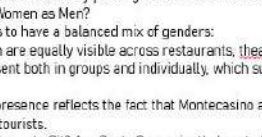
That said, free public seating is more limited compared to seating within paid venues.

4. Are Spaces Clean and Free of Litter? Who is Responsible for Maintenance?

Montecasino is consistently clean, well-maintained, and visually polished:

- Floors, restrooms, and public areas are cleaned regularly and thoroughly.
- Maintenance staff are visibly present throughout the day.
- The entire property is managed by Montecasino's private management team, likely under Tsogo Sun, the owning company.

The standard of cleanliness contributes to the space feeling upscale, safe, and professional

Does the place make a good first impression?

Are there as many women as men?

Are there enough places to sit? Are seats conveniently located?

Do people have a choice of places to sit, either in the sun or shade?

Are spaces clean and free of litter? Who is responsible for maintenance?

Does the area feel safe? Are there security personnel present? If so, what do these people do? When are they on duty?

Are people taking pictures? Are there many photo opportunities available?

Do vehicles dominate pedestrian use of the space, or prevent them from easily getting to the space?

Placemaking Attributes Applied – Case Study 2: Monte Casino

Comfort & Image

5. Does the Area Feel Safe? Are There Security Personnel Present?
 Yes, safety is a high priority at Montecasino.

- Security personnel are visible at entrances, inside the complex, and in parking areas.
- They monitor the space, provide assistance, and help manage crowds during events.
- Security is present 24/7, given the late-night hours of the casino and entertainment venues.
- The entire complex is under surveillance with controlled access, giving it a secure, monitored feel.

This level of security contributes to families and individuals feeling safe, even late at night.
 6. Are People Taking Pictures? Are There Many Photo Opportunities?
 Yes, Montecasino is very photogenic and designed for visual appeal.

- Visitors often take pictures under the painted sky, near fountains, in courtyards, or beside statues.
- The architecture and interior theming make it feel like a European movie set—ideal for social media sharing and tourist photos.
- Events and performances also offer unique moments worth capturing.

The complex is clearly aware of its role as a visual experience, and people take full advantage of it.
 7. Do Vehicles Dominate Pedestrian Use of the Space, or Prevent Easy Access?
 Inside Montecasino, vehicles do not interfere—it is entirely pedestrianized once you're inside.

However, getting there is car-centric:

- The complex is surrounded by major roads and parking areas, making it difficult for pedestrians to approach comfortably.
- There is minimal public transportation infrastructure nearby, and bicycle access is almost nonexistent.
- While vehicle traffic dominates the outside, the interior is protected, walkable, and safe. Montecasino offers a clean, safe, and visually engaging environment that leaves a strong first impression—especially once inside. It succeeds in being a social, inclusive space with balanced gender use, adequate seating, and high-quality maintenance. While vehicular access dominates the outer experience, the internal atmosphere is pedestrian-friendly and welcoming, making it a popular choice for group outings, dates, or family visits. The emphasis on safety, aesthetic charm, and functionality keeps Montecasino a favored destination for a wide range of visitors.



Does the place make a good first impression?
 Are there as many women as men?
 Are there enough places to sit? Are seats conveniently located?
 Do people have a choice of places to sit, either in the sun or shade?
 Are spaces clean and free of litter? Who is responsible for maintenance?
 Does the area feel safe? Are there security personnel present? If so, what do these people do? When are they on duty?
 Are people taking pictures? Are there many photo opportunities available?
 Do vehicles dominate pedestrian use of the space, or prevent them from easily getting to the space?





3.2.3. Placemaking Attributes – “Users & Activities,” Monte Casino

This section of the Findings Chapter will assess the placemaking attribute of “Uses & Activities,” that utilizes the following guiding questions from the Project for Public Spaces. (2009). What is Placemaking? Retrieved from <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking> mentioned in Chapter 2 to evaluate the case study

Placemaking Attributes Applied – Case Study 2: Monte Casino



Uses & Activities

1. Are People Using the Space, or Is It Empty?

Yes, Montecasino is actively used, and it rarely feels empty.

- During weekdays, especially evenings, people visit for dinner, shows, or the casino.
- On weekends and holidays, it is very busy, with families, tourists, and locals filling the indoor and outdoor areas.
- Even in off-peak hours, some level of activity is always present—particularly in the restaurants and casino.

Its range of attractions ensures a steady flow of people throughout the day and night.

2. Is It Used by People of Different Ages?

Yes, Montecasino is frequented by a diverse age range:

- Children and families visit the bird gardens, movies, and child-friendly restaurants.
- Young adults and couples often come for dates, shows, and nightlife.
- Older adults are commonly seen in the casino, theatres, and fine-dining spots.

The space is clearly designed to be multi-generational, and that is reflected in its use.

3. How Many Different Types of Activities Are Occurring at One Time?

Montecasino supports a wide variety of simultaneous activities, though they are mostly centered around entertainment and leisure rather than passive recreation. Activities include:

- Walking and exploring the themed interiors.
- Dining at a wide range of restaurants and cafés.
- Gambling in the casino.
- Watching movies or live shows at the theater or cinema.
- Visiting the Montecasino Bird Gardens (outdoors).
- Shopping at small boutiques or souvenir stores.
- Photo-taking, particularly in the scenic indoor courtyards.
- Relaxing and socializing at lounges, fountains, or quiet corners.

You won't find people playing chess or sports like baseball—it's a commercial entertainment zone, not a public park. But within its scope, the variety of experiences is rich and well-curated.



Are people using the space, or is it empty?
Is it used by people of different ages?
How many different types of activities are occurring at one time—people walking, eating, playing baseball, chess, relaxing, reading?
Which parts of the space are used and which are not?
Is there a management presence, or can you identify anyone in charge of the space?

Figure 28: placemaking attribute of “Users & Activities” (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal)

Placemaking Attributes Applied – Case Study 2: Monte Casino



Uses & Activities

4. Which Parts of the Space Are Used and Which Are Not?

- The most-used areas include:
 - The central indoor piazza with restaurants and ambient lighting.
 - The casino floor, which draws steady crowds.
 - Cinemas and theaters, especially in the evenings.
 - The bird gardens, during daylight hours.
- Less-used areas:
 - Some corridors or side alleys designed for aesthetics more than function may see less foot traffic.
 - Outer perimeters or service zones are typically quiet or inaccessible to the public.

Overall, nearly every space that is open to the public sees regular use, with activity concentrated in entertainment and dining areas.

5. Is There a Management Presence, or Can You Identify Anyone in Charge of the Space?

Yes, Montecasino is a privately managed property, and the presence of staff and management is highly visible:

- Security staff patrol all areas, providing directions and assistance, while also maintaining order.
- Cleaning staff are regularly seen maintaining the high cleanliness standards.
- Customer service desks and information points are available to help guests.
- For special events or performances, event staff or ushers are also present.

While you might not see a single person “in charge,” the space is clearly well-managed and professionally operated, likely under Tsogo Sun, the property owner and operator. Montecasino is a highly active and well-used space, catering to a diverse audience across age groups with a broad range of leisure activities. Its appeal lies in its immersive environment and rich programming. Though it's not a public space in the traditional sense, it functions as a vibrant social and entertainment hub. The presence of management and staff ensures that the space remains safe, clean, and efficiently run, contributing to its ongoing popularity.



Are people using the space, or is it empty?
Is it used by people of different ages?
How many different types of activities are occurring at one time—people walking, eating, playing baseball, chess, relaxing, reading?
Which parts of the space are used and which are not?
Is there a management presence, or can you identify anyone in charge of the space?

Figure 29: placemaking attribute of “Users & Activities” (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal)

3.2.4. Placemaking Attributes – “Sociability,” Monte Casino

This section of the Findings Chapter will assess the placemaking attribute of “Sociability,” that utilizes the following guiding questions from the Project for Public Spaces. (2009). What is Placemaking? Retrieved from <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking> mentioned in Chapter 2 to evaluate the case study



Sociability

1. Is This a Place Where You Would Choose to Meet Your Friends? Are Others Meeting Friends Here?
Yes, Montecasino is definitely the kind of place where people meet friends. With its mix of restaurants, cafes, cinemas, and the casino, it's a convenient and enjoyable spot for:

- Catch-ups over meals or drinks
- Group outings to movies or shows
- Celebrations like birthdays or date nights

You'll see many groups of friends and families arriving together or meeting inside, which shows that it is a trusted social venue.

2. Are People in Groups? Are They Talking with One Another?
Yes, the majority of visitors are seen in small to medium-sized groups:

- People are actively talking, laughing, and engaging—especially in seating areas, restaurants, or while strolling.
- While most groups tend to stick to themselves, there's a general atmosphere of friendly coexistence, especially in shared spaces like queues, bars, or live performances.
- You're less likely to see strangers striking up conversations with other groups unless prompted by a shared experience (e.g., asking to take a photo).

3. Do People Seem to Know Each Other by Face or Name?
Among staff, hotel guests, or regular casino visitors, there's evidence of familiarity and recognition—smiles, greetings, and short conversations.

- Among general visitors, people mostly interact within their own circles, so it's not a deeply communal space in the traditional sense, but recognition between returning guests and staff is noticeable.

4. Do People Bring Friends and Relatives to See the Place? Do They Point to Its Features with Pride?
Yes, Montecasino is a place where locals bring out-of-town guests or family members, often with a sense of pride or enjoyment:

- The indoor “sky,” Italian-style architecture, bird gardens, and entertainment options are unique selling points.
- Visitors are often seen taking photos, giving informal “tours,” or pointing out specific features, especially in the more theatrical indoor sections or near the fountains.



Is this a place where you would choose to meet your friends?
Are others meeting friends here?
Are people in groups? Are they talking with one another? Do they talk to people in other groups?
Do people seem to know each other by face or by name?
Do people bring their friends and relatives to see the place?
Do they point to its features with pride?
Are people smiling? Do people make regular eye contact with each other?
Do many people use the place frequently?
Does the mix of ages and ethnic groups generally reflect the community at large?
Do people tend to pick up litter when they see it?

Figure 30: placemaking attribute of “Sociability” (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal)



Sociability

5. Are People Smiling? Do They Make Regular Eye Contact with Each Other?
Yes, the general mood is positive and relaxed:

- You'll see people smiling, laughing, and enjoying themselves, especially in dining and entertainment zones.
- There is regular eye contact between staff and guests, as well as within groups.
- The atmosphere is welcoming and comfortable, though not overly informal—more structured than a public park, but still warm and interactive.

6. Do Many People Use the Place Frequently?
Yes, Montecasino has a strong base of frequent users, including:

- Locals who come for weekly dinners, movies, or the casino.
- Professionals using the restaurants for casual business meetings.
- Regular event-goers attending performances or festivals hosted in the theater.

While it attracts many first-time visitors and tourists, there's also a steady stream of repeat users who are clearly familiar with the layout and offerings.

7. Does the Mix of Ages and Ethnic Groups Reflect the Community at Large?
Montecasino draws a reasonably diverse crowd, especially during weekends and holidays:

- You'll see a variety of age groups—from young children to elderly couples.
- The ethnic diversity reflects Johannesburg's multicultural makeup, though, due to its location in a more affluent suburb, it may slightly skew toward middle to upper-income visitors.

That said, the space feels inclusive and doesn't cater to a single demographic.

8. Do People Tend to Pick Up Litter When They See It?
Typically, no—visitors don't tend to pick up litter themselves, but:

- The space remains clean because of proactive, visible cleaning staff.
- The cleanliness culture is strongly enforced, which subtly discourages littering in the first place.

It's not the kind of environment where people take direct ownership of the space like in a public park, but they do respect the rules and upkeep.

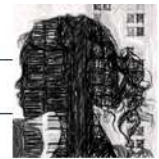
Montecasino is a place where social interaction thrives in a controlled but comfortable environment. It's a popular choice for meeting friends, hosting family outings, or enjoying entertainment together. The space promotes casual sociability, pride of place, and repeat use, even if deeper, spontaneous community bonding is limited by its commercial nature. Nonetheless, its atmosphere is friendly, inclusive, and well-managed, making it a reliable social destination for a broad cross-section of the community.

Figure 31: placemaking attribute of “Sociability” (Cassim, T, Fieldwork Journal)

3.3. Summaries and Findings of user experiences

This section of the report provides a user experience of the two case studies:

Findings – On Site



With reference to the two case studies, the following synthesis is prepared in response to the aim of the research..

From examining the two selected case studies, and assessing the placemaking principles and design tools that successfully achieve the objectives of public spaces in privately managed public spaces the following outcomes are highlighted:

Question	Summary of findings	
What does Public Space mean to you, and your definition of how to describe these spaces?	Public spaces are accessible areas for everyone, promoting social interaction, relaxation, and civic engagement. They should be inclusive, welcoming, and flexible, accommodating various activities while reflecting the community's cultural identity.	Public Space means that the space should be easily accessible to every member of society despite varying degrees of class.
What does the term "Placemaking" mean to you?	To me, Placemaking means creating spaces that are accessible, functional and give a sense of ownership to those who interact with them.	Placemaking is the act of formulating space that is activated by people and further defined through their use and engagement with the space and in conjunction with other users contributing to the 'spirit'/ emotive quality of that space.

"Investigating the Growing Trend of Privatisation in Urban Environments:
Evaluating the Role of Privately Managed Public Spaces in Achieving Public Space Objectives through Placemaking Design Principles"

Findings – On Site



Question	Summary of findings	
In your experience, with reference to Case Study 1 and 2, what design elements makes the space attractive to users in these spaces?	Case Study 1: Nelson Mandela Square	Case Study 2: Monte Casino
	At Nelson Mandela Square, its open design, ample seating, and the iconic statue of Mandela make it a popular meeting spot. It's well-known for its fine dining options, but remains enjoyable for those who cannot afford the expensive restaurants, as the square serves as a recreational and transitional space.	Montecasino, on the other hand, is an experiential space that uses its thematic design to replicate ancient European villages, particularly Roman styles. This adds a sense of European charm to the user experience, making it attractive to visitors seeking an immersive, themed environment with diverse entertainment and dining options.
	Case Study 1: Nelson Mandela Square	Case Study 2: Monte Casino
	- Broad range of programme: hotel/theatre/ cinema/ nightclub/ restaurant etc. - Walkability through the entire complex - Varying sight lines which allow for the opportunity to see what's happening below and above	- Tuscan style design creating a foreign and therefore 'romantic' allure (Monte Casino) - Broad range of programme: hotel/theatre/ cinema/ nightclub/ restaurant etc. - Walkability through the entire complex - Varying sight lines which allow for the opportunity to see what's happening below and above

"Investigating the Growing Trend of Privatisation in Urban Environments:
Evaluating the Role of Privately Managed Public Spaces in Achieving Public Space Objectives through Placemaking Design Principles"

Findings – On Site



Question	Summary of findings	
With reference to Case Study 1 and 2, what design elements in these squares, in your professional opinion, creates a sense of belonging to the square?	Case Study 1: Nelson Mandela Square At Nelson Mandela Square, the statue of Mandela symbolizes unity and heritage, fostering a sense of pride.	Case Study 2: Monte Casino In Montecasino, the immersive Italian design and pedestrian-friendly spaces create a sense of escape and familiarity, making people feel part of a unique community experience
	Case Study 1: Nelson Mandela Square A variety of restaurants suited to different consumer needs and budgets that face the squares. - A focal point through a fountain allowing for children to play and clear sightlines for parents to supervise their children. An element of play for children creates a specific sense of belonging with other families/ parents/ children.	Case Study 2: Monte Casino A variety of restaurants suited to different consumer needs and budgets that face the squares. - A focal point through a fountain allowing for children to play and clear sightlines for parents to supervise their children. An element of play for children creates a specific sense of belonging with other families/ parents/ children.

"Investigating the Growing Trend of Privatisation in Urban Environments:
Evaluating the Role of Privately Managed Public Spaces in Achieving Public Space Objectives through Placemaking Design Principles"

Findings – On Site



Question	Summary of findings	
What characteristics of quasi-public spaces do you think, contributes to the popularity of these spaces continuously being used?	Case Study 1: Nelson Mandela Square At Nelson Mandela Square, the statue of Mandela symbolizes unity and heritage, fostering a sense of pride.	Case Study 2: Monte Casino In Montecasino, the immersive Italian design and pedestrian-friendly spaces create a sense of escape and familiarity, making people feel part of a unique community experience
	Both Nelson Mandela Square and Montecasino offer quasi-public spaces that are safe, well-maintained, and accessible, with a diverse mix of commercial, recreational, and cultural activities. The management of these spaces have a clear commercial interest in keeping them attractive and vibrant. They actively use events, advertising, and immersive activations to maintain high foot traffic, ensuring these spaces stay busy and commercially viable, which directly benefits the surrounding businesses. - Access up until the evening/ night - Various events that activate the space - 'Exclusivity' of the space that creates hype and contributes to the desire to be seen	
What design elements do you think can improve these spaces?	Both Nelson Mandela Square and Montecasino could benefit from more green spaces. Currently, there is an overemphasis on hard surfaces, and a better balance between paved areas and natural elements like trees and plants would enhance the aesthetic and comfort of these spaces. Increasing greenery would not only make them more environmentally friendly but also create a more relaxing atmosphere for users, improving the overall experience	
	Larger (and more) seating and landscape design that could contribute to people spending more time enjoying being an observer in the space without being compelled to purchase a meal.	

"Investigating the Growing Trend of Privatisation in Urban Environments:
Evaluating the Role of Privately Managed Public Spaces in Achieving Public Space Objectives through Placemaking Design Principles"

Findings – On Site



Question	Summary of findings
What design elements do you find most attractive in Privately Owned Public Spaces? (Open spaces, Seating arrangements, Architectural design, Landscaping)?	• Open areas that are not necessarily defined for a single purpose but could serve multiple activities. • Public art installations • Landscape architecture
	Seating with some sort of shading - Incorporation of green space (trees and plants) - Open space with clear sightlines and the ability to feel safe visually
Do you believe the ownership of public space impacts the public / users rights to use it? (Yes, No, Unsure)	Yes
How important is it to you who owns the space? (Not important, Slightly important, Moderately important, Very important)	Not Important
Have you ever been asked to leave or restricted from accessing certain areas within this space? (Yes, No) If yes, please explain.	No

While privately managed public spaces often raise concerns about control and exclusion, placemaking design tools can still succeed when:

- The private actor embraces civic responsibility.
- Community voices are actively included.
- Design prioritizes comfort, inclusion, and flexibility over surveillance and branding.

The challenge lies in ensuring that these tools aren't just used to make spaces look public – but to make them truly feel and function as public.

"Investigating the Growing Trend of Privatisation in Urban Environments:
Evaluating the Role of Privately Managed Public Spaces in Achieving Public Space Objectives through Placemaking Design Principles"

The abovementioned users provided the following reasons as the basis of their choice to spend their time in private public space in contrast to the preference of public space:

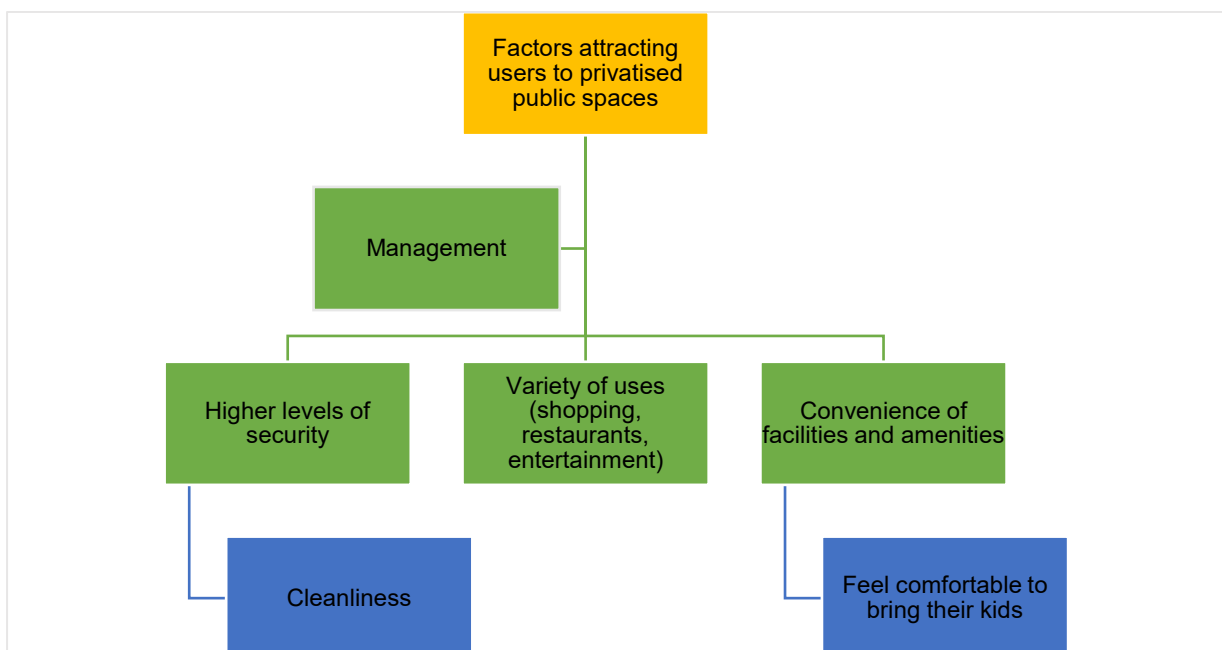


Figure 32: Factors that attract users to public spaces

With reference to the fieldwork journal summarising the outcomes of the findings, the abovementioned data collected, are the basis of the research problem. The following outcomes of the on – site observations recording factors of attraction in privately managed public spaces are highlighted:

- Users prefer public spaces but actually spend majority of their time in private public spaces due to their quality of services, cleanly environment and relevance of use to the community.
- There are specific characteristics of private public spaces, that are persuading users to choose private public spaces instead of public spaces.
- The participants highlighted that the design of public spaces lacks security and surveillance measures, there is a neglect of care of these spaces and the services / function of the public spaces available to them no longer serve their current needs.

Opportunities for Placemaking in PMPS

- Well-maintained environments: Private funding can ensure cleanliness, security, and upkeep.
- Innovative design: Private entities may invest in creative architecture, landscaping, and amenities.
- Flexibility: Less bureaucracy than city-managed spaces can mean quicker implementation of placemaking projects.
- Events and programming: Private managers can curate events that activate the space (e.g. farmers markets, art exhibits).

In order to strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value. Subsequently, more than just promoting better urban design principles, placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.

Concluding remarks from this study – the paradox of public and privately managed spaces continues to be a conflict of interest in theory, however in practice there are positive practices being implemented to gain and improve the conditions of public spaces, thus making them more attractive to users. The role of placemaking is vital for the planning and development of public spaces to adapt the users' needs and integrate this into the wider environments they are established in. These are connections that form part of the larger serving development field and deserve to be acknowledged for their role in contributing to users' needs and attending to the current trends of development.

FOUR

Findings and Outcomes

Semi – Structured Interviews

Chapter 4 – Voices of Experience: Unpacking Professional Inputs from Practice

Semi-structured interviews form a central qualitative component of this study, providing in-depth insights into the perceptions, experiences, and professional understandings of those involved in shaping, managing, and regulating Privately Managed Public Spaces (PMPS) within Johannesburg's urban context. While spatial analysis in this research offers a macro-level perspective on the distribution and patterns of PMPS, semi-structured interviews complement this by revealing the nuanced social, institutional, and design dimensions that underpin their development and everyday operation.

As a data collection method, semi-structured interviews strike a balance between structure and flexibility. Guided by a set of predetermined themes and open-ended questions, the approach allows for consistency across interviews while enabling participants to elaborate on issues most relevant to their expertise and experience. This format is particularly valuable when engaging with built environment professionals—such as urban planners, architects, urban designers, property developers, and municipal officials—whose insights are shaped by their professional roles, policy frameworks, and on-the-ground involvement in urban projects.

The use of semi-structured interviews in this research is motivated by the need to capture multiple perspectives on how PMPS are conceptualized, implemented, and governed within Johannesburg's urban regeneration agenda. These professionals operate at the interface of public policy and private development, making their viewpoints crucial for understanding how ideas of accessibility, security, aesthetics, and commercial viability influence the design and management of urban spaces that are nominally public yet privately controlled.

Through these interviews, the study seeks to uncover how decisions surrounding PMPS reflect broader shifts in urban governance, the privatization of public functions, and the pursuit of world-class city ideals. Moreover, engaging with professionals allows the research to interrogate the tensions between policy intentions and spatial outcomes—highlighting the challenges of ensuring inclusivity and genuine publicness in an increasingly privatized urban landscape.

In summary, the semi-structured interview method provides the qualitative depth necessary to contextualize the spatial findings of this study. It enables a richer interpretation of how built environment professionals perceive their roles and responsibilities in shaping Johannesburg's public realm and how their practices contribute to the evolving character of public space in the city.

4.1. Interpretation of data collected from semi structured interviews in response to the research sub – questions

Participant	Profession	Date of Interview
1 Ayanda Made	Urban Designer in Private Practice	Interview Date: 13 November 2024
2 Jacolene Swart	Professional Town Planner worked in Public and Private Sector	Interview Date: 29 October 2024
3 Johan – Calitz Janse van Rensburg	GIS & Data Analyst / Urban Studies	Interview Date: 15 November 2024
4 Puvendra Akkiah	Professional Urban Planner in Private Practice	Interview Date: 15 October 2024
5 Heidi Lu	Architect / Lecturer at University of Johannesburg	Interview Date: 11 October 2024
6 Moabi Dimpe	Architect / Urban Designer in Private Practice	Interview Date: 16 October 2024
7 Rorisang Sojane	Business Development Manager at Excellerate Precinct Management. / Director at the Gauteng Precinct Management Association	Interview Date: 29 October 2024

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	Participant	Profession	Relevance to Study	Record of Interview
1	Heidi Lu	Architect / Lecturer at University of Johannesburg	Designing public spaces for private sector development	Interview Date: 11 October 2024 Hard Copy Questionnaire
2	Puvendra Akkiah	Professional Urban Planner	Co-authored a Global Public Space framework policy UN Habitat in their public space experts group meetings and contributed to their public space policies	Interview Date: 15 October 2024
			 public space design-20241016_174319-Meeting Recording.mp4	

3	Moabi Dimpe	Architect	My involvement in public space comes from integrating public-use areas into residential projects. These often include designing shared spaces such as parks, pedestrian walkways, and public plazas within or adjacent to residential developments to enhance liveability and foster a sense of community. These public spaces offer residents a place for recreation, social interaction, and relaxation.	Interview Date: 16 October 2024
4	Ayanda Made	Urban Designer	Designing public spaces for private sector development	Interview Date: 13 November 2024
			 Part 1 ... Public space with Ayanda M. 1.m4a	
			 Part 2 ... Public space with Ayanda M .2.m4a	
			 Part 3 ... Public Space with Ayanda M. 3.m4a	
5	Rorisang Sojane	Business Development Manager at Excellerate Precinct Management. / Director at the Gauteng Precinct Management Association	Management of City of Johannesburg CIDs	Interview Date: 29 October 2024
6	Jacolene Swart	Professional Town Planner	Planning and Land Use Management applications for public spaces	Interview Date: 29 October 2024
			 Discussion_ Public Spaces-20241029_161415-Meeting Recording.mp4	
7	Johan – Calitz Janse van Rensburg	GIS & Data Analyst / Urban Studies	Studies Human Behaviour as part of market studies for the design of public space	Interview Date: 15 November 2024
			 Johan Janse van Rensburg.m4a	

- Research sub – question 1: What are the similarities and differences between public and private public spaces?

In theory the shared similarities between public and private public spaces are the users that it seeks to serve. Public Spaces are spaces dedicated to public use and for the public activities. In the literature these spaces are connected the following characteristics – firstly, both spaces are generally easily accessible to the public, secondly, through the use to the public and the communities they serve, as both spaces are planned and design for social interaction, public events, recreation and spaces people utilize to move throughout the course of the day. Thirdly, these spaces include amenities such as landscaping, designed for user experience and include seating, public art work and a sense of geographical location that signifies their identity. Fourthly both spaces play a role in urban integration as they are gathering spaces for people. These can be planned and unplanned interactions, that promote a sense of belonging and promote inclusivity through no social or racial distinctions as previously segregated in apartheid. Lastly, these spaces are deemed similar in theory because of their intention to serve the greater public and their surrounding environments.

In contrast, these spaces also differ in their comparisons in theory, due to the ownership, management and motivated interest of the entities that plan and design them. Firstly, in theory public space is owned by the government and the social entities that maintain these spaces, which make public spaces available for anyone to use without any restriction to their access. In comparison to Private Public Spaces, these are spaces open for public use, but are often owned, and managed privately, thus limiting their access by the regulations they are governed by.

Secondly, in theory, public space is governed by specific public laws and regulations, that are often in line with the constitutional rights of humans, allowing broad social and physical access to these spaces. However, Private Public Spaces are open to the public but governed by private laws that abide by constitutional rights. Thirdly, Public Spaces are funded and maintained through public sector investments, which is through national treasure allocating budgets to local governments to make provision for the planning and design and development of public spaces. In comparison to Private Public Spaces, the funding is maintained and invested from the private owner, thus impacting the quality and types of services available in these spaces.

Fourthly, there is an interconnected relationship between the maintenance and management of public spaces, namely these are funded by local government thus the duties of management fall on the government departments to exercise. In comparison to Private Public Spaces, these are maintained and managed at the discretion of the private developer and / or owner. Most significantly, the purpose and design of these spaces are the greatest difference – Public Spaces are designed by a mandate set out by local government policies and regulations.

In comparison to Private Public Spaces are planned and design with the reflection of the owner's vision and mission on how to meet the user's needs. These spaces prioritize understanding the user's needs, and wants, as well as considering the current trends in the development space to ensure that the proposed use is relevant to the needs of the public / communities they seek to serve as this will guarantee a return on investment for them. Lastly, the legal protections of these spaces physically and socially are dependent on their regulatory bodies. For Public Spaces, these are protected by public laws in contrast to private public spaces that protect by the private companies that manage them which thereafter abide by the laws of the public. In summary the similarities and differences of Public Spaces and Private Public Spaces are based on access, use, ownership, and funding.

Interview 1: Ayanda Made (Architect /Urban Designer)

Question: What area (private / public) of the development sector do you work in, and how are you involved in Public Space?

Question: What does Public Space mean to you, and your definition of how to describe these spaces?

- Public Space is the street: the only true reflection of public space through its diversity on the street edges such as ownership, land uses, functions and flow of movement of people and cars. The diversity of users represent the true extent of publicness is found in the street. Public Spaces excludes spirit of place, placemaking due to formalisation of these spaces. There is a lack of negotiating in formalised public space, which is an important defining factor for public space to exist. The rigid identities that come with formalising public space use and function, whereas the street has an ambiguity that allows the public to use and negotiate and navigate through without restrictions.

Question: What does placemaking mean to Ayanda?

- Placemaking is not an outcome you can achieve, but a product of a process
- Placemaking is a by – product of building blocks
- Placemaking is not something to be achieved and measured
- Placemaking is a tool that can be used to make spaces a place
- "You know it, when you see it"
- What is the elements of placemaking that contribute to working spaces.
- An elusive objective to pursue as a designers and not just a spatial intervention

Question: What are the elements that connect Private Public Space and Placemaking?

- Identifying factors that connect the user to space
- Concerns of access to the public space as an identity is formed, as result producing private public spaces.
- Rise of monocultural spaces as a result of blanket approaches in the design of public spaces.
- Private Public Spaces create opportunities to tailor designs of public spaces for their users as they form part of larger developments.

Question: What is the key differences between Private Public Spaces in comparison to Public Spaces?

- Power of Identifiers is your ticket to accessing private public space
- Through buying **power** you can participate in private public space use. These create subconscious point of views of who has access and who does not.
- Central Integrated Development initiatives exclude and dictate users and participants.
- The perception of how we experience space is dictated by preconceived ideas created by the aesthetic and access of the public space or private public spaces.
- Block Ownership Concept: Place and Space being categorised by the type of ownership (public or private) impacts the publicness of the space thus encouraging and or discouraging specific groups of people to use or enter the space.

How does the power of ownership (public / private) impact design of in practice?

- Developers are now targeting a specific market and demographic which then marginalised others in both Public Spaces and Private Public Spaces. However, the measure of success is different for Public Entity Projects in comparison to Private Entity Projects due to the scales of development, the size of the target market and target groups of specific economies. These measures of success are then used as models for approaching public spaces in general and as result fail due to the lack of planning and designing for the user and wider integrated environment. Planning needs to be authentic and conducted for the local culture and representation of these communities. The services provided in space categorises the type of user as a result of the rise in cities of difference we can no longer segregate users in space.

Figure 33: Interesting insights from an Urban Designer from the Fieldwork Journal, (Cassim, T)

- Research sub – question 2: What are the driving factors for the planning and design of private public spaces?

This research question seeks to unpack the factors that drive the planning and design of private public spaces based on the interviews conducted with the professionals in the field. Firstly, the market, and development trends are a key factor to driving the planning and design of private public spaces, this is as a result ensuring that proposals meet the needs of the users they seek to cater for, a set vision and mission. Similarly, the economic markets for development set the trajectory for the growth and attraction of these spaces. As suggested by interviewee 2 (Jacolene Swart), what is important to observe here is the methodological approaches to the planning and design of public spaces in comparison to private public spaces. The research and feasibility studies conducted between these private developers and the town planners ultimately determine the quality of space and the user's experience. In practice, there is a blanket approach, in which the planning and design of public spaces are through a tick box exercise.

The planning and design of private public spaces thrive because they are carefully curated, maintained, and designed to attract and retain foot traffic, which is crucial to their commercial success. These spaces are typically planned to be located in high-density areas, close to retail and entertainment, ensuring convenience and frequent use. The private owners, motivated by the need to drive revenue through surrounding businesses or nearby developments, invest in high-quality design, cleanliness, and safety, often offering a superior experience compared to publicly owned spaces, factor 3; tailoring designs for the user. Additionally, they host events and manage security, creating an appealing environment that encourages repeated visits.

Interview 3: Johan – Calitz Janse van Rensburg

Question: What area (private / public) of the development sector do you work in, and how are you involved in Public Space?

Question: What does Public Space mean to you, and your definition of how to describe these spaces?

- Public Space is anything beyond my personal private property boundary. I am involved in the planning and design for the positioning of public space in relation to where people move and pass through space (understanding the human behaviour). Why do people do what they do in around the public space. There is a relationship between flow of people and the position of public space that holds a key interest.

Question: What does the term "Placemaking" mean to you?

- Placemaking is connected to human behaviour – in order to create public space, you need to understand human behaviour. Spaces can be planned and developed but without understanding and incorporating human behaviour they do not connect with the users. For example: "Men design shopping centres for women to shop in without understanding how women think."
- This is why public spaces are lacking in attracting users, they are not incorporating the human behaviours of the users they are catering for.
- For example: "Social Housing, caters for lower income groups with assumption users don't have cars and as result do not make provision for adequate parking."

Question: What relationships connect Public Space and Placemaking?

- There is a lack of money / economic investment in public space as a result placemaking principles cannot be implemented.
- Quality spaces are catered for, they offer diversity in terms of entertainment and food, or greenery.

Question: What is the key differences between Private Public Spaces in comparison to Public Spaces?

- Access

How does the power of ownership (public / private) impact design in practice?

I think it does in a matter. It also depends the way the public space is. um normally when it's far flung around the townships, um, most of the time is still, but I have been in townships away people that lives close to the to the public park has taken ownership with the park. an someone goes out every day and got every week and cut the grass, you know, just that neighbourhood. I think in in a public private space, it is there is definitely dynamics around where ownership place are all and how well it's managed and how well it's sustained, and for the private se if there's not financially in there's actually no purpose for them to be there, where from a public space, it's more a case of like your social duty to upkeep it actually. and I think that is where government is sort of needs to fulfil that role in general is like it's the best way we can help the world, basically. It just depends on how well it's managed from each side. o someone should have the vision of it, but if that person has the vision, but he's not empowered by the mipality or by someone to make a good place making or to just upkeep on um on the park, then there is no purpose for that person to even go delve into it. Like if he doesn't have a mandate or be to be empowered to do this, then it doesn't actually, you know, you. So I think skills and strategy and um the other one you just mentioned. To create a connection here and you're like, well, how you see it in terms of flow of people, human behavior, access, uh when you look at public and privatized public spaces, would you think does better in terms of principles of what makes public space public I think it's a private and general and it comes down to maybe that like empowerment, like some not everyone has the vision or something, but then also private sector, I think we spoke about shortly on on LinkedIn is that we it's basically a case of like shopping centres, is power spaces, but our public spaces. and it's the case of like they just manage it better because there's a a incentive.

Figure 34: Interesting insights from a Private Sector Town Planner from the Fieldwork Journal, (Cassim, T)

The continuous flow of people is essential for generating revenue, so owners are committed to maintaining these spaces to ensure their profitability and desirability, reinforcing the symbiotic relationship between well-maintained spaces and economic return – maintenance and management issue. The lack of care, and apathy towards public spaces is a result of why users find private public spaces more attractive – factor 5; Care. The scales of development of private public spaces are key to ensuring the proposals for development are manageable and attainable, factor 6; quality of quantity. In summary private public spaces are tailored from process to implementation due to the risks of getting it wrong impacting the return on investment. In summary, a key lesson here is that when private developers and stakeholders are designing from their own funds there is greater consideration of how the funds are spent as shared in Interview 5, by Heidi Lu.

Interview 4: Puvendra Akkiah

Question: What area (private / public) of the development sector do you work in, and how are you involved in Public Space?

Advocate for public space in practice and theory. Sustainable goals champion. My experience covers private and public sector, in which I branched out from local government, into strategic planning and global policy contributor for Public Spaces.

Question: What does Public Space mean to you, and your definition of how to describe these spaces?

- Public Space is a product of inclusivity, and the quality is a result of funding.
- Public space has become the poorer cousin the design of cities and towns in the public sector due to the challenges faced with funding.
- A catalyst for spatial transformation of the cities fabric as there is an intersectionality of quality in relation to investment as a result impacting public life and public experience.
- What drives public spaces the development of these spaces – spatial transformation and spatial justice
- "You can't develop public spaces without. Effectively engaging with the end user, so key is engaging with the communities."

Question: What does placemaking mean to you?

- Placemaking is going beyond design
- The relationship between people and design
- Place making actually takes a far bigger role in bringing together interested and affected parties or stakeholders.
- Placemaking is the intersectionality between responsibility and responsiveness
 - It's it's about clearly understanding exactly what the needs are, what the roles and responsibilities of each of the stakeholders are, and developing a space that is responsive. Responsive in terms of the needs of the Community, but also responsive in terms of how we view sustainable development but responsive in that it is a facility that is going to be used. Placemaking is an outcome of engagement regarding the planning and design of public spaces.
- Placemaking is for People
 - Engaging end – users
 - Design elements: material, access, target driven, value is based on serving the needs of the users
 - Inclusivity – How we do create opportunities for inclusivity, through placemaking.

• Placemaking is a process of "Co – creating"

Question: What are the elements that connect Private Public Space and Placemaking?

- The user is the focus
- The planning and design is market driven.
- Private public spaces offer quality spaces but lack the engagement from the public.
- Sterilised Spaces are created by regulations and inhibits the true reflections of public space qualities in terms of access, use and freedom of expression

Question: What is the key differences between Private Public Spaces in comparison to Public Spaces?

- Public Spaces are developed by the city, the end – user forms part of the process of planning and design and co – funded
- Private Public Spaces – imperative to note how we view private public space and privately managed public spaces
- The relationship between use – agency – access
- Private Public Spaces – market driven

Figure 35: Interesting insights from a National Government Official from the Fieldwork Journal, (Cassim, T)

- Research sub – question 3: From a professional point of view, what characteristics of private public spaces in the city of Johannesburg are design with the end – user in mind?

The City of Johannesburg, also infamously known as the city that does not sleep, it was shared through the interview 1 – Ayanda Made (Architect /Urban Designer) , 3 – Johan – Calitz Janse van Rensburg and 7 – Rorisang Sojane a common thread surveillance, variety and diversity of use and a sense of exclusivity created in the private public spaces promote the users desires and needs. For example, making reference to the Nelson Mandela Square, its open design, ample seating, and the iconic statue of Mandela make it a popular meeting spot.

It's well-known for its fine dining options, but remains enjoyable for those who cannot afford the expensive restaurants, as the square serves as a recreational and transitional space. Similarly, Montecasino, on the other hand, is an experiential space that uses its thematic design to replicate ancient European villages, particularly Roman styles.

This adds a sense of European charm to the user experience, making it attractive to visitors seeking an immersive, themed environment with diverse entertainment and dining options shared by interview 1 – Ayanda Made (Architect /Urban Designer) , 3 – Johan – Calitz Janse van Rensburg (Feasibility Study Specialist / Town Planner) and 5 – Heidi Lu (Architect)

Interview 4: Puvendra Akkiah

Question: How does the power of ownership (public / private) impact design of in practice?

It's a space for public, but however we must understand that it operates on a on a on a premise that you will be spending money in that space. So for public space to be truly public space. It should not have come with any conditions. It should be a space, that is that is absolutely free of use and free of access. It's up so whilst you are able to access shopping mall for free et cetera. However, there is an expectation that you will be spending money or you will be using that space in terms of some monetary exchange itself. So from, from my perspective is we really need to change the paradigm around planning and how we plan for public space. And therein lies the role of the built environment professional, and I'm actually. Specifically saying built environment professional and not saying town planner. Because - The role of public space is far bigger than just the town plan and the architect, urban designer, et cetera. It's actually the entire built environment profession coming together and that is one of the sort of challenges that we've currently experienced in public space development. So if developing a new town centre, you will find urban design guidelines coming through with regards to how public space is developed. If you're looking at a much at a more localised macro as a micro sort of perspective from the building design perspective then the architect will. Get involved together with possibly the urban designer to define public spaces within that building. Building context itself now from a planning context, you know whether you looking at local area plans, local area plans, functional area precinct area plans, et cetera. You will just look at the allocation of public space or zoning of public spaces within an entire area. We as the built environment need to engage more on when it comes to place making. Inclusivity, spatial transformation for public spaces in the African context. South African context

Question: Why private public space? What is attractive about them?

I think the only target that public space managed by public institutions should have is the number of people that are actually using that space on a regular basis to actually improve or make impact in terms of their quality of life. But when you look at privately owned, privately managed public spaces, they actually meeting the needs of now, and that is why they continue to thrive in a way, in their own way, in the long term, even though they don't succumb to the.

Figure 36: Interesting insights from an Urban Designer from the Fieldwork Journal, (Cassim, T)

- Research sub – question 4: From a professional point of view, how are the successes of the planning and design tools of placemaking in Johannesburg revealed in private public spaces

For the purpose of answering sub – question 4, the each of the 7 professionals were asked to interpret placemaking and the tools and principles that guide the success of planning and design private public spaces in the city of Johannesburg. The following pointers were highlighted: From, 5 – Heidi Lu (Architect) – “Both Nelson Mandela Square and Montecasino offer quasi-public spaces that are safe, well-maintained, and accessible, with a diverse mix of commercial, recreational, and cultural activities. The management of these spaces have a clear commercial interest in keeping them attractive and vibrant. They actively use events, advertising, and immersive activations to maintain high foot traffic, ensuring these spaces stay busy and commercially viable, which directly benefits the surrounding businesses. Both Nelson Mandela Square and Montecasino could benefit from more green spaces. Currently, there is an overemphasis on hard surfaces, and a better balance between paved areas and natural elements like trees and plants would enhance the aesthetic and comfort of these spaces. Increasing greenery would not only make them more environmentally friendly but also create a more relaxing atmosphere for users, improving the overall experience.”

4.2. Addressing the Research Question

What attracts users to privately-owned public spaces in Johannesburg?

When space Speaks to the current and latest development trends, and needs of the communities they seek to develop in are addressed, thus making these spaces useful. This can only be understood and created through scaling plans to the micro level for public spaces to improve their quality of space as the private public spaces do. Specificity creates successful public spaces. This is clearly observed in the investment in budgets and extent of expenditure that is made for the development of these spaces. The selected locations of private public spaces are strategic and as a result located conveniently for the users / communities they target. These are spatial clusters of influence; private public spaces are not built in isolation but rather have a development radius that they wish to reach. This can be seen by the diverse services they provide and the variety that allows different users to be catered too.

There is a sense of surveillance created by a space being managed – which turns it into a place, this attracts people. The factors that attract users to private public spaces are the pull factors that make them useful, as Whyte suggested in the literature review, designing spaces for the actual use of people promotes their usefulness to people ultimately creating spaces that work – “Attractive spaces are pull factors to people.”

- The market has become the deciding factor for planning and designing of public spaces and as a result the motivation for the desired outcomes is based off market studies of the population groups and as a result private public spaces work well for as they are tailored from the planning process to design and thereafter the implementation thereof. These private public spaces produce models of influence as a result of safety, care and aesthetic being provided for by private entities attempts to respond to the market. These design approaches begin to create enclaves, by placing perimeters in these spaces, thus creating the private – public dynamic. As designers we follow what sells, and where people go to, which in turn provides the development parameters for newly proposed private public spaces that form part of larger developments overall.
- Considering the paradox and misconceptions of private public space limiting the public in access and agency due to their regulations, it is imperative to note that rules guide culture and in order to create a sense of place and community private public spaces are managed and ruled by an agenda. The user when deciding to use space is aware that there are rules and regulations, it's like abiding by a unified culture, which through regulation creates a sense of unity. It is here you can see that people choose the cultures they want to be a part of by choosing the places they want to spend their time in and ultimately form part of. The concerns of limiting access are not about restriction, but rather what cultures are people choosing to be a part of and not. These are spatial clusters of influence; private public spaces are not built in isolation but rather have a development radius that they wish to reach.
- This can be seen by the diverse services they provide and the variety that allows different users to be catered too. There is a sense of surveillance created by a space being managed – which turns it into a place, this attracts people. Surveillance in Private Public Spaces is an attraction factor for people.

▪ Key Points concluded from the interviews to be considered...

Principle	Design Tool	Application and success in PMPS
Community Engagement and co - design processes	Involving local communities in the design, programming, and governance of the space.	Builds trust and local ownership even within private developments. Helps identify overlooked needs (e.g., accessibility, seating, cultural expression).
Flexible, Human-Centred Design	Designing spaces with moveable furniture, multiple uses (e.g., play, rest, eat), and sensory elements (sound, shade, water).	Increases dwell time, attracts diverse users. Supports informal social interaction and comfort.
Public Art & Cultural Programming	Commissioning local artists, temporary installations, live performances.	Adds identity and vibrancy. Creates a sense of place that aligns with local culture – not just brand aesthetics.
Clear access policies	Prevents discriminatory enforcement.	Citizens / Users have a choice to use the privately public space at their own discretion without any prejudice or coercion.

"Investigating the Growing Trend of Privatisation in Urban Environments:
Evaluating the Role of Privately Managed Public Spaces in Achieving Public Space Objectives through Placemaking Design Principles"

Figure 37: Key Themes and Relationships summarised from the Interviews from the Fieldwork Journal, (Cassim, T)

Subsequent to the above, the research conducted through semi-structured interviews provided valuable perspectives from built environment professionals regarding the growing public interest in Privately Managed Public Spaces (PMPS) within Johannesburg's popular urban neighbourhoods. These insights offer an understanding of the underlying social, economic, and spatial factors that make such spaces attractive to urban residents—ranging from perceptions of safety, cleanliness, and exclusivity to the provision of well-designed, amenity-rich environments that traditional public spaces often lack. By engaging with professionals involved in planning, architecture, and urban management, the study captures the rationale behind the proliferation of PMPS and the ways in which they respond to both market demands and governance challenges in the contemporary city.

Furthermore, the interviews shed light on the planning and design processes that guide the creation of these spaces, emphasizing how placemaking principles and urban design tools are applied to balance functionality, aesthetics, and social interaction. Professionals discussed how design strategies—such as spatial layout, material selection, landscape integration, and programmed activities—are intentionally used to cultivate a sense of place and attract diverse users, even within privately regulated settings. This qualitative dimension enriches the spatial analysis by contextualizing the human and institutional factors shaping Johannesburg's evolving public realm.

Ultimately, the inclusion of semi-structured interviews ensures that the research not only maps where PMPS are located but also interrogates why they are emerging, how they are planned and designed, and what implications they hold for urban inclusivity and the future of public space governance in Johannesburg. These findings provide a foundation for critically evaluating the role of built environment professionals in influencing urban transformation and for proposing more equitable approaches to placemaking within the city's complex socio-spatial landscape.

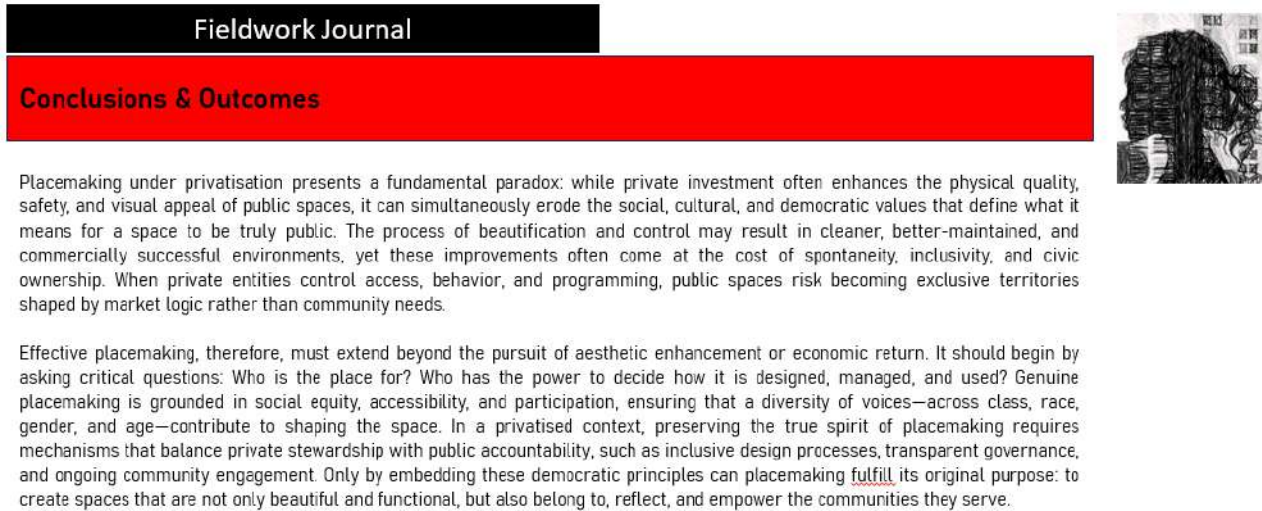


Figure 38: Concluding remarks from the interviews from the Fieldwork Journal, (Cassim, T)

4.3. Concluding Themes



Figure 39: Final Thoughts from the Fieldwork Journal, (Cassim, T)

Making Sense of the Story

Overview of the Study

The aim of the study was “Investigating the Growing Trend of Privatisation in Urban Environments” -

“Evaluating the Role of Privately Managed Public Spaces in Achieving Public Space Objectives through Placemaking Design Principles”

The paradox of the design and evolution of public spaces can be observed by the public spaces that users choose to return to, travel for and use regularly. Privately Managed public spaces boast a certain tailoring to users' needs which make them popular and in turn sustain their use and relevancy. Subsequent to the above, the research to be conducted seeks to provide perspectives from built environment professionals on what are the reasons for these private public spaces showing a growing interest by the public. As well as, understanding the planning and design processes followed for the development of these public spaces. The main research question was formulated as follows: “What attracts users to privately-owned public spaces in Johannesburg?.” The subsequent chapters examined, in different ways, the factors considering theories of public space and private public spaces, their contextualisation to South Africa, specifically City of Johannesburg and how factors of attraction connect space to place with people.

The theoretical similarities between public spaces and privately owned public spaces (POPS) lie primarily in their intended purpose—to serve the public. Both are designed to facilitate accessibility, foster social interaction, and support urban life through amenities such as seating, public art, and landscaping. In both cases, these spaces function as vital elements of urban integration by promoting inclusivity, cultural expression, and a sense of place. Their physical features often reflect a shared intent to create environments that accommodate recreation, transit, and gathering, contributing to a cohesive urban fabric.

However, significant differences emerge when examining the ownership, governance, funding, and intent behind each space. Public spaces are publicly owned and managed, legally protected by public regulations, and funded by government resources. They are, in theory, universally accessible and shaped by policy mandates. In contrast, POPS are owned and managed by private entities, often with restricted access governed by privately determined rules. Although they must align with constitutional rights, their use is shaped by commercial motives and private investment, resulting in curated experiences aimed at attracting and retaining foot traffic for economic gain.

Additionally, while public spaces are created under the directive of public interest and long-term urban policy, private public spaces are often shaped by market demands, user trends, and the return on investment for developers. This creates a divergence in the motivations driving their design and management. Legal protections also differ, with public spaces safeguarded by state institutions and POPS subject to private enforcement with public oversight. In summary, while public and private public spaces may appear similar in form and function, they diverge in their underlying principles of ownership, governance, funding, and intended outcomes. Their distinctions raise important questions about equity, accessibility, and the role of private interest in shaping spaces meant for public life.

Privately managed public spaces (PMPS) partially achieve the objectives of traditional public spaces by providing accessible, well-designed, and well-maintained environments that support social interaction, movement, and leisure. These spaces often offer high levels of safety, cleanliness, and user-focused amenities, enhancing the overall urban experience. However, they fall short in fulfilling the deeper democratic and inclusive aims of public space. PMPS are typically governed by private entities, which can result in limited access for marginalized groups and restrictions on political expression or spontaneous public gatherings. This undermines the role of public space as a platform for civic engagement, social equity, and the right to the city. While PMPS contribute positively to the urban landscape, their commercial motivations and selective inclusivity mean they do not fully realize the broader social and democratic functions of truly public spaces.

In Nelson Mandela Square, the objectives of public space are partially realized through high-quality design, symbolic representation, and general public accessibility. The square offers a clean, safe, and aesthetically appealing environment that encourages social interaction, supports tourism, and integrates cultural identity through the prominent statue of Nelson Mandela. These elements foster a sense of place and belonging, aligning with key goals of public space. However, as a privately managed site, its use is subject to commercial interests and behavioural restrictions, limiting spontaneous civic expression and full social inclusivity. While the space effectively functions as a vibrant urban node, its governance and design primarily serve consumer-oriented activities, illustrating the trade-offs inherent in privately owned public spaces.

At Montecasino, the objectives of public space are achieved primarily through thematic design, controlled accessibility, and a curated user experience, though these are closely tied to commercial and entertainment purposes. The space is designed as a themed, immersive environment, replicating a European village, which offers visitors a unique and visually engaging experience that encourages social interaction, leisure, and repeat visits. It includes public seating, open walking areas, and entertainment options that create the feel of a communal space. However, as a privately owned and managed precinct, access and behaviour are regulated to maintain a specific atmosphere aligned with the brand and commercial goals. This results in a safe, clean, and vibrant environment, but one that is commercially exclusive, limiting informal use and broader civic expression. While Montecasino succeeds in offering an attractive and user-friendly public realm, its function remains primarily commercial, highlighting the selective inclusivity and market-driven nature of privately managed public spaces.

The outcomes recorded in the fieldwork journal reveal a critical tension at the heart of the research problem: while users express a preference for traditional public spaces, they consistently choose to spend more time in privately managed public spaces due to their higher standards of cleanliness, safety, and service delivery. On-site observations and participant feedback highlight that these privately managed spaces offer qualities that are increasingly absent from public spaces—namely, a sense of care, relevance, and consistent user experience. Participants also pointed to the deterioration of public spaces, citing a lack of maintenance, inadequate safety measures, and poor alignment with current community needs. These findings underscore the urgency for rethinking how public spaces are planned and maintained, and highlight the value of placemaking as a strategy to bridge the gap.

Placemaking, when genuinely collaborative and context-sensitive, holds the potential to restore the functionality and inclusiveness of public spaces by embedding social, cultural, and physical identities into their design. This research, therefore, advances the discourse by seeking the perspectives of built environment professionals to better understand the design and planning frameworks that make privately managed public spaces increasingly attractive to the public—and how these practices can inform the revitalisation of traditional public space.

Limitations of the Study

This study only sampled a very small part of professionals in the development field in South Africa. Most importantly, it sampled only a very small part of the Gauteng. Considering the above, the location of the study areas was not including of the per-urban or semi-rural areas, as result conditions of the form (built structure and wider environment) were solely limited to urban regions. The sample of participants is also thereof small in contrast to the size of the population in the Gauteng, as a result the study makes use of a generalised overview, which made it difficult to justify. With only 7 participants, it could be argued that this would make any differences more meaningful, but this assumption cannot be argued statistically. Similarly, the space of time allocated for the research limited the number of study areas that could have been investigated to compare and contrast data collected for this study. Another consideration is that there are school holidays that impact professional availability. In conclusion, research based on qualitative data need to be attentive in their understanding during interviews and communicate effectively in order to ensure that the research question is being clearly answered as well as aligned to the research aim.

Concluding remarks

In summary, the most significant variable which emerged from the analysis were those linked to the relationship between space and place that are transformed by placemaking, which in turn produces public spaces that are planned and designed for the actual use and needs of the end – user. When places are attractive and designed with the user in mind these pull people to use them. Spaces that work, are spaces that attract users time and time again through principles of placemaking. In order to ensure longevity of spaces in our cities we need to ensure as professionals in the field of development that these spaces cater to the needs of the user. The misconceptions of the aims and interests of privately managed public space reflect a hinderance for change in the planning and development field. These spaces are planned, designed and managed with the interest of the user in mind, promoting spaces that are tailored to the user.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Participant Information Sheets

PERMISSION LETTER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITH THE PROFESSORS / LECTURERS WHO SPECIALIZE IN PUBLIC SPACE AND THE DESIGN OF THESE SPACES.

School of Architecture and Planning, John Moffat Building
Private Bag X3Johannesburg
2017

INSERT COMPANY'S ADDRESS

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Permission to conduct research with Architectural Professionals / Urban Designers / Planners working with Public Space

My name is Tunisia Cassim, a Postgraduate student in Planning. As part of my studies, I am conducting research on how the interest of the public is represented in privately owned public spaces, with specific reference to the City of Johannesburg as a case study. The objective of the research is to investigate how the interest of privatized public spaces reflect the interest of the public in privately owned public spaces such as Nelson Mandela Square and Monte Casino situated in Johannesburg.

I would like to request your permission to conduct interviews on your premises with Professionals who work with and in Public Space design, planning and / or construction. If they agree, they will be asked to answer questionnaires; guided by a semi structured interview. The duration of the interview will take 30 to 40 minutes, and can take place physically in person or a copy can be emailed to them to complete in a space that is more comfortable for them. The interview will only be recorded if the participant feels comfortable. Participants will be asked to give their written or verbal consent before the research begins. Their responses will be treated confidentially, and identities (their names and the name of the organisation) will be anonymous unless otherwise expressly indicated. Individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

The results will be communicated in the final dissertation. The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participants will not be paid for this study. All research data will be saved on a personal hard drive and protected.

I therefore request permission in writing to conduct my research at your organization. The permission letter should be on your organization's headed paper, signed and dated, and specifically referring to myself by name and the title of my study. Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely,



Tunisia Cassim, 2730521@students.wits.ac.za, 0834533294
Supervisor: Nqobile Malaza, nqobile.malaza@wits.ac.za,
011 7177754

Appendix B: Consent Forms

	Participant	Profession	Date of Interview
1	Heidi Lu	Architect / Lecturer at University of Johannesburg	Interview Date: 11 October 2024
2	Puvendra Akkiah	Professional Urban Planner in Private Practice	Interview Date: 15 October 2024
3	Moabi Dimpe	Architect / Urban Designer in Private Practice	Interview Date: 16 October 2024
4	Ayanda Made	Urban Designer in Private Practice	Interview Date: 13 November 2024
5	Rorisang Sojane	Business Development Manager at Excellerate Precinct Management. / Director at the Gauteng Precinct Management Association	Interview Date: 29 October 2024
6	Jacolene Swart	Professional Town Planner worked in Public and Private Sector	Interview Date: 29 October 2024
7	Johan – Calitz Janse van Rensburg	GIS & Data Analyst / Urban Studies	Interview Date: 15 November 2024



CONSENT FORMS

My name is Tunisia Cassim, a Postgraduate student in Planning. As part of my studies, I am conducting research on **"What attracts users to privately-owned public spaces in Johannesburg?"** with specific reference to the City of Johannesburg as a case study.

The objective of the research is to explore the perceptions of what constitutes public placemaking and what those perceptions indicate about the transformation of public spaces that are owned and managed by private entities. The research will entail collecting data from users of public spaces in City of Johannesburg, which will assist answering the research topic.

I am kindly inviting you to assist in this research by completing a short survey attached to this email

I J JANSE VAN RENSBURG agree to participate in this research project, in so doing I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below)

The research study was explained to me. I understand what this study is about.	☒ YES ☐ NO
I understand that I can volunteer to take part in the study	☒ YES ☐ NO
I agree that the interview may be audio recorded	☒ YES ☐ NO
I agree that direct quotations from my interview may be used by the researcher in their research report/ manuscript/book chapter	☒ YES ☐ NO
I agree that my participation will remain anonymous (my name or other identifying data will not be used by the researcher in their research report/manuscript/book chapter)	☒ YES ☐ NO
I agree that other researchers may use the information I provide in my interview (depending on their own ethics clearance being obtained) but my name and any personal information will not be used or passed on	☒ YES ☐ NO

J JANSE VAN RENSBURG (signature)
J JANSE VAN RENSBURG (name of participant)
27/02/2025 (date)

T. Cassim (signature)
T. Cassim (name of researcher/person seeking consent)
27/02/2025 (date)

CONSENT FORMS (Email) – URBAN DESIGNER / BUILT ENVIRONMENT PROFESSIONAL

My name is Tunisia Cassim, a Postgraduate student in Planning. As part of my studies, I am conducting research on “**What attracts users to privately-owned public spaces in Johannesburg?**” with specific reference to the City of Johannesburg as a case study.

The objective of the research is to explore the perceptions of what constitutes public placemaking and what those perceptions indicate about the transformation of public spaces that are owned and managed by private entities. The research will entail collecting data from users of public spaces in City of Johannesburg, which will assist answering the research topic.

I am kindly inviting you to assist in this research by completing a short survey attached to this email

I MOABI DIMPE, agree to participate in this research project, in so doing I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below)

The research study was explained to me. I understand what this study is about.	☒ YES ☐ NO
I understand that I can volunteer to take part in the study	☒ YES ☐ NO
I agree that the interview may be audio recorded	☒ YES ☐ NO
I agree that direct quotations from my interview may be used by the researcher in their research report/ manuscript/book chapter	☒ YES ☐ NO
I agree that my participation will remain anonymous (my name or other identifying data will not be used by the researcher in their research report/manuscript/book chapter)	☒ YES ☐ NO
I agree that other researchers may use the information I provide in my interview (depending on their own ethics clearance being obtained) but my name and any personal information will not be used or passed on	☒ YES ☐ NO

..... (signature)

.....MOABI DIMPE..... (name of participant)

.....16.10.2024..... (date)

..... (signature)

17/10/2024..... (name of researcher/person seeking consent)

..... (date)

CONSENT FORMS (Email) – URBAN DESIGNER / BUILT ENVIRONMENT PROFESSIONAL

My name is Tunisia Cassim, a Postgraduate student in Planning. As part of my studies, I am conducting research on “**What attracts users to privately-owned public spaces in Johannesburg?**” with specific reference to the City of Johannesburg as a case study.

The objective of the research is to explore the perceptions of what constitutes public placemaking and what those perceptions indicate about the transformation of public spaces that are owned and managed by private entities. The research will entail collecting data from users of public spaces in City of Johannesburg, which will assist answering the research topic.

I am kindly inviting you to assist in this research by completing a short survey attached to this email

I _____Ayanda Made_____, agree to participate in this research project, in so doing I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below)

The research study was explained to me. I understand what this study is about.	☒ YES ☐ NO
I understand that I can volunteer to take part in the study	☒ YES ☐ NO
I agree that the interview may be audio recorded	☒ YES ☐ NO
I agree that direct quotations from my interview may be used by the researcher in their research report/ manuscript/book chapter	☒ YES ☐ NO
I agree that my participation will remain anonymous (my name or other identifying data will not be used by the researcher in their research report/manuscript/book chapter)	☒ YES ☐ NO
I agree that other researchers may use the information I provide in my interview (depending on their own ethics clearance being obtained) but my name and any personal information will not be used or passed on	☒ YES ☐ NO



..... (signature)

.....Ayanda..... (name of participant)

.....2024-11-13..... (date)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Cassim'.

..... (signature)
...T Cassim..... (name of researcher/person seeking consent)
2024-11-13..... (date)

CONSENT FORMS (Email) – URBAN DESIGNER / BUILT ENVIRONMENT PROFESSIONAL

My name is Tunisia Cassim, a Postgraduate student in Planning. As part of my studies, I am conducting research on “**What attracts users to privately-owned public spaces in Johannesburg?**” with specific reference to the City of Johannesburg as a case study.

The objective of the research is to explore the perceptions of what constitutes public placemaking and what those perceptions indicate about the transformation of public spaces that are owned and managed by private entities. The research will entail collecting data from users of public spaces in City of Johannesburg, which will assist answering the research topic.

I am kindly inviting you to assist in this research by completing a short survey attached to this email

I _____ Heidi Lu _____, agree to participate in this research project, in so doing I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below)

The research study was explained to me. I understand what this study is about.	YESX	NO
I understand that I can volunteer to take part in the study	YESX	NO
I agree that the interview may be audio recorded	YESX	NO
I agree that direct quotations from my interview may be used by the researcher in their research report/ manuscript/book chapter	YESX	NO
I agree that my participation will remain anonymous (my name or other identifying data will not be used by the researcher in their research report/manuscript/book chapter)	YESX	NO
I agree that other researchers may use the information I provide in my interview (depending on their own ethics clearance being obtained) but my name and any personal information will not be used or passed on	YESX	NO



..... (signature)

.....Heidi Lu..... (name of participant)

.....2024-10-10..... (date)

..... (signature)
T Cassim

..... (name of researcher/person seeking consent)

11-10-2024..... (date)



CONSENT FORMS

My name is Tunisia Cassim, a Postgraduate student in Planning. As part of my studies, I am conducting research on “**What attracts users to privately-owned public spaces in Johannesburg?**” with specific reference to the City of Johannesburg as a case study.

The objective of the research is to explore the perceptions of what constitutes public placemaking and what those perceptions indicate about the transformation of public spaces that are owned and managed by private entities. The research will entail collecting data from users of public spaces in City of Johannesburg, which will assist answering the research topic.

I am kindly inviting you to assist in this research by completing a short survey attached to this email

I Jacolene Swart, agree to participate in this research project, in so doing I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below)

The research study was explained to me. I understand what this study is about.	☒ YES NO
I understand that I can volunteer to take part in the study	☒ YES NO
I agree that the interview may be audio recorded	☒ YES NO
I agree that direct quotations from my interview may be used by the researcher in their research report/ manuscript/book chapter	☒ YES NO
I agree that my participation will remain anonymous (my name or other identifying data will not be used by the researcher in their research report/manuscript/book chapter)	☒ YES NO
I agree that other researchers may use the information I provide in my interview (depending on their own ethics clearance being obtained) but my name and any personal information will not be used or passed on	☒ YES NO

..... (signature)
Jacolene Swart (name of participant)
13/11/2024 (date)

..... (signature)
T. Cassim (name of researcher/person seeking consent)
14/11/2024 (date)

CONSENT FORMS

My name is Tunisia Cassim, a Postgraduate student in Planning. As part of my studies, I am conducting research on “**What attracts users to privately-owned public spaces in Johannesburg?**” with specific reference to the City of Johannesburg as a case study.

The objective of the research is to explore the perceptions of what constitutes public placemaking and what those perceptions indicate about the transformation of public spaces that are owned and managed by private entities. The research will entail collecting data from users of public spaces in City of Johannesburg, which will assist answering the research topic.

I am kindly inviting you to assist in this research by completing a short survey attached to this email

I Rorisang Sojane, agree to participate in this research project, in so doing I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below)

The research study was explained to me. I understand what this study is about.	Yes
I understand that I can volunteer to take part in the study	YES
I agree that the interview may be audio recorded	YES
I agree that direct quotations from my interview may be used by the researcher in their research report/ manuscript/book chapter	YES
I agree that my participation will remain anonymous (my name or other identifying data will not be used by the researcher in their research report/manuscript/book chapter)	YES
I agree that other researchers may use the information I provide in my interview (depending on their own ethics clearance being obtained) but my name and any personal information will not be used or passed on	YES


 (signature)
 Rorisang Sojane (name of participant)
 29 October 2024 (date)


 (signature)
T.Cassim..... (name of researcher/person seeking consent)
 ..30/10/2024..... (date)

CONSENT FORMS

My name is Tunisia Cassim, a Postgraduate student in Planning. As part of my studies, I am conducting research on “**What attracts users to privately-owned public spaces in Johannesburg?**” with specific reference to the City of Johannesburg as a case study.

The objective of the research is to explore the perceptions of what constitutes public placemaking and what those perceptions indicate about the transformation of public spaces that are owned and managed by private entities. The research will entail collecting data from users of public spaces in City of Johannesburg, which will assist answering the research topic.

I am kindly inviting you to assist in this research by completing a short survey attached to this email

I PUVENDRA AKKIAH agree to participate in this research project, in so doing I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below)

The research study was explained to me. I understand what this study is about.	YES
I understand that I can volunteer to take part in the study	YES
I agree that the interview may be audio recorded	YES
I agree that direct quotations from my interview may be used by the researcher in their research report/ manuscript/book chapter	YES
I agree that my participation will remain anonymous (my name or other identifying data will not be used by the researcher in their research report/manuscript/book chapter)	YES
I agree that other researchers may use the information I provide in my interview (depending on their own ethics clearance being obtained) but my name and any personal information will not be used or passed on	YES



(signature)

PUVENDRA AKKIAH (name of participant)

16 Oct 2024 (date)



(signature)

T Cassim (name of researcher/person seeking consent)

18/10/2024 (date)



RESEARCH INSTRUMENT - INTERVIEW SCHEDULES
(Urban Designer / Built Environmental Professional)

Topic: Exploring the relationship between the People's Perception and the Management's Perspective of Quasi-Public Spaces in the Johannesburg. A Case Study of quasi-public spaces in the City of Johannesburg, Gauteng Province

Research Aim (s):

The aim of the research is to explore how the interest of the public is represented in privately owned public spaces with specific reference to the City of Johannesburg as a case study. The following objectives will guide the interview questions to address the research question:

- To explore the urban design principles of privatized public spaces
- To investigate people's perceptions of quasi – public spaces.
- To investigate how does the interest of the center management of the selected privatized public spaces reflect the interest of the public in Nelson Mandela Square and Montecasino.

Questions:

1. What area (private / public) of the development sector do you work in, and how are you involved in Public Space?
2. What does Public Space mean to you, and your definition of how to describe these spaces?
3. What is your perspective on these privately managed public spaces in Case Study 1 and 2?
4. In your opinion, with reference to Case Study 1 and 2, what about these public spaces represent the interest of the public?
5. With reference to Case Study 1 and 2, what design elements in these squares, in your professional opinion, creates a sense of belonging to the square?
6. What characteristics of quasi-public spaces do you think, keeps attracting people?
7. What design elements do you think can improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of quasi-public spaces?

Research Topic:

Placemaking – Public Space verses Privatised Public Spaces

A Case Study in the City of Johannesburg

Background

Placemaking is taking a 'people first' approach to urban planning. Rather than just considering the structural layout and buildings needed in a community, placemaking also considers how it feels to live, work, or grow in that area.

Strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value. More than just promoting better urban design, placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.

With placemaking, multiple factors are considered to create an area that is meaningful and beneficial to the people who live in its space. Placemaking helps improve social connection and drives a sense of local community which means people are more likely to spend time in, and thus invest, in its infrastructure through use of amenities provided.

What Makes a Great Place?

Project
for Public
Spaces



The Place Diagram is one of the tools Project for Public Spaces has developed to help communities evaluate places. The inner ring represents a place's key attributes, the middle ring its intangible qualities, and the outer ring its measurable data.

Research Question:

What attracts users to privately-owned public spaces in Johannesburg?

Sub-questions:

- What are the similarities and differences between public and quasi-public spaces?
- What are the main approaches to placemaking from the perspective of public space designers and development planners?
- What are the perceptions and experiences of users of public spaces and placemaking in Johannesburg?
- In ways has public placemaking as principle and practice evolved and transformed in the post-apartheid period?
- What do the processes and products of placemaking in Johannesburg reveal about quasi-public spaces?

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT - INTERVIEW SCHEDULES (Professionals in Public Space)

Research Question: “What attracts users to privately-owned public spaces in Johannesburg?” A Case Study of quasi-public spaces in the City of Johannesburg, Gauteng Province

Research Aim (s):

The objective of the research is to explore the perceptions of what constitutes public placemaking and what those perceptions indicate about the transformation of public spaces that are owned and managed by private entities. The research will entail collecting data from users of public spaces in City of Johannesburg, which will assist in answering the research topic. The following objectives will guide the interview questions to address the research question:

- To investigate people’s experiences of privately owned public spaces.
- To investigate why are privately owned public spaces are attractive?

Questions:

1. What area (private / public) of the development sector do you work in, and how are you involved in Public Space?

I work in both the private and public sectors within the development of social, affordable, and student housing in Johannesburg. My involvement in public space comes from integrating public-use areas into residential projects. These often include designing shared spaces such as parks, pedestrian walkways, and public plazas within or adjacent to residential developments to enhance liveability and foster a sense of community. These public spaces offer residents a place for recreation, social interaction, and relaxation.

2. What does Public Space mean to you, and your definition of how to describe these spaces?

Public spaces are accessible areas for everyone, promoting social interaction, relaxation, and civic engagement. They should be inclusive, welcoming, and flexible, accommodating various activities while reflecting the community's cultural identity.

3. What does the term “Placemaking” mean to you?

To me, Placemaking means creating spaces that are accessible, functional and give a sense of ownership to those who interact with them.

4. In your experience, with reference to Case Study 1 and 2, what design elements makes the space attractive to users in these spaces?

At Nelson Mandela Square, its open design, ample seating, and the iconic statue of Mandela make it a popular meeting spot. It’s well-known for its fine dining options, but remains enjoyable for those who cannot afford the expensive restaurants, as the square serves as a recreational and transitional space.

Montecasino, on the other hand, is an experiential space that uses its thematic design to replicate ancient European villages, particularly Roman styles. This adds a sense of European charm to the user experience, making it attractive to visitors seeking an immersive, themed environment with diverse entertainment and dining options.

5. With reference to Case Study 1 and 2, what design elements in these squares, in your professional opinion, creates a sense of belonging to the square?

At Nelson Mandela Square, the statue of Mandela symbolizes unity and heritage, fostering a sense of pride. In Montecasino, the immersive Italian design and pedestrian-friendly spaces create a sense of escape and familiarity, making people feel part of a unique community experience

6. What characteristics of quasi-public spaces do you think, contributes to the popularity of these spaces continuously being used?

Both Nelson Mandela Square and Montecasino offer quasi-public spaces that are safe, well-maintained, and accessible, with a diverse mix of commercial, recreational, and cultural activities. The management of these spaces have a clear commercial interest in keeping them attractive and vibrant. They actively use events, advertising, and immersive activations to maintain high foot traffic, ensuring these spaces stay busy and commercially viable, which directly benefits the surrounding businesses.

7. What design elements do you think can improve these spaces?

Both Nelson Mandela Square and Montecasino could benefit from more green spaces. Currently, there is an overemphasis on hard surfaces, and a better balance between paved areas and natural elements like trees and plants would enhance the aesthetic and comfort of these spaces. Increasing greenery would not only make them more environmentally friendly but also create a more relaxing atmosphere for users, improving the overall experience

Where do you prefer spending your time:

Public Spaces **or** Privately Own Public Space?

Privately Owned

Why?

Safety, cleanliness and maintenance.

Quality of Space Survey Questions

Objective: Understand the public's assessment of the quality of public spaces.

In the table below, please rate the qualities between the two types of public space on a scale of 1 – 3

1 – Poor

2 – Adequate

3 – Good

Characteristics of Placemaking:	Principles	Public Open Space (Publicly Owned / Free Access Spaces)	Quasi-Public Spaces (Privately Owned Public Spaces)
		1 - 3	1 - 3
Design of Space / Architectural Qualities	Easy Access	1	2
	Aesthetic / Design	2	2
	Public Furniture / Utilities	2	1
Inclusivity of Space	Child - Friendly	2	2
	Disability Friendly	3	3
Functional Quality	Signage	2	3
	Easy to navigate	3	3
	Services (bathrooms, wifi, help desk, security offices)	1	2
	Amenities (activities and facilities)	1	2
Care of Space	Safety	1	3
	Cleanliness	1	3
	Lighting	2	3
	Comfortability	1	1

Attraction Survey Questions:

Objective: Understand what draws individuals to the space and what keeps them coming back.

What design elements do you find most attractive in Privately Owned Public Spaces? (Open spaces, Seating arrangements, Architectural design, Landscaping)?

- Open areas that are not necessarily defined for a single purpose but could serve multiple activities.
- Public art installations
- Landscape architecture

Legal Ownership Survey Questions

Objective: Understand the public's awareness and perception of the legal ownership of the space.

Sample Questions

- Do you believe the ownership of public space impacts the public / users rights to use it? (Yes, No, Unsure)
Yes
- How important is it to you who owns the space? (Not important, Slightly important, Moderately important, Very important)
Not Important
- Do you feel that private ownership of public spaces enhances or restricts public experience? (Enhances, Restricts, No impact, Unsure)
Restricts

4. Have you ever been asked to leave or restricted from accessing certain areas within this space? (Yes, No) If yes, please explain.

No

5. **As a professional in the Built Environment, why do you think privately owned public spaces continue to thrive and attract users?**

They thrive because they are carefully curated, maintained, and designed to attract and retain foot traffic, which is crucial to their commercial success. These spaces are typically located in high-density areas, close to retail and entertainment, ensuring convenience and frequent use. The private owners, motivated by the need to drive revenue through surrounding businesses or nearby developments, invest in high-quality design, cleanliness, and safety, often offering a superior experience compared to publicly owned spaces. Additionally, they host events and manage security, creating an appealing environment that encourages repeated visits. The continuous flow of people is essential for generating revenue, so owners are committed to maintaining these spaces to ensure their profitability and desirability, reinforcing the symbiotic relationship between well-maintained spaces and economic return.

Definitions:

- Quasi – Public Spaces: having some public and some private features, for example providing public services but being privately owned or run
- Public Open Space: open public spaces such as beaches, parks and other natural spaces, pavements or squares and closed public spaces such as libraries, museums or religious, spiritual and heritage sites.
- Characteristics for Successful Public Spaces:

A successful public space generally needs to offer four qualities: it should be accessible, it should be comfortable and have a good image, people should be able to engage in an array of activities, and, it should be sociable.

Research Topic:

Placemaking – Public Space verses Privatised Public Spaces

A Case Study in the City of Johannesburg

Background

Placemaking is taking a 'people first' approach to urban planning. Rather than just considering the structural layout and buildings needed in a community, placemaking also considers how it feels to live, work, or grow in that area.

Strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value. More than just promoting better urban design, placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.

With placemaking, multiple factors are considered to create an area that is meaningful and beneficial to the people who live in its space. Placemaking helps improve social connection and drives a sense of local community which means people are more likely to spend time in, and thus invest, in its infrastructure through use of amenities provided.

What Makes a Great Place?

Project
for Public
Spaces



The Place Diagram is one of the tools Project for Public Spaces has developed to help communities evaluate places. The inner ring represents a place's key attributes, the middle ring its intangible qualities, and the outer ring its measurable data.

Research Question:

What attracts users to privately-owned public spaces in Johannesburg?

Sub-questions:

- What are the similarities and differences between public and quasi-public spaces?
- What are the main approaches to placemaking from the perspective of public space designers and development planners?
- What are the perceptions and experiences of users of public spaces and placemaking in Johannesburg?
- In ways has public placemaking as principle and practice evolved and transformed in the post-apartheid period?
- What do the processes and products of placemaking in Johannesburg reveal about quasi-public spaces?

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT - INTERVIEW SCHEDULES (Professionals in Public Space)

Research Question: “What attracts users to privately-owned public spaces in Johannesburg?” A Case Study of quasi-public spaces in the City of Johannesburg, Gauteng Province

Research Aim (s):

The objective of the research is to explore the perceptions of what constitutes public placemaking and what those perceptions indicate about the transformation of public spaces that are owned and managed by private entities. The research will entail collecting data from users of public spaces in City of Johannesburg, which will assist in answering the research topic. The following objectives will guide the interview questions to address the research question:

- To investigate people’s experiences of privately owned public spaces.
- To investigate why are privately owned public spaces are attractive?

Questions:

1. What area (private / public) of the development sector do you work in, and how are you involved in Public Space?
I work in the Private sector. As an Architect my involvement in Public Space varies according to the client’s brief- whether the building they require interfaces with the public or not.
2. What does Public Space mean to you, and your definition of how to describe these spaces?
Public Space means that the space should be easily accessible to every member of society despite varying degrees of class.
3. What does the term “Placemaking” mean to you?
Placemaking is the act of formulating space that is activated by people and further defined through their use and engagement with the space and in conjunction with other users contributing to the ‘spirit’/ emotive quality of that space.
4. In your experience, with reference to Case Study 1 and 2, what design elements makes the space attractive to users in these spaces?
 - Tuscan style design creating a foreign and therefore ‘romantic’ allure (Monte Casino)
 - Broad range of programme: hotel/theatre/ cinema/ nightclub/ restaurant etc.
 - Walkability through the entire complex
 - Varying sight lines which allow for the opportunity to see what’s happening below and above

5. With reference to Case Study 1 and 2, what design elements in these squares, in your professional opinion, creates a sense of belonging to the square?
 - A variety of restaurants suited to different consumer needs and budgets that face the squares.
 - A focal point through a fountain allowing for children to play and clear sightlines for parents to supervise their children. An element of play for children creates a specific sense of belonging with other families/ parents/ children.

6. What characteristics of quasi-public spaces do you think, contributes to the popularity of these spaces continuously being used?
 - Access up until the evening/ night
 - Various events that activate the space
 - 'Exclusivity' of the space that creates hype and contributes to the desire to be seen

7. What design elements do you think can improve these spaces?
 - Larger (and more) seating and landscape design that could contribute to people spending more time enjoying being an observer in the space without being compelled to purchase a meal.

Where do you prefer spending your time:

Public Spaces **or** Privately Own Public Space?

_____ Privately owned Public Space _____

Why?

Due to the higher level of security
available _____

Attraction Survey Questions:

Objective: Understand what draws individuals to the space and what keeps them coming back.

What design elements do you find most attractive in Privately Owned Public Spaces? (Open spaces, Seating arrangements, Architectural design, Landscaping)?

- Seating with some sort of shading
- Incorporation of green space (trees and plants)
- Open space with clear sightlines and the ability to feel safe visually

Legal Ownership Survey Questions

Objective: Understand the public's awareness and perception of the legal ownership of the space.

Sample Questions

1. Do you believe the ownership of public space impacts the public / users rights to use it? (Yes, No, Unsure) *Yes, the owner to some degree should be able to have a say on how it's used.*
2. How important is it to you who owns the space? (Not important, Slightly important, Moderately important, Very important)

Not important
3. Do you feel that private ownership of public spaces enhances or restricts public experience? (Enhances, Restricts, No impact, Unsure)
It could restrict the experience.
4. Have you ever been asked to leave or restricted from accessing certain areas within this space? (Yes, No) If yes, please explain
No, I have not.
5. **As a professional in the Built Environment, why do you think privately owned public spaces continue to thrive and attract users?**
The human desire to belong, be a part of a wider community, and be seen (especially in the era of social media) is what attracts users.

Definitions:

- Quasi – Public Spaces: having some public and some private features, for example providing public services but being privately owned or run
- Public Open Space: open public spaces such as beaches, parks and other natural spaces, pavements or squares and closed public spaces such as libraries, museums or religious, spiritual and heritage sites.
- Characteristics for Successful Public Spaces:

A successful public space generally needs to offer four qualities: it should be accessible, it should be comfortable and have a good image, people should be able to engage in an array of activities, and, it should be sociable.

PLACEMAKING

What if we built our cities around places?



WHAT IS PLACEMAKING?

Placemaking inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community. Strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value. More than just promoting better urban design, placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.

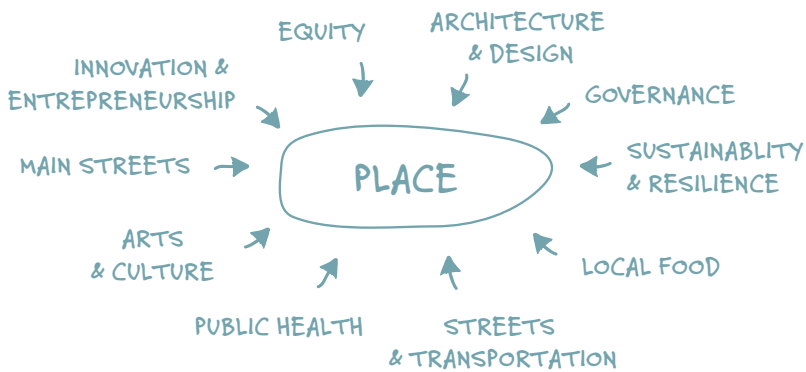


Cities have the capability of providing something
for everybody, only because, and only when,
they are created by everybody

-Jane Jacobs

Public Space at the Crossroads

Public space is inherently multidimensional. Successful and genuine public spaces are used by many different people for many different purposes at many different times of the day and the year. Because public spaces harbor so many uses and users—or fail to do so—they are also where a staggering cross-section of local and global issues converge.



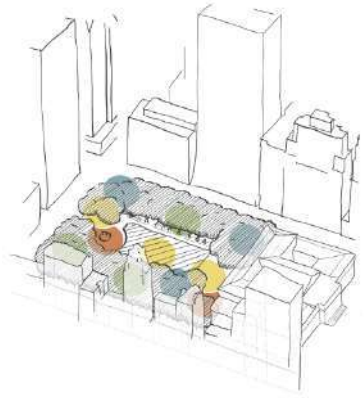
Public space is for negotiating the interface between our homes, our businesses, our institutions, and the broader world. Public space is how we get to work, how we do our errands, and how we get back home. Public space is where nearly half of violent crimes happen. Public space is where policing ensures safety for some but not others. Public space is for buying and selling, or for meeting, playing, and bumping into one another. Public space is for conveying our outrage and our highest aspirations, as well as for laying the most mundane utilities and infrastructure. And when we let it, public space can be a medium for creativity, expression, and experimentation.

In short, public space is where so many tragedies and triumphs of the commons play out. And that's why getting it right matters. The ten issue areas where we believe placemaking can have the most transformative impact are: *equity & inclusion; streets as places; architecture of place; innovation hubs; market cities; place governance; sustainability & resilience; rural communities; creative placemaking; and health.*

POWER OF 10+

How Cities Transform through Placemaking

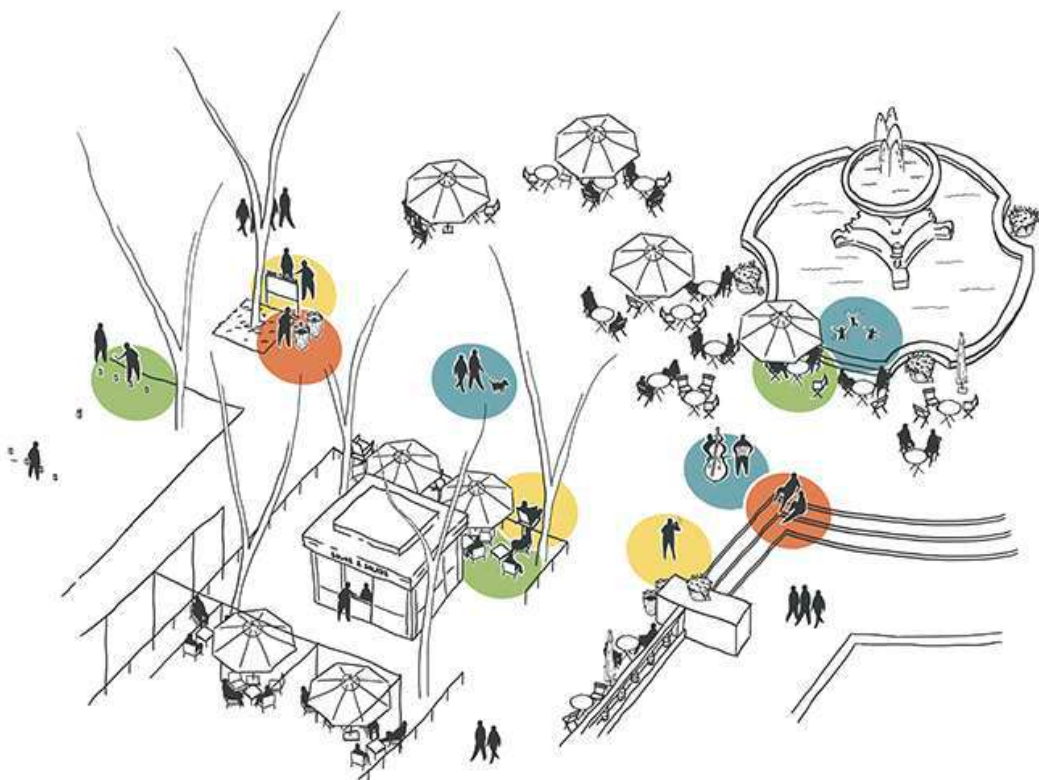
To be successful, cities need destinations. They need destinations that give an identity and image to their communities, and that help attract new residents, businesses, and investment. But they also need strong community destinations that attract people. A destination might be a downtown square, a main street, a waterfront, a park, or a museum. Cities of all sizes should have at least 10 destinations where people want to be. What makes each destination successful is that it has multiple places within it. For example, a square needs at least 10 places: a café, a children's play area, a place to read the paper or drink a cup of coffee, a place to also sit, somewhere to meet friends, etc. Within each of the places, there should be at least 10 things to do. Cumulatively, these activities, places and destinations are what make a great city. We call this big idea the "Power of 10+."



City/Region
10+ MAJOR DESTINATIONS



Destination
10+ PLACES IN EACH



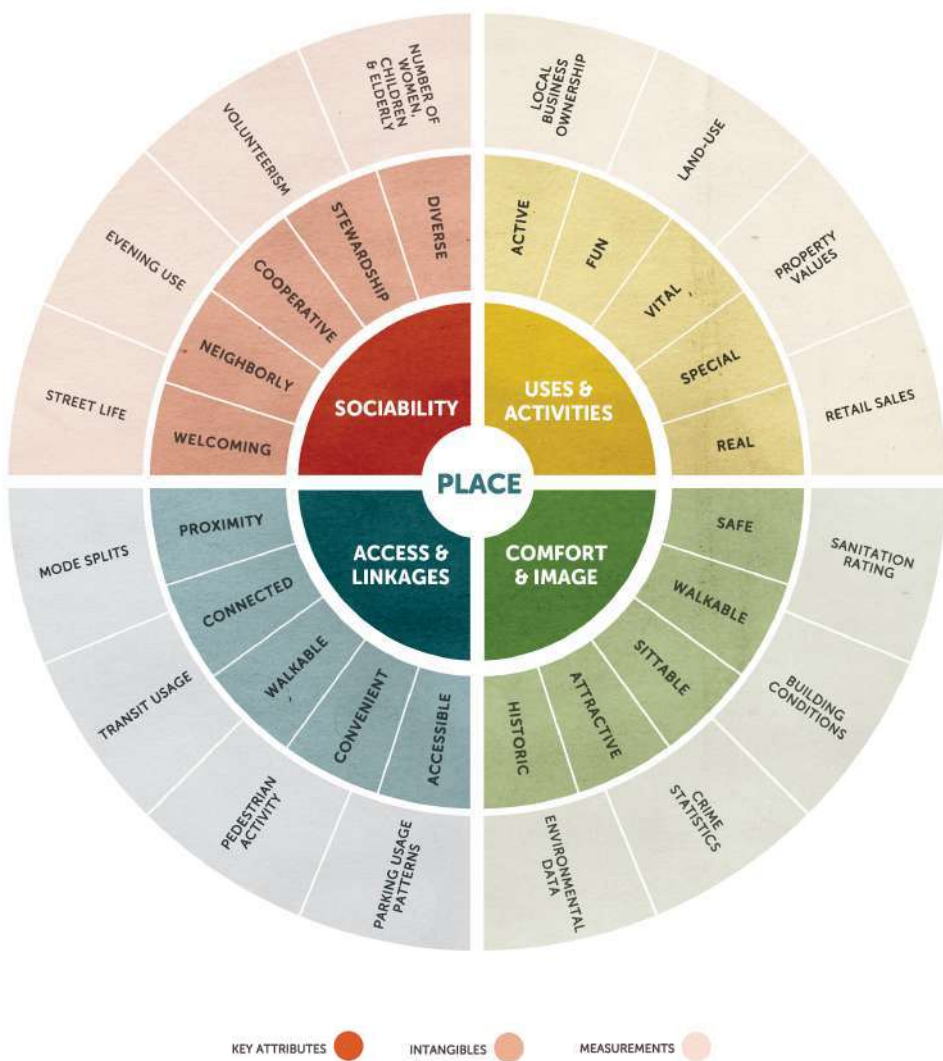
Place
10+ THINGS TO DO,
LAYERED TO CREATE SYNERGY

WHAT MAKES A GREAT PLACE?

It's surprisingly simple.

Most great places, whether a grand downtown plaza or humble neighborhood park, share four key attributes:

1. They are accessible and well connected to other important places in the area.
2. They are comfortable and project a good image.
3. They attract people to participate in activities there.
4. They are sociable environments in which people want to again and again.



Cities fail and succeed at
the scale of human interaction





Access & Linkages

You can easily judge the accessibility of a place by noting its connections to the surroundings, including the visual links. A great public space is easy to get to, easy to enter, and easy to navigate. It is arranged so that you can see most of what is going on there, both from a distance and up close. The edges of a public space also play an important role in making it accessible. A row of shops along a street, for instance, is more interesting and generally safer to walk along than a blank wall or an empty lot. Accessible spaces can be conveniently reached by foot and, ideally, public transit, and they have high parking turnover.

Questions to consider about Access & Linkages:

- *Can you see the space from a distance? Is its interior visible from the outside?*
- *Is there a good connection between this place and adjacent buildings? Or, is it surrounded by blank walls, surface parking lots, windowless buildings, or any other elements that discourage people from entering the space?*
- *Do occupants of adjacent buildings use the space?*
- *Can people easily walk there? Or are they intimidated by heavy traffic or bleak streetscapes?*
- *Do sidewalks lead to and from the adjacent areas?*
- *Does the space function well for people with disabilities and other special needs?*
- *Do the paths throughout the space take people where they actually want to go?*
- *Can people use a variety of transportation options—bus, train, car, and bicycle—to reach the place?*





Comfort & Image

A space that is comfortable and looks inviting is likely to be successful. A sense of comfort includes perceptions about safety, cleanliness, and the availability of places to sit. A lack of seating is the surprising downfall of many otherwise good places. People are drawn to places that give them a choice of places to sit, so they can be either in or out of the sun at various times of day or year.

Questions to consider about Comfort & Image:

- *Does the place make a good first impression?*
- *Are there as many women as men?*
- *Are there enough places to sit? Are seats conveniently located? Do people have a choice of places to sit, either in the sun or shade?*
- *Are spaces clean and free of litter? Who is responsible for maintenance?*
- *Does the area feel safe? Are there security personnel present? If so, what do these people do? When are they on duty?*
- *Are people taking pictures? Are there many photo opportunities available?*
- *Do vehicles dominate pedestrian use of the space, or prevent them from easily getting to the space?*





Uses & Activities

A range of activities are the fundamental building blocks of a great place. Having something to do gives people a reason to come (and return) to a place. When there is nothing interesting to do, a space will sit empty. That's the best measure that something is wrong. A carefully chosen range of activities will help a place attract a variety of people at different times of the day. A playground will draw young kids during the day, while basketball courts draw older kids after school, and concerts bring in everyone during the evening.

Questions to consider about Uses & Activities:

- *Are people using the space, or is it empty?*
- *Is it used by people of different ages?*
- *How many different types of activities are occurring at one time—people walking, eating, playing baseball, chess, relaxing, reading?*
- *Which parts of the space are used and which are not?*
- *Is there a management presence, or can you identify anyone in charge of the space?*





Sociability

This is the most important quality for a place to achieve—and the most difficult. When a place becomes a favorite spot for people to meet friends, greet their neighbors, and feel comfortable interacting with strangers, then you are well on your way to having a great place.

Questions to consider about Sociability:

- *Is this a place where you would choose to meet your friends? Are others meeting friends here?*
- *Are people in groups? Are they talking with one another? Do they talk to people in other groups?*
- *Do people seem to know each other by face or by name?*
- *Do people bring their friends and relatives to see the place? Do they point to its features with pride?*
- *Are people smiling? Do people make regular eye contact with each other?*
- *Do many people use the place frequently?*
- *Does the mix of ages and ethnic groups generally reflect the community at large?*
- *Do people tend to pick up litter when they see it?*

What attracts people most, it would appear,
is other people.

- William "Holly" Whyte



THE BEN GREAT

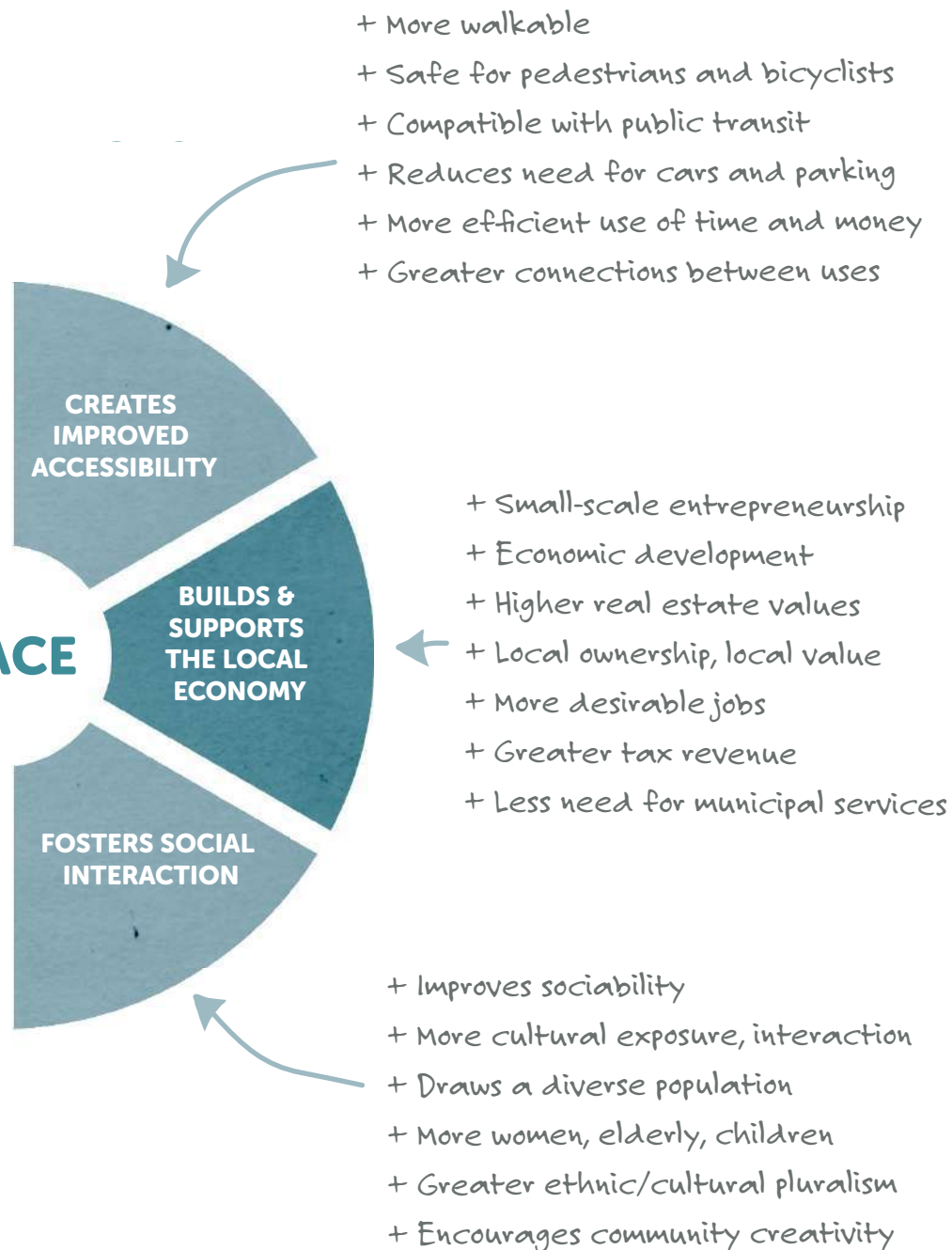
- + Visually pleasing
- + Generally stimulating
- + Sense of belonging
- + Greater security
- + Better environmental quality
- + Feeling of freedom

- + Greater community organization
- + Sense of pride and volunteerism
- + Perpetuation of integrity and values
- + Less need for municipal control
- + Self-managing

- + Increased physical activity
- + Access to fresh food
- + Greater security
- + Greater social inclusion
- + Enhanced environmental health



EFITS OF PLACES



11 PRINCIPLES FOR CREATING GREAT COMMUNITY PLACES

Effective public spaces are extremely difficult to accomplish because their complexity is rarely understood. As William (Holly) Whyte said, “It’s hard to design a space that will not attract people. What is remarkable is how often this has been accomplished.”

PPS has identified 11 key principles for transforming public spaces into vibrant community places, whether they are parks, plazas, public squares, streets, sidewalks, or the myriad other outdoor and indoor spaces that have public uses in common. These principles are:



*It takes a place to create a community and
a community to create a place*

Underlying Ideas

- 1 *The Community is The Expert*
- 2 *Create a Place, Not a Design*
- 3 *Look for Partners*
- 4 *They Always Say “It Can’t Be Done.”*

Planning & Outreach Techniques

- 5 *Have a Vision*
- 6 *You Can See a Lot Just By Observing*

Translating Ideas into Action

- 7 *Form Supports Function*
- 8 *Triangulate*
- 9 *Experiment: Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper*

Implementation

- 10 *Money Is Not The Issue*
- 11 *You Are Never Finished*

1. The community is the expert

The important starting point in developing a concept for any public space is to identify the talents and assets within the community. In any community there are people who can provide historical perspective, valuable insights into how the area functions, and an understanding of critical issues. Tapping this information at the beginning of the process will help to create a sense of community ownership in the project that can be of great benefit to both the project sponsor and the community.

2. Create a place, not a design

To make an under-performing space into a vital “place,” physical elements must be introduced that would make people welcome and comfortable, such as seating and new landscaping, and also through “management” changes in the pedestrian circulation pattern and by developing more effective relationships between the surrounding retail and the activities going on in the public spaces. The goal is to create a place that has both a strong sense of community and a comfortable image, as well as a setting and activities and uses that collectively add up to something more than the sum of its often simple parts. This is easy to say, but difficult to accomplish.

3. Look for partners

Partners are critical to the future success and image of a public space improvement project. Whether you seek partners at the start to plan for the project, or brainstorm and develop scenarios with a dozen partners who might participate in the future, these collaborations are invaluable in providing support and getting a project off the ground. They can be local institutions, museums, schools, and others.

4. They always say “It can’t be done.”

One of Yogi Berra’s great sayings is “If they say it can’t be done, it doesn’t always work out that way,” and we have found it to be appropriate for our work as well. Creating good public spaces is inevitably about encountering obstacles, because no one in either the public or private sectors has the job or responsibility to “create places.” For example, professionals such as traffic engineers, transit operators, urban planners and architects all have narrow definitions of their job – facilitating traffic or making trains run on time or creating long term schemes for building cities or designing buildings. Their job, evident in most cities, is not to create “places.” Starting with small scale community-nurturing improvements can demonstrate the importance of “places” and help to overcome obstacles.

5. You can see a lot just by observing

We can all learn a great deal from the successes and failures of others. By looking at how people use public spaces and finding out what they like and don’t like about them, it is possible to assess what makes them work. Through these observations, it becomes clear what kinds of activities are missing, and what might be incorporated. And when the spaces are built, continuing to observe them will teach us even more about how they evolve and can be managed over time.



6. Have a vision

The vision needs to come out of each individual community; however, essential to a vision for any public space is an idea of what kinds of activities might be happening in the space, a vision that the space should be comfortable and have a good image, and that it should be an important place where people want to be. It should instill a sense of pride in the people who live and work in the surrounding area.

7. Form supports function

The input from the community and potential partners, the understanding of how other spaces function, the experimentation, and overcoming the obstacles and naysayers provides the concept for the space. Although design is important, these other elements tell you what “form” you need to accomplish the future vision for the space.

8. Triangulate

“Triangulation is the process by which some external stimulus provides a linkage between people and prompts strangers to talk to other strangers as if they knew each other” (Holly Whyte). In a public space, the choice and arrangement of different elements in relation to each other can put the triangulation process in motion (or not). For example, if a bench, a wastebasket and a telephone are placed with no connection to each other, each may receive a very limited use, but when they are arranged together along with other amenities such as a coffee cart, they will naturally bring people together (or triangulate!). On a broader level, if a children’s reading room in a new library is located so that it is next to a children’s playground in a park and a food kiosk is added, more activity will occur than if these facilities were located separately.

9. *Experiment: Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper*

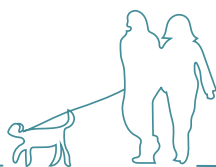
The complexity of public spaces is such that you cannot expect to do everything right initially. The best spaces experiment with short term improvements that can be tested and refined over many years! Elements such as seating, outdoor cafes, public art, striping of crosswalks and pedestrian havens, community gardens and murals are examples of improvements that can be accomplished in a short time.

10. *Money is not the issue*

This statement can apply in a number of ways. For example, once you've put in the basic infrastructure of the public spaces, the elements that are added that will make it work (e.g., vendors, cafes, flowers and seating) will not be expensive. In addition, if the community and other partners are involved in programming and other activities, this can also reduce costs. More important is that by following these steps, people will have so much enthusiasm for the project that the cost is viewed much more broadly and consequently as not significant when compared with the benefits.

11. *You are never finished*

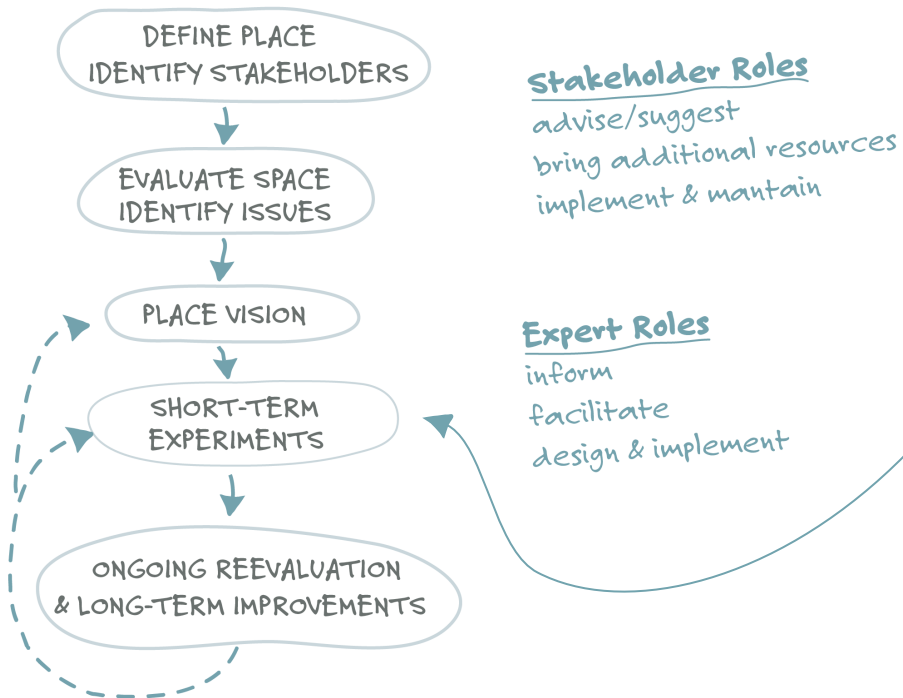
By nature good public spaces that respond to the needs, the opinions and the ongoing changes of the community require attention. Amenities wear out, needs change and other things happen in an urban environment. Being open to the need for change and having the management flexibility to enact that change is what builds great public spaces and great cities and towns.



THE PLACEMAKING PROCESS

Placemaking is both a process and a philosophy. It is centered around observing, listening to, and asking questions of the people who live, work, and play in a particular space in order to understand their needs and aspirations for that space and for their community as a whole. Working with the community to create a vision around the places they view as important to community life and to their daily experience is key to building a strategy for implementation. Beginning with short term, experimental improvements can immediately bring benefits to public spaces and the people who use them and inform longer term improvements over time.

Place Led, Community-Based Process



➤ *Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper (LQC)*

A low-cost, high-impact incremental framework for improving public spaces in short order that capitalizes on the creative energy of the community to efficiently generate new uses and revenue for places in transition.

LQC experiments range in scale and impact.

From small neighborhood amenities and art to large downtown temporary structures and events.

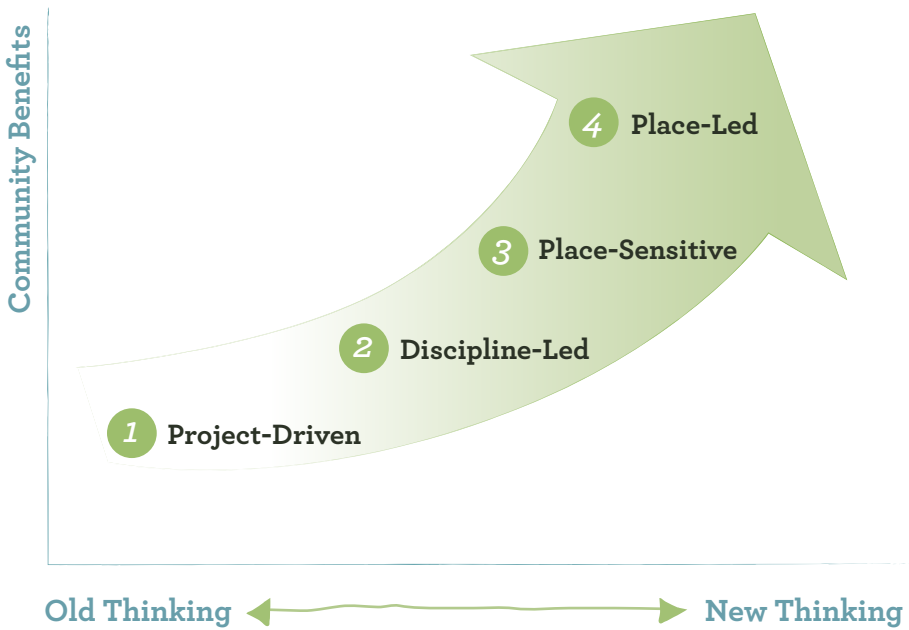


TOWARDS A PLACE-LED FUTURE

Through our own placemaking work, we've found that public space projects and the governance structures that produce them tend to fall into one of four types of development along a spectrum.

- 1 **Project-driven** spaces often emerge from top-down, bureaucratic leadership, which value on-time, under-budget delivery above all else. Project-driven processes generally lead to places that follow a general protocol without any consideration for local needs or desires.
- 2 **Discipline-led** projects may be of higher value and more photogenic, but their reliance on the singular vision of design professionals and other disciplinary silos often makes for spaces that do not function terribly well as public gathering places.
- 3 The **place-sensitive** approach to projects, which we see emerging among some design professionals, makes a concerted effort to gather community input—but the process is still led by designers and architects.
- 4 A truly **place-led** approach relies not on community input, but on a unified focus on place outcomes built on community engagement. A place-led process turns proximity into purpose, and the planning and management of shared public spaces into a group activity that builds social capital and shared values. Local participants in this process feel invested in the resulting public space, and are more likely to serve as its stewards.

Evolution of Development



When you focus on place,
you do everything differently



Everyone has the right to live in a great place.
More importantly, everyone has the right to
contribute to making the place where they
already live great.

- Fred Kent



Project for Public Spaces (PPS) is a nonprofit planning, design and educational organization dedicated to helping people create and sustain public spaces that build stronger communities.

Want to participate in the Placemaking movement? Apply for the **Placemaking Leadership Council** and connect with over 1,300 activists and strategists (from over 75 countries, and 500 cities) at the forefront of a growing movement.

Learn more: pps.org and pps.org/about/leadership-council/



Fieldwork Journal

**Tunisia Cassim
2730521
MSc Development Planning**

**20 January 2024 -
28 February 2025**

Welcome... From the Researcher.

Purpose...

Reflecting on the ever – changing development trends, Public Spaces and Public Life continue to be the common thread in between the mega residential and commercial developments. Their roles and meanings have changed with time, and new mutations of a variety of types of public spaces has evolved. The growing competition between cities and towns to attract citizens and investment, often overlook the quality of life of the people living in, working in and passing through.

For the purposes of the practicality and reflecting the application of the various research concepts, methods, and tools used to compile the research report, the “Fieldwork Journal,” was created by the researcher to physical show the journey of the search process.

The Fieldwork Journal, illustrates the researchers' thought processes, in class discussions and activities as well as the methodologies for how the researcher will be compiling each chapter of the research report.

The Fieldwork Journal was inspired by the works of Jan Gehl and Birgitte Svarre who wrote the book – “How to study Public Life.” The book shares a behind the scenes experience of a variety of tools from the Public Life studies toolbox that can be used to understand Public Life and Public Spaces. Considering the research reports theme is on “investigating,” and “evaluating,” public spaces, privately managed public spaces - it was imperative to adopt a toolbox that studies and guides those involved in city planning and others responsible for the quality of life of our cities. I as the researcher, adopted tools from the “Public Life Toolbox,” as guiding methods to obtain my data for my studies.



“Investigating the Growing Trend of Privatisation in Urban Environments:

Evaluating the Role of Privately Managed Public Spaces in Achieving Public Space Objectives through Placemaking Design Principles”



Shaping Space – 3 Conversations

- From Theory to Practice –
I was inspired by the conversation that can be had between three views:

Literature

These are the conversations from knowledgeable academics over the years who studied, assessed and formulated preconceived ideas and conceptualisations of public spaces and private public spaces. These theorisations have set the foundations of thoughts, and opinions of readers and professionals as they approach the theme of space. As such, these preconceived theories create pre-determined views, ideas, designs and plans for the future development of these spaces.

Developers / Professionals / Public and Private Entities

These are the movers and shakers who play an important role in shaping the planning, design and target groups of public space and private public space. The missions and visions of these entities, are motivated by the interests and objectives they wish to achieve in the proposed developments they pursue.

Ultimately influencing the “who” and “what” priorities of the space.

Users – People, Communities, Society

The users are the people who use the space planned and designed for, shaped by the preconceived notions and theories influenced by Literature.

There is a relationship here, of connections of lived experiences, representations and blueprints created by the literature that has examined these spaces overtime.

The true reflection of successful public space is in the user...



How did we decide on the research topic?

Tunisia Casim
2730521
ARPL 7040A: Research Methods
Proposal Presentation
12 April 2024

What defines the character of a city or its public spaces? How do we measure the quality of these spaces? What are the challenges and opportunities for improving the quality of these spaces? (100 words)

"Monetizing Urban Public Spaces: The survival or death of Publicness"

What are we questioning?



How does the dimensions of Publicness impact the quality of user's lived space / experience of urban public spaces in Johannesburg.

Objectives of the Research

- To compare and contrast how the values and developing principles of Private and Public Owned Public Spaces are governed.
- To explore the physical and social nature of these intermediate Public Spaces.
- What are principles that makes Urban Public Spaces successful?
- To provide lessons and recommendations for future planning for these Public Spaces that should be reflected regardless of the difference in ownership.

Student: Tunisia Casim

ARPL /MBA: Research Methodologies

Assessment: Direct Research Proposal

Assignment 4: Revised Draft Research Proposal

Research Theme: Privatization of Public Spaces

Research Topic: The survival or decay of Public Spaces: A study of the spatial transformation of Nelson Mandela and Paul Kruger Square a comparison of the quality of these environments between now and just – could to reflect what contributed to their regeneration after the global pandemic.

Research Question: How does the influence of privately owned public spaces impact the quality of these environments and the user's experience?

Reflection: Is the privatization of public spaces the key to ensuring the survival and sustainability of these spaces?

Key words: Public Space, Management, User – Experience, Privatization, Quality of Public Space

Due: 18 April 2024 @ 10:00am

Supervisor: Nqobile Malaza

Refining the Research Proposal

Tunisia Casim
ARPL 7040A
Research Proposal
(Neck Presentation)
29 April 2024

Research Specifications

- Research Theme**
The influence of ownership on the quality of public spaces and how this shapes the management of these spaces, and impacts the user's experience.
- Key Words**
Quality of Public Space, Ownership, Management, User – Experiences, Privatization
- Working Title (18 words max.)**
The influence of ownership on the management of public spaces, and how does this impact the public's experience
- Problem Statement**
There is inequality in the design and maintenance of public spaces, which is impacting the dimensions of what makes public spaces public. The management of these public spaces influence the user's experience and the spaces ability to adapt and sustain itself. Public spaces were significantly impacted by the covid – 19 pandemic however post – covid, some public spaces recovered better than others, resulting in some public spaces decaying and others thriving better than before.

Student: Tunisia Casim

Student No. 2730521

Discipline: MSc Development Planning

Module: ARPL 7040A (Research Methodologies)

Assessment: Full Proposal for External Examination

Working Title: The meaning of Public Space through the user's sense of Ownership

Research Theme: What are the attributes that make public spaces sustainable over time?

Research Question: What qualities and dimensions of squares as public spaces facilitate and embed a sense of ownership in those who use them Johannesburg and Tshwane?

Key Words: Public Space, Publicness, Ownership, Facilitation, Urban Design

Supervisor: Nqobile Malaza

Due: 12 May 2024

Tunisia Casim – 2730521
ARPL 7040A
Research Proposal
(Neck Presentation)
8 April 2024

Main Research Question (Sub – question)

- Sub – questions**
 - Is there a difference in the quality of Public Spaces that are managed under Private Ownership in contrast to Public Ownership?
 - What are the major differences in terms of types of retail / businesses, safety, aesthetics of these areas and mobility and access that is observed in these areas around the transport hubs?
 - What are the different policies that these Public Spaces are governed by under their ownership?
 - What are the lessons learnt from the people interviewed that can be implemented in those surrounding public spaces to ensure that the quality of these spaces is maintained equally?

Main Research Question

- The research question aims to investigate, "How does Ownership affect the quality of Public Spaces? The research question is designed to explore the relationship between the type of ownership and the impact on quality of space.
- Research Question**
Exploring how the influence of Ownership affects the quality of Public Spaces, and the impact that the management of these environments have on types of retail / businesses, safety, provision, existence of these areas and mobility and access.

Student: Tunisia Casim

Student No. 2730521

Discipline: MSc Development Planning

Module: ARPL 7040A (Research Methodologies)

Assessment: Full Proposal for External Examination

Working Title: Un – colouring the qualities of a Racial City, through the principles of urban design of Post Apartheid Public Spaces.

Supervisor: A Case Study of quasi-public spaces in the City of Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, Nqobile Malaza

Due: 12 May 2024

Student: Tunisia Casim

Student No. 2730521

Discipline: MSc Development Planning

Module: ARPL 7040A (Research Methods)

Assessment: Ethics Application Amendments

Working Title: Exploring the relationship between the People's Perception and the Management's Perspective of Quasi-Public Spaces in the Johannesburg

Supervisor: Nqobile Malaza

Due: 16 July 2024

The outcome of ethics and taking a suggested change in approach

Section B

Summary of overall risk category identified by applicant of this study. Refer to risk category definitions for what these risks specifically refer to. Please select the appropriate box

Minimal risk

Summary of overall risk category identified by reviewer of this study. Refer to risk category definitions for what these risks specifically refer to. Please select the appropriate box

Minimal risk

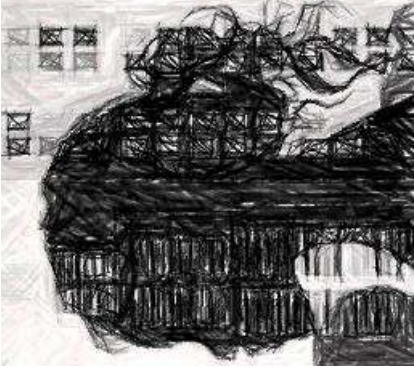
Does the reviewer believe that the applicant has adequately dealt with all the potential risks of this project

Yes

If NO, describe which specific risks need to be addressed and how

Non

- My research journey took a turn after the outcome of my ethics application... After much discussion and deliberation with my Supervisor, it was decided to begin again from a different angle. My ethics application made reference to the "Uncoloring of the Racial City," which in my feedback notes suggested that any content that is racially linked can be controversial and may scare off participants during the fieldwork phase. I learned that themes relating to sensitive human experiences can be difficult to manage in the findings chapter as substantiating opinions of the interviewee with an analytic approach can be misleading and inaccurate.



ended.

5) Reviewer's overall comments

- Permission letter:

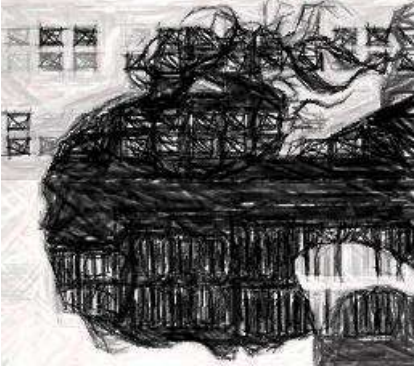
(a) "I am seeking permission to do research at the Town and Regional Planning at the University of Pretoria" - Incomprehensible. Please edit before sending out to avoid making a negative impression.

(b) "post - apartheid public spaces contribute to negating the qualities of the racial city created during the apartheid government regime with specific reference to the City of Johannesburg as a case study" - This is a very complex sentence. Try writing this in simple terms and frame your research in the interest of the shopping centre management. They are likely to be wary about research that has the potential to associate their business with apartheid and "the racial city". I think that you are studying more than that and you should probably lean into the public space and experiential aspects of your study when explaining it.

- A very interesting and immensely relevant study. I look forward to your findings.

The outcome of ethics and taking a suggested change in approach

- During the discussions held with my Supervisor, we relooked the common themes of my research being – public space, private public space, placemaking. The common thread here is – “What attracts users to space?” In theory, attraction to space is creating through placemaking which transform space into a place using various planning and design tools from the placemaking concept.
- It was after the October Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 presentation to the panel of the School of Architecture and Planning did, we adjust the approach and research question from “attraction,” to “approaches” to placemaking. This was as result of the confusion caused by the word “attraction,” that was raised by the panel.
- The evolution of refining and reworking the research topic, and research question has been incredibly difficult for me, perhaps the most difficult part of this research process. Everyone has a thought and opinion and are more informed sometimes – so how do you decide who you listen too?



Sometimes you are left with questions, opinions, thoughts and suggestions from the Panellists, Supervisors, Lecturers etc who are all more qualified in the field than you are as the student, and now you have to make a decision... This was the most daunting period for me during the research process. Who do you listen too?

Further to the above, how do you begin motivating and writing a research piece based on others thoughts, concerns, misunderstandings and suggestions – it is incredibly difficult...

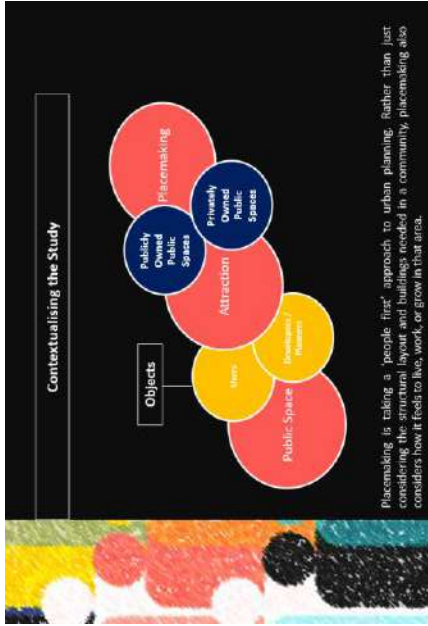
I listened. I chose to listen. I chose to be guided.

I listened. I chose to listen. I chose to be guided.

17 October 2024 – Final Presentation of the year ...

Making Space for People in Public Space

Tunisia Cassim
Stu No: 2730521
MSc Development Planning
Supervisor: Nabille Malaza
17 October 2024



What attracts users to privately-owned public spaces in Johannesburg?

The objective of the research is to explore the perceptions of what constitutes public placemaking and what those perceptions indicate about the transformation of public spaces that are owned and managed by private entities.

The research will entail collecting data from users of public spaces in City of Johannesburg, which will assist in answering the research topic.

The following objectives will guide the interview questions to address the research question:

- To investigate people's experiences of privately owned public spaces.
- To investigate why are privately owned public spaces are attractive?

Research Title

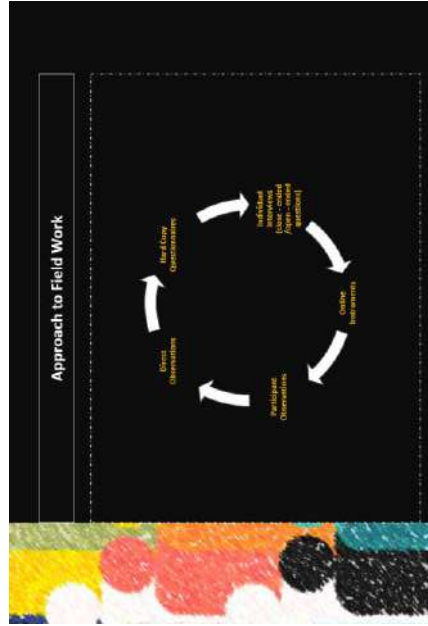
Unpacking the Findings

Experience	Users have a preference for any they choose the public spaces they spend time in.
Design	The design of public spaces play a role in the longevity of those space use and outcomes.
Management	The clear and self thinking and designing of public spaces has a result of operations and well-being.

Gaps highlighted during the field work that I have learned –

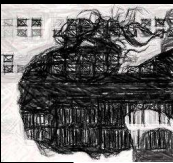
- The rise of quad – public spaces is actually a result of and outcome of lack of funding structures, public private sector partnerships and the impact of post – covid user appreciation of public spaces.
- Sector driven public space developments are driven by targets and meeting users needs, which entails designing for the user but not involving them in the design process.

Spaces for the public that are not public



Research Questions

- What are the similarities and differences between public and quasi-public space?
- What are the main approaches to placemaking from the perspective of public space designers and development planners?
- What are the perceptions and experiences of users of public spaces and placemaking in Johannesburg?
- In ways has public placemaking as principle and practice evolved and transformed in the post-apartheid period?
- What do the processes and products of placemaking in Johannesburg reveal about quasi-public spaces?



17 October 2024 – Final Presentation of the year ...

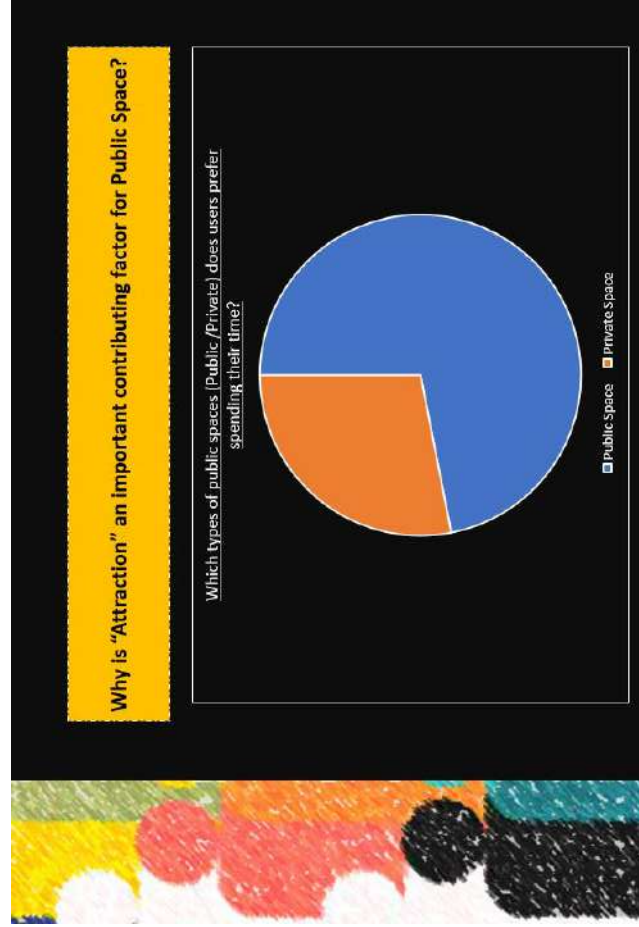


Research Sub - Questions

- What are the main approaches to placemaking from the perspective of public space designers and development planners?
 - Public Sector
 - Developed by City and guided by City Policies
 - User Engagement
 - Correcting the past
 - Private Sector
 - Market – Driven
 - Client – Brief
 - Forming Space

Research Questions

- What are the perceptions and experiences of users of public spaces and placemaking in Johannesburg?
 - Variety of uses
 - Safety at all hours of the day
 - Incorporation of greenery, retail and play areas in one facility



I listened. I chose to listen. I chose to be guided.

Reflection...

The final angle...

I remember having this discussion during our debriefing sessions in October in our Cohort group. The concerns around the word attraction from the Panellists were loud – the words caused much confusion and alarms.

I questioned my knowledge and capabilities to complete this research report as I was being swayed and fractured by the knowledge of the powers that knew so much more than me. It was here I had to learn how to justify my study and the problem I am trying to address.

The final angle – looking at attraction from placemaking elements in private public spaces that draw users in, create a sense of belonging and establish a sense of place that the users, people and communities they serve want to be in.

I was encouraged by Supervisor to use my strengths which is journaling a journey and that inspired the research title
– From Theory to Practice.

I listened. I chose to listen. I chose to be guided.

LEARNING

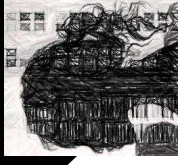
Alone



With a mentor



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Reflection...

Research Title

- Placemaking in South African Private Public Spaces – From Theory to Practice

Research Topic

- The paradox of the design and evolution of public spaces can be observed by the public spaces that users choose to return too, travel for and use regularly. These types of public spaces boast a certain tailoring to users' needs which make them popular and in turn sustain their use and relevancy. Subsequent to the above, the research to be conducted seeks to provide perspectives from built environment professionals on what are the reasons for these private public spaces showing a growing interest by the public. As well as, understanding the planning and design processes followed for the development of these public spaces. There is a paradox here, as one can look at private public spaces as tailored spaces for the market's it will serve. The researcher poses the challenging reflection, that perhaps these spaces are planned and designed on the elements that the user's need, desire and want and as result make a profit. Similarly, these private public spaces are not solely concrete villages seeking a return on investment, but perhaps that these spaces are able to make a return on investment because they meet the needs of public and the communities they serve? As David Harvey makes reference, the right to the city phenomena is a commandment that is necessary for connection between the user and space in the context of this research report.

Research Question

- What attracts users to privately-owned public spaces in Johannesburg?

I listened. I chose to listen. I chose to be guided.

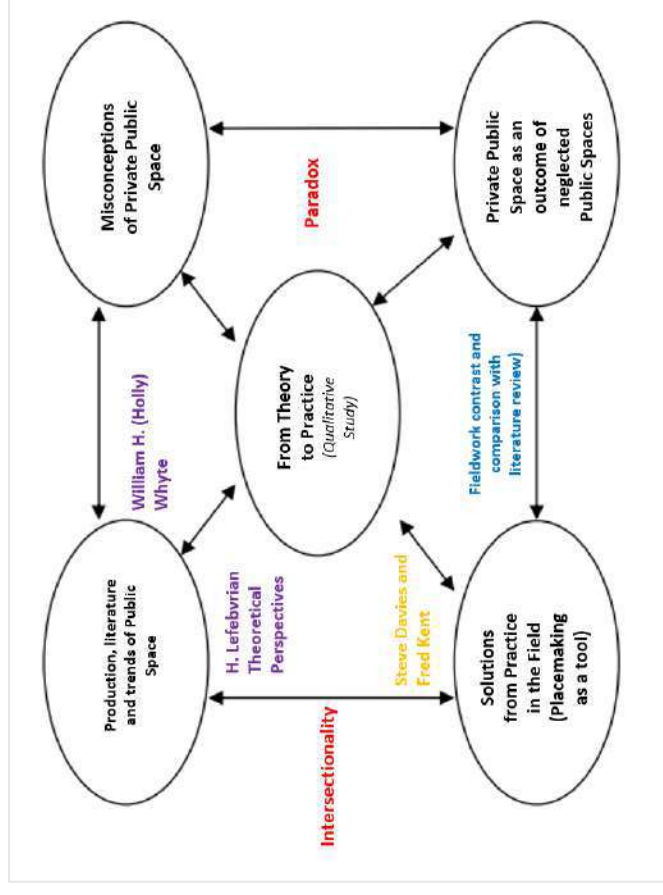
Reflection....

Research Sub – questions

- What are the similarities and differences between public and private public spaces in theory?
- What are the driving factors for the planning and design of private public spaces in theory?
- From a professional point of view, what characteristics of private public spaces in the city of Johannesburg are design with the end – user in mind?
- From a professional point of view, how are the successes of the planning and design tools of placemaking in Johannesburg revealed in private public spaces?

I listened. I chose to listen. I chose to be guided.

Conceptual Framework



Tunisia Cassim

2730521

MSc Development Planning

"Investigating the Growing Trend of Privatisation in
Urban Environments:

Evaluating the Role of Privately Managed Public
Spaces in Achieving Public Space Objectives through
Placemaking Design Principles"



- Initial Research Report submitted – 28 February 2025
- Newly Revised incorporating comments from examination outcome received
8 September 2025
- Revised Examination Report to be submitted 24 October 2025



- The newly revised research report submitted 24 October 2025 makes reference to the Fieldwork Journal to illustrate the practical work and application undertaken by the researcher during the research journey from 20 January 2025 to 24 October 2025.



Fieldwork Journal

Tunisia Cassim

2730521

MSc Development Planning

**“Investigating the Growing Trend of Privatisation in Urban Environments:
Evaluating the Role of Privately Managed Public Spaces in Achieving Public
Space Objectives through Placemaking Design Principles”**

Chapter 1

Problem Statement

Despite the essential role that public spaces play in fostering community interaction, engagement, and a shared sense of identity, many urban areas—particularly in South African cities—are experiencing a decline in the quality, accessibility, and utilization of these spaces. While some public spaces thrive, others face decay due to limited investment, poor design, and disconnection from the needs of their users. In contrast, privately-managed public spaces (PMPS) in cities like Johannesburg appear to be flourishing, often better aligning with user preferences and offering higher quality environments.

This discrepancy highlights a critical gap between theoretical frameworks on public space design and the realities of urban planning and implementation. The challenge lies in understanding why private managed public spaces attract more users and investment compared to traditional public spaces and what this reveals about the current planning and design practices.

Research Aim

This research seeks to explore the driving factors behind this trend and to investigate the growing trend of privatisation in urban environments and evaluating the role of Privately Managed Public Spaces in achieving public space objectives through Placemaking Design Principles.



Research Aim

Evaluating the Role of Privately Managed Public Spaces in Achieving Public Space Objectives through Placemaking Design Principles"

Context of Research

"Investigating the Growing Trend of Privatisation in Urban Environments"

Research Objectives

- To describe the purpose and objectives of public space
- To investigate how privatisation impacts public space.
- To explore how the planning and design tools of placemaking are used in privately managed public spaces
- To provide an outcome of whether Privately Managed Public Spaces are achieving the objectives of Public Spaces through placemaking design principles.



Research Question

What attracts users to privately-owned public spaces in Johannesburg?



Research Question

- What are the similarities and differences between public and private public spaces?
- What are the driving factors for the planning and design of private public spaces?
- From a professional point of view, what characteristics of private public spaces in the city of Johannesburg are design with the user in mind?
- From a professional point of view, how are the successes of the planning and design tools of placemaking in Johannesburg revealed in private public spaces?

Methods for Researching PMPS

- Site observations: Documenting design features, usage patterns, security presence.
- Interviews: With users, planners, developers, and private managers.
- Discourse analysis: Studying how PMPS are framed in planning documents and media.
- Ethnography: Immersive research capturing lived experience and informal rules of use.



Research Methodology

Embedding my Research in the “right” Definitions for the Study

As a vital process for compiling a research report, understanding your key terms are important to carefully convey what the research seeks to achieve.

The key themes for this research report are –

- **Public Space**
- **Privatisation**
- **Placemaking**
- **Privately Managed Public Space**

These key themes of the research was inspired by my time in the City of Cape Town in 2023, as I explored the city's public spaces and wondered – “Why are some public spaces more busier than others?”
“Why are some public spaces more cleaner than others?”
“Why are some public spaces more prettier than others?”

- Public space under the lens of privatization (management)



Public Space

Definitions...

Public Space refers to the areas that are publicly owned and accessible to all members of a community, this is not defined by their background, and are typically characterised by their openness, inclusivity, and capacity to facilitate social interaction, civic engagement and democratic expression."

(Low & Smith (2006), Mitchell (1995), and Carr et al. (1992))



Privatization

Definitions...

"Privatization is the process by which functions, services, or assets that were previously under public ownership or control are transferred to private ownership, management, or influence. This process often reflects broader neoliberal policies aiming to increase efficiency, reduce government expenditure, and expand market logic into public sectors." *Savas (2000), Harvey (2005), and Peck & Tickell (2002)*

In urban contexts, privatization refers not only to the sale of land or services but also to the outsourcing of management, surveillance, and regulation of spaces that are nominally public. This can result in Privately Managed Public Spaces (PMPS) or semi-public areas governed by corporate interests, where access and behaviour are tightly controlled.



Public Space in the context of Privatization

Definitions...

"Public space is traditionally understood as **publicly owned** and **accessible urban areas** where individuals can gather, express themselves, and engage in civic life.

However, in the context of increasing privatization, these spaces are often subject to private control, surveillance, and exclusionary practices that challenge their openness, reduce democratic potential, and transform them into pseudo-public or controlled environments."

— Adapted from *Mitchell (2003)*, *Zukin (1995)*, and *Minton (2009)*



Privately Managed Public Spaces (PMPS)

Definitions...



"Privately managed public spaces are urban areas that, while publicly accessible, are owned or controlled by private entities. These spaces often resemble traditional public spaces in appearance and function but are governed by private rules, security, and surveillance, which may restrict access, behaviour, and expression in ways that challenge the democratic and inclusive ideals of public space."

Kayden (2000), Minton (2009), and Madden (2010)

- Jerold Kayden (2000), in his landmark study on POPS in New York City, defines these spaces as "publicly accessible spaces created through agreements between private developers and municipalities, where public access is exchanged for zoning bonuses or other incentives

Placemaking

Definitions...



Placemaking is the process of planning, designing, and managing public spaces with the goal of creating vibrant, accessible, and community-centred places. It focuses on:

- Community engagement
- Cultural identity
- Accessibility and inclusivity
- Public interaction and social cohesion

There are different approaches to placemaking, such as strategic placemaking, creative placemaking, and tactical urbanism, but they all aim to improve the quality of life through the physical and social fabric of a place.

Placemaking background

Definitions...

The rise of placemaking has occurred within a broader context of neoliberal urbanization, where the boundaries between public and private space are increasingly blurred. Peck & Tickell (2002) argue that placemaking, especially in cities that rely on public-private partnerships, often reflects a neoliberal agenda that prioritizes economic growth, consumerism, and market-driven forces.

The literature on placemaking reflects both its potential and its limitations. On one hand, it offers a framework for revitalizing urban spaces in ways that prioritize community well-being and social interaction. On the other hand, the rise of privatized spaces and market-driven placemaking challenges the ideal of truly public spaces as sites for democratic participation. As urban areas continue to grapple with issues of privatization, social justice, and inclusivity, placemaking remains a pivotal concept that demands critical examination within the broader discourse on urban space and governance.

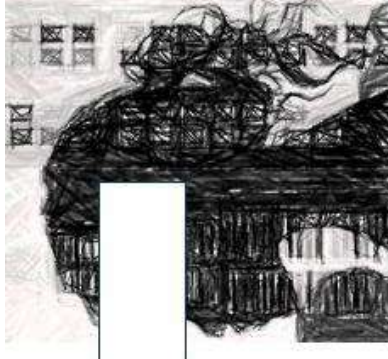


Placemaking

Definitions...

Wyckoff (2014) describes placemaking as "the deliberate shaping of an environment to facilitate social interaction and improve a community's quality of life," distinguishing between strategic placemaking (long-term goals like economic development) and creative placemaking (arts and culture-driven approaches).

Wyckoff, M. A. (2014). Definition of placemaking: Four different types. In Planning & Zoning News, 32(3), 1-10



Privately Managed Public Spaces (PMPS)



Privately Managed Public Spaces (PMPS)

What Are Privately Managed Public Spaces (PMPS)?

These are spaces open to the public but owned or managed by private entities.

Examples:

- Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS)
- Shopping centre plazas
- Corporate courtyards
- Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)

"Investigating the Growing Trend of Privatisation in Urban Environments:

Evaluating the Role of Privately Managed Public Spaces in Achieving Public Space Objectives through Placemaking Design Principles"

Privately Managed Public Spaces (PMPS)

Definitions...

"Privately managed public spaces are urban areas that, while publicly accessible, are owned or controlled by private entities. These spaces often resemble traditional public spaces in appearance and function but are governed by private rules, security, and surveillance, which may restrict access, behaviour, and expression in ways that challenge the democratic and inclusive ideals of public space."

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Privately Managed Public Spaces (PMPS)

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Kayden (2000), Minton (2009), and Madden (2010)

- Jerold Kayden (2000), in his landmark study on POPS in New York City, defines these spaces as "publicly accessible spaces created through agreements between private developers and municipalities, where public access is exchanged for zoning bonuses or other incentives

Key Questions to Explore...

Opportunities for Placemaking in PMPS

- **Well-maintained environments:** Private funding can ensure cleanliness, security, and upkeep.
- **Innovative design:** Private entities may invest in creative architecture, landscaping, and amenities.
- **Flexibility:** Less bureaucracy than city-managed spaces can mean quicker implementation of placemaking projects.
- **Events and programming:** Private managers can curate events that activate the space (e.g. farmers markets, art exhibits).



Tunisia Cassim
2730521

MSc Development Planning

"Investigating the Growing Trend of Privatisation in
Urban Environments:

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Chapter 3



- Initial Research Report submitted – 28 February 2025
- Newly Revised incorporating comments from examination outcome received
8 September 2025
- Revised Examination Report to be submitted 24 October 2025



Fieldwork Journal

Tunisia Cassim

2730521

MSc Development Planning

**"Investigating the Growing Trend of Privatisation in Urban Environments:
Evaluating the Role of Privately Managed Public Spaces in Achieving Public
Space Objectives through Placemaking Design Principles"**

Chapter 3

Targeted Sampling the Built Environment Professionals

Public Space

National or Provincial Government

- Working with planning policy and legislation
- Private Sector Town Planners or Public Sector Town Planners working with land use applications
- Architects or Urban Designers working in design and modelling of public spaces and privately managed public spaces
- Property Managers who work in the managing of public space and private managed public spaces.

Local Scale

Designers

Property Managers / Private Companies Managing Public Spaces



"Investigating the Growing Trend of Privatisation in Urban Environments:
Evaluating the Role of Privately Managed Public Spaces in Achieving Public Space Objectives through Placemaking Design Principles"

- Research Design & Data Collection Methods Applied



■ My Time in the Field...

Attempting to Interview...

- The field work kick off was exciting as I began to reach out to the various companies who worked in the urban design, construction, planning and development space. I mailed, I visited and I was ready to interact.
- However, what the research process does not show you is the challenges of sourcing suitable times with very busy people. I was declined, denied and ghosted at some point. The various process the University of Pretoria Staff had to face to be allowed to interview posed as a delay for my timeframes and again – I had to re – evaluate my data sources (participants).
- After much discussion and query, we chose to focus on solely Built Environment Professionals and not only the professionals of University of Pretoria. I was fortunate room and provision was made on my ethics application for both so this was still "ethical."
- From here I began the process of sharing my research online and seeking Professionals who were open to participate in my field work process – I was delighted by people's enthusiasm.
- Finally, I felt hopeful...



Tunisia Cassim • You
Development Planning - Public Space Enthusiast - Thinker
4mo • Edited • 34

Looking for an Urban Designer / Architect who can assist me with my Master's Research survey in the Design of Public Space.

Please comment your details below should you have the time to engage with me.



16 comments • 4 reposts

Support Comment Repost Send

Most relevant



Peter Gilmore • Following
Professional Urban Planner
4mo

Hi Tunisia, I'm an urban planner involved in public realm space upgrade and have done several nodes and town centres in township areas, gladly timeshare my experience with you.

Peter Gilmore
Senior Projects Manager
eThekweni Municipality

Love 3 • Reply • 2 Replies

See previous replies



Tunisia Cassim • Author
Development Planning - Public Space Enthusiast - Thinker
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Tunisia Cassim • Author
Development Planning - Public Space Enthusiast - Thinker
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Tunisia Cassim oh I see I need premier to connect. 2730521@students.wits.ac.za this is my email address



Findings...

On site observations and Mapping

- Illustrating placemaking principles and design tools in the two selected Case Studies, namely; Nelson Mandela Square and Monte Casino.

Semi – structured interviews

- Built Environment Professionals on their experience in practice working with public space and privately

The Fieldwork Journal was inspired by the works of Jan Gehl and Birgitte Svarre who wrote the book – “How to study Public Life.” The book shares a behind the scenes experience of a variety of tools from the Public Life studies toolbox that can be used to understand Public Life and Public Spaces. Considering the research reports theme is on “investigating,” and “evaluating,” public spaces, privately managed public spaces – it was imperative to adopt a toolbox that studies and guides those involved in city planning and others responsible for the quality of life of our cities. I as the researcher, adopted tools from the “Public Life Toolbox,” as guiding methods to obtain my data for my studies.



“Investigating the Growing Trend of Privatisation in Urban Environments:

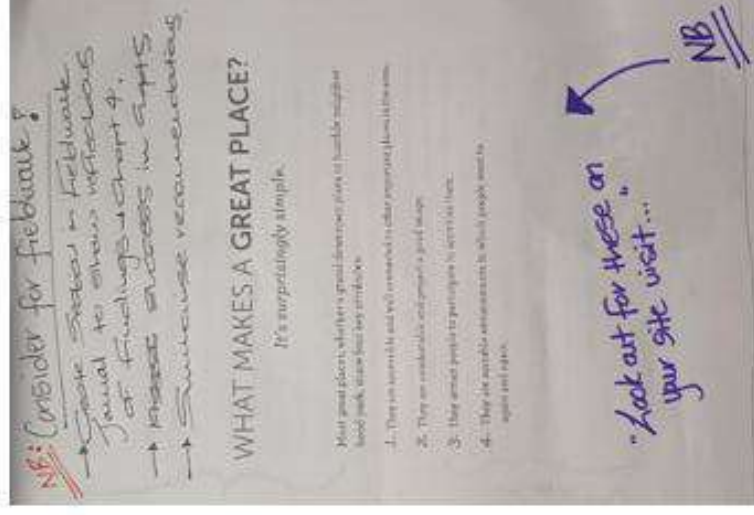
Evaluating the Role of Privately Managed Public Spaces in Achieving Public Space Objectives through Placemaking Design Principles”



Findings... On - Site

On site observations and Mapping

- Illustrating placemaking principles and design tools in the two selected Case Studies, namely, Nelson Mandela Square and Monte Casino.



"Investigating the Growing Trend of Privatisation in Urban Environments:

Evaluating the Role of Privately Managed Public Spaces in Achieving Public Space Objectives through Placemaking Design Principles"



Fieldwork Journal

Tunisia Cassim

2730521

MSc Development Planning

**"Investigating the Growing Trend of Privatisation in Urban Environments:
Evaluating the Role of Privately Managed Public Spaces in Achieving Public
Space Objectives through Placemaking Design Principles"**

Chapter 4

- 
- My Time in the Field & the Results...

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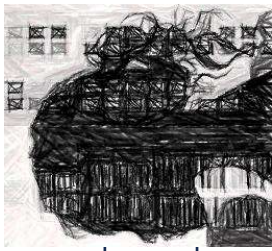
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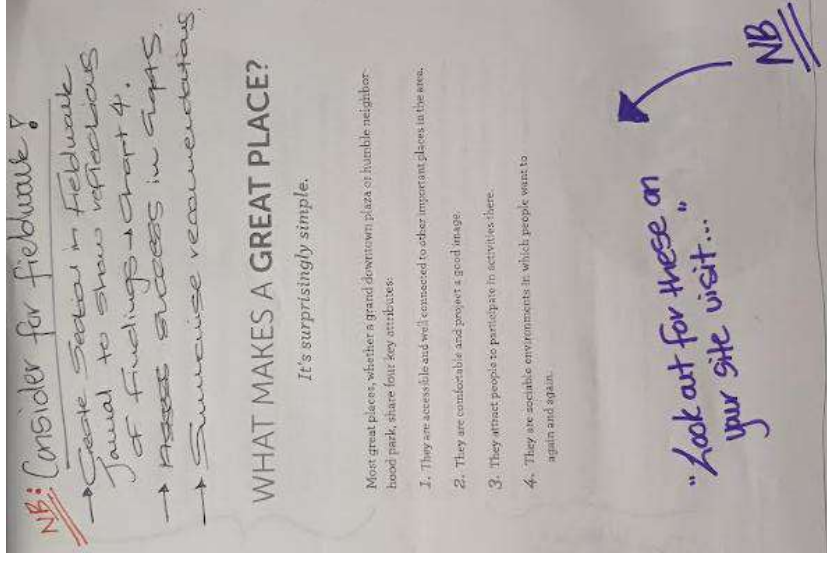
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■ Placemaking Principles & Design Tools

Attribute		Definition	Application
1.	Access & Linkages 	You can easily judge the accessibility of a place by noting its connections to the surroundings, including the visual links. A great public space is easy to get to, easy to enter, and easy to navigate. It is arranged so that you can see most of what is going on there, both from a distance and up close. The edges of a public space also play an important role in making it accessible. A row of shops along a street, for instance, is more interesting and generally safer to walk along than a blank wall or an empty lot. Accessible spaces can be conveniently reached by foot and, ideally, public transit, and they have high parking turnover	Questions to consider about Access & Linkages: <i>Can you see the space from a distance? Is its interior visible from the outside?</i> <i>Is there a good connection between this place and adjacent buildings? Or, is it surrounded by blank walls, surface parking lots, windowless buildings, or any other elements that discourage people from entering the space?</i> <i>Do occupants of adjacent buildings use the space?</i> <i>Can people easily walk there? Or are they intimidated by heavy traffic or bleak streetscapes?</i> <i>Do sidewalks lead to and from the adjacent areas?</i> <i>Does the space function well for people with disabilities and other special needs?</i> <i>Do the paths throughout the space take people where they actually want to go?</i> <i>Can people use a variety of transportation options—bus, train, car, and bicycle—to reach the place?</i>
2.	Comfort & Image 	A space that is comfortable and looks inviting is likely to be successful. A sense of comfort includes perceptions about safety, cleanliness, and the availability of places to sit. A lack of seating is the surprising downfall of many otherwise good places. People are drawn to places that give them a choice of places to sit, so they can be either in or out of the sun at various times of day or year.	Questions to consider about Comfort & Image: <i>Does the place make a good first impression?</i> <i>Are there as many women as men?</i> <i>Are there enough places to sit? Are seats conveniently located? Do people have a choice of places to sit, either in the sun or shade?</i> <i>Are spaces clean and free of litter? Who is responsible for maintenance?</i> <i>Does the area feel safe? Are there security personnel present? If so, what do these people do? When are they on duty?</i> <i>Are people taking pictures? Are there many photo opportunities available?</i> <i>Do vehicles dominate pedestrian use of the space, or prevent them from easily getting to the space?</i>

■ Placemaking Principles & Design Tools

Attribute		Definition	Application
3	<i>Uses & Activities</i> 	A range of activities are the fundamental building blocks of a great place. Having something to do gives people a reason to come (and return) to a place. When there is nothing interesting to do, a space will sit empty. That's the best measure that something is wrong. A carefully chosen range of activities will help a place attract a variety of people at different times of the day. A playground will draw young kids during the day, while basketball courts draw older kids after school, and concerts bring in everyone during the evening.	Questions to consider about Uses & Activities: <i>Are people using the space, or is it empty?</i> <i>Is it used by people of different ages?</i> <i>How many different types of activities are occurring at one time—people walking, eating, playing baseball, chess, relaxing, reading?</i> <i>Which parts of the space are used and which are not?</i> <i>Is there a management presence, or can you identify anyone in charge of the space?</i>
4	<i>Sociability</i> 	This is the most important quality for a place to achieve—and the most difficult. When a place becomes a favourite spot for people to meet friends, greet their neighbours, and feel comfortable interacting with strangers, then you are well on your way to having a great place.	Questions to consider about Sociability: <i>Is this a place where you would choose to meet your friends? Are others meeting friends here?</i> <i>Are people in groups? Are they talking with one another? Do they talk to people in other groups?</i> <i>Do people seem to know each other by face or by name?</i> <i>Do people bring their friends and relatives to see the place? Do they point to its features with pride?</i> <i>Are people smiling? Do people make regular eye contact with each other?</i> <i>Do many people use the place frequently?</i> <i>Does the mix of ages and ethnic groups generally reflect the community at large?</i> <i>Do people tend to pick up litter when they see it?</i>



- Placemaking Attributes Applied – Case Study 1: Nelson Mandela Square

■ Placemaking Attributes Applied – Case Study 1: Nelson Mandela Square

Uses & Activities

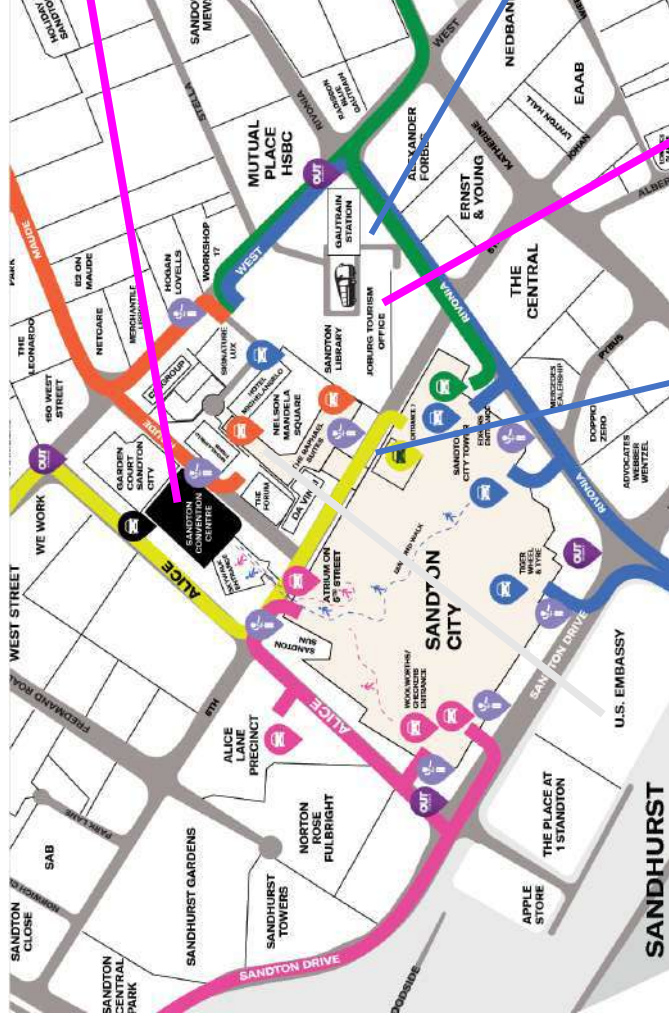
The mixed – use character of the development provides an array of activities and uses for various people's needs such as residential, commercial, retail, entertainment, community facilities such as the Library, as well as heritage and art elements in and around the entire space.

Sociability

The social features include various types of restaurants from fine dining to fast food courts as well as cafés and on the go services, a public square with water and art elements that create a sense of belonging through South African History, as well the many entertainment options offered to a diverse people such as – theatre, bowling, game arcade, movies, and the informal market on entry at West Street.

Comfort & Image

The architectural design and aesthetic of the Nelson Mandela Square is beautified by the arches, cleanliness, and heritage and art elements on site that reflect the country's history and the works of local artists.



Access & Linkages

The geographical location of Nelson Mandela Square is well situated and easily accessible for pedestrians and vehicles from all directions.

Uses & Activities

The Sandton Convention Centre is centrally located which hosts a variety of conferences, international conferences and local arts & crafts events such as the FNB Art Fair yearly. The centre allows the space to host various shows and be used in a diverse manner, adapting to the needs and demands of the public.

Access & Linkages

The privately managed public space is located in adjacent to the Sandton Gautrain Station which hosts a bus service, taxi rank and uber hailing facility. These various forms of transport reflects opportunities for diverse income groups to be considered in this area and that access is permissible to all who choose to visit the space.

Uses & Activities

The privately managed public space accommodates a historical monument and significant community facility – “The Sandton Library,” this is not only a library but a workspace and a media centre available to the public free of charge and is easily access for pedestrians and motorists.

Access & Linkages

The privately managed public space provides pedestrians with a bridge that spans over 5th Street, providing safety and convenience and the option to have to leave the space to access the Uses & Activities on the other side.

Uses & Activities

The space has a very predominant security and management aspect that is felt, with many information desks and staff on site to guide you in and around the space. The many social amenities and activities show why the space is constantly busy from evening to morning.

"Investigating the Growing Trend of Privatisation in Urban Environments:

Evaluating the Role of Privately Managed Public Spaces in Achieving Public Space Objectives through Placemaking Design Principles"

■ Placemaking Attributes Applied – Case Study 1: Nelson Mandela Square



Access & Linkages

1. Connection to Adjacent Buildings

Yes, there is a strong connection between Nelson Mandela Square and the adjacent buildings. The square is seamlessly integrated with Sandton City Mall, one of the largest shopping centers in Africa. Multiple luxury hotels, office towers, and restaurants directly overlook or open onto the square, encouraging a natural flow of people between these buildings and the public space. There are no blank walls or desolate zones immediately surrounding it.

2. Use by Occupants of Adjacent Buildings

The space is heavily used by people who work, shop, dine, or stay in nearby establishments. It functions as a popular meeting place, particularly for tourists, businesspeople, and local residents. Outdoor cafes and restaurants encourage lingering, making it a lively and social environment throughout the day and evening.

3. Walkability and Streetscape

Pedestrian access is generally good, especially from within the surrounding mall and buildings. However, the area outside the square itself, particularly along some major streets like Rivonia Road, can be dominated by heavy traffic, which may feel intimidating or unsafe for pedestrians, especially when crossing roads. That said, Sandton's recent infrastructure upgrades, including wider sidewalks and improved crossings, have helped mitigate some of this. Walkability from within the broader Sandton precinct is improving but still varies depending on the route.

4. Sidewalk Connectivity

There are clearly defined sidewalks that lead into and out of the square from the mall, nearby hotels, and the Sandton Gautrain Station, connecting it to Johannesburg's public transport system. Internal pedestrian routes through the square are well-maintained and visually inviting.

Evaluation:

Is there a good connection between this place and adjacent buildings? Or, is it surrounded by blank walls, surface parking lots, windowless buildings, or any other elements that discourage people from entering the space?

Do occupants of adjacent buildings use the space?

Can people easily walk there? Or are they intimidated by heavy traffic or bleak streetscapes?

Do sidewalks lead to and from the adjacent areas?

Does the space function well for people with disabilities and other special needs?

Do the paths throughout the space take people where they actually want to go?

Can people use a variety of transportation options—bus, train, car, and bicycle—to reach the place?



■ Placemaking Attributes Applied – Case Study 1: Nelson Mandela Square



Access & Linkages

5. Accessibility for People with Disabilities

Nelson Mandela Square has been designed with universal accessibility in mind. The square includes ramped entries, smooth pavements, elevators, and accessible restrooms within the mall. Most dining and retail areas are wheelchair-friendly. However, navigating the surrounding urban terrain (e.g., uneven curbs or traffic-heavy zones) can still pose challenges for some.

6. Path Layout and Functionality

The paths within the square are logically laid out, leading people directly to key destinations such as restaurants, retail entrances, and the statue. Seating, shade, and open space are well-distributed, allowing for both movement and rest. It supports natural pedestrian flow and spontaneous gatherings.

7. Transportation Options

The square is easily accessible via multiple transportation modes:

- Train: It's within walking distance of the Sandton Gautrain Station, offering fast transit to central Johannesburg and OR Tambo International Airport.
- Bus & Minibus Taxis: Various public and private transport options serve the area.
- Car: Ample parking is available in the connected Sandton City Mall.
- Bicycles: There is some limited infrastructure for cycling, though it's not yet extensive or fully safe, and still developing.

Nelson Mandela Square is a highly functional, well-connected urban space that integrates successfully with its surrounding buildings and transportation systems. While some areas around the square may present challenges for pedestrians due to traffic, the space itself is accessible, attractive, and widely used by locals and visitors alike. Its layout, accessibility, and centrality make it a model public space in an otherwise car-dominated cityscape.

Evaluation:

Is there a good connection between this place and adjacent buildings? Or, is it surrounded by blank walls, surface parking lots, windowless buildings, or any other elements that discourage people from entering the space?

Do occupants of adjacent buildings use the space?

Can people easily walk there? Or are they intimidated by heavy traffic or bleak streetscapes?

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■ Placemaking Attributes Applied – Case Study 1: Nelson Mandela Square



Comfort & Image



1. First Impressions

The square leaves a positive and memorable first impression. As you enter the open plaza from Sandton City Mall or nearby streets, you're immediately struck by the large bronze statue of Nelson Mandela, set against the backdrop of elegant buildings and vibrant cafes. The square feels inviting, modern, and cosmopolitan, often bustling with activity yet organized and orderly.

2. Gender Balance

Yes, there appears to be a fair balance between women and men using the space. Visitors include a wide demographic: tourists, local families, businesspeople, and shoppers. Women feel comfortable and visible in the space, often sitting in the cafes, taking photos, or socializing, which speaks to a perception of safety and inclusivity.

3. Seating Availability and Comfort

There are adequate places to sit, both in the open and shaded areas:

- Seating is offered in the form of benches, planters with ledges, and seating at restaurant patios.
- People have the choice between sun and shade, especially with umbrellas provided by cafes and some natural shade from trees or nearby buildings.
- Seating is mostly well-positioned, allowing views of the statue and the overall square. However, most free seating is limited, as much of it is connected to restaurants or cafes. More public, informal seating could enhance inclusivity.

4. Cleanliness and Maintenance

The square is generally very clean and well-maintained. Trash bins are placed at appropriate intervals, and litter is minimal.

- Maintenance is likely managed by the Sandton City property management or a private urban management company, ensuring daily cleaning, landscaping, and infrastructure upkeep.
- High standards of cleanliness contribute to the positive experience and visual appeal.

Does the place make a good first impression?

Are there as many women as men?

Are there enough places to sit? Are seats conveniently located? Do people have a choice of places to sit, either in the sun or shade?

Are spaces clean and free of litter? Who is responsible for maintenance?

Does the area feel safe? Are there security personnel present? If so, what do these people do? When are they on duty?

Are people taking pictures? Are there many photo opportunities available?

Do vehicles dominate pedestrian use of the space, or prevent them from easily getting to the space?

■ Placemaking Attributes Applied – Case Study 1: Nelson Mandela Square



Comfort & Image

5. Safety and Security

The area feels safe, even during the evening hours, due to:

- Visible private security personnel, stationed at entrances and patrolling the square.
- Security staff are typically on duty throughout the day and into the night, providing both surveillance and assistance.
- Their presence is non-intrusive but reassuring, and they often assist with directions or support for events.

Security is a key feature given the square's location in a high-profile commercial district.

6. Photo Opportunities

Yes, there are numerous photo opportunities, with the Nelson Mandela statue being the most popular. It's common to see:

- Tourists posing with the statue.
 - People capturing shots of the architecture, fountains, or restaurant ambiance.
- The space is aesthetically designed, encouraging photography, especially for social media sharing and tourism promotion.

7. Impact of Vehicles on Pedestrian Access

While the square itself is fully pedestrianized, some challenges exist at the perimeter:

- Busy surrounding roads (like Rivonia and West Street) can be barriers to pedestrian access if crossing isn't planned well.
- However, the nearby Gautrain station, pedestrian bridges, and mall access points make it manageable to reach the square without needing to interact heavily with vehicle traffic.
- Drop-off zones and secure parking are also nearby for those arriving by car, creating a balanced integration of vehicle and pedestrian needs.

Nelson Mandela Square is a visually impressive, comfortable, and safe urban space that balances tourism, commerce, and public life. While external traffic can affect access slightly, the interior environment is clean, inclusive, and photo-friendly, with a strong emphasis on security and aesthetics. Its popularity among both locals and international visitors reinforces its success as a welcoming and multifunctional public plaza.



Does the place make a good first impression?
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■ Placemaking Attributes Applied – Case Study 1: Nelson Mandela Square



Uses & Activities

Nelson Mandela Square is one of Johannesburg's most active public spaces, especially due to its central location in Sandton, its connection to Sandton City Mall, and its attraction as a tourist destination. Here's a reflection based on its usage patterns, diversity of users, and visible management:

1. Are People Using the Space, or Is It Empty?

Yes, people are actively using the space. It is rarely empty, particularly during business hours and weekends. Peak times include:

- Lunch hours, when professionals step out from nearby offices.
 - Afternoons and evenings, when tourists, shoppers, and families gather.
 - Weekends and holidays, when it becomes a hub for visitors, events, and leisure.
- Even in quieter times, a steady trickle of people can be observed walking through, taking photos, or using nearby cafes.

2. Is It Used by People of Different Ages?

Absolutely. The space attracts a wide age range, including:

- Young professionals working nearby.
 - Families with children, often visiting from the mall or nearby hotels.
 - Tourists of all ages, particularly older visitors interested in the history and symbolism of the Nelson Mandela statue.
 - Teens and youth, using the space for socializing or as a transit point.
- While the square is not designed with specific children's play areas, families still make use of it informally.

3. Range of Activities

There is a diverse mix of activities happening at once, which adds to the vibrancy of the space:

- Walking and passing through the square from the mall or hotel entrances.
 - Dining at the outdoor restaurants and cafes lining the square.
 - Taking photos—especially with the Nelson Mandela statue.
 - Sitting and relaxing, either on benches or around fountains and planter ledges.
 - Business meetings or casual conversations—a common sight at café tables.
- While the square is not intended for sports like baseball or large-scale physical activities, it does support low-impact, social and leisure uses.



Are people using the space, or is it empty?
Is it used by people of different ages?
How many different types of activities are occurring at one time—people walking, eating, playing baseball, chess, relaxing, reading?
Which parts of the space are used and which are not?
Is there a management presence, or can you identify anyone in charge of the space?

■ Placemaking Attributes Applied – Case Study 1: Nelson Mandela Square



Uses & Activities

4. Which Parts of the Space Are Used, and Which Are Not?

- The central plaza, where the Nelson Mandela statue is located, is the most heavily used.
 - The restaurant edges are consistently active, with seating areas drawing people for meals, meetings, or relaxation.
 - Planters and shaded corners also see regular use by people seeking quieter spots.
 - Perimeter zones that are further from restaurants or not facing the statue may be less used, especially if they lack seating or shade.
- There are few truly "unused" parts, but activity is concentrated around visual and functional focal points.

5. Is There a Management Presence?

Yes, there is a visible and effective management presence:

- Security personnel are clearly identifiable and regularly patrol the space.
- Cleaning staff can be seen maintaining the cleanliness of the square throughout the day.
- Mall or property staff, such as concierge or event coordinators, may be present during special events or promotions.

While there's no single person openly "in charge" of the square at all times, the presence of uniformed personnel and maintenance teams indicates organized, consistent management by the property owners—likely Liberty Two Degrees or Sandton City Mall management.

Nelson Mandela Square is a well-used, lively urban plaza that caters to a broad demographic and supports a variety of social and leisure activities. Its central features and commercial edges keep it active throughout the day. Good management, security, and cleanliness contribute to the space's ongoing appeal, ensuring that it remains one of Johannesburg's most iconic and functional public spaces.



Are people using the space, or is it empty?

Is it used by people of different ages?

How many different types of activities are occurring at one time—people walking, eating, playing baseball, chess, relaxing, reading?

Which parts of the space are used and which are not?

Is there a management presence, or can you identify anyone in charge of the space?

■ Placemaking Attributes Applied – Case Study 1: Nelson Mandela Square



Sociability

Nelson Mandela Square is not just a commercial or tourist destination—it also serves as a social and cultural gathering space. Its design and atmosphere make it a suitable location for informal meetings, family outings, and social engagement. Here's a reflection on how the space functions socially:

1. Is This a Place Where You Would Choose to Meet Friends?

Yes, this is a place many would choose to meet friends. It offers:

- Central location in Sandton, easily accessible by public transport and car.
- Plenty of cafes and restaurants for sitting down and socializing.

- A pleasant and visually appealing environment with the Nelson Mandela statue as a conversation piece or photo backdrop.

Many visitors, especially tourists and locals working nearby, arrange to meet here due to its convenience and lively atmosphere.

2. Are Others Meeting Friends Here?

Yes, it is common to see people meeting up in small groups:

- Friends chatting at outdoor tables.
 - Business colleagues in informal meetings.
 - Families or groups gathering before or after shopping.
- It is a natural social hub, especially on weekends or around meal times.

3. Are People in Groups? Are They Talking to One Another?

Yes, most people are in pairs or small groups, and active conversation is common. You'll often see:

- Laughter and animated discussions at tables.
- Families and friends pointing at the statue or sharing photos.
- Occasional interaction between different groups, especially if they're tourists asking for photos or directions.

4. Do People Seem to Know Each Other by Face or Name?

While it's a public and often transient space (especially with tourists), there's a sense that regulars—like nearby workers or mall staff—recognize each other. In the café areas or among security staff and maintenance crews, face recognition is evident through greetings and casual conversation.



Is this a place where you would choose to meet your friends?
Are others meeting friends here?
Are people in groups? Are they talking with one another? Do they talk to people in other groups?
Do people seem to know each other by face or by name?
Do people bring their friends and relatives to see the place?
Do they point to its features with pride?
Are people smiling? Do people make regular eye contact with each other?
Do many people use the place frequently?
Does the mix of ages and ethnic groups generally reflect the community at large?
Do people tend to pick up litter when they see it?

■ Placemaking Attributes Applied – Case Study 1: Nelson Mandela Square



Sociability

5. Do People Bring Friends and Relatives to See the Place? Do They Point to Features with Pride?

Yes, this is a destination people are proud to show others:

- Tourists bring family and friends for the photo opportunity with the statue.
- Locals often use it as a point of pride, especially due to the symbolic value of Nelson Mandela.
- Visitors regularly take pictures, point out architectural details, or share a bit of history with their guests.

It's a space with strong cultural and emotional meaning, particularly for South Africans.

6. Are People Smiling? Do They Make Eye Contact?

Yes, people often appear relaxed, smiling, and engaged:

- The open design and natural sunlight create a pleasant ambiance.
- Interactions between people are generally friendly, and staff (e.g., in cafes or security) often make eye contact and greet passersby.
- Tourists and families are usually in high spirits, contributing to the positive mood.

7. Do Many People Use the Place Frequently?

Yes, there's a consistent base of frequent users, including:

- Office workers in Sandton.
- Shoppers and mallgoers.

• Hotel guests who return to the square during their stay.

You can often recognize repeat patterns of use—certain tables always full, familiar faces among mall employees or regular diners.

8. Does the Mix of Ages and Ethnic Groups Reflect the Community at Large?

Generally, yes. Nelson Mandela Square attracts a diverse crowd:

- South Africans of various ethnic backgrounds.
- International tourists.
- People of all ages—from toddlers to seniors.

While the surrounding area is a wealthier commercial district, the diversity seen in the square is more inclusive than one might expect from its luxury surroundings. It represents the broader Johannesburg community reasonably well, especially on weekends or public holidays.



Is this a place where you would choose to meet your friends?

Are others meeting friends here?

Are people in groups? Are they talking with one another? Do they talk to people in other groups?

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- Placemaking Attributes Applied – Case Study 2: Monte Casino

■ Placemaking Attributes Applied – Case Study 2: Monte Casino



Access & Linkages

1. Connection to Adjacent Buildings

Montecasino is a self-contained complex. Its design intentionally creates a themed, enclosed experience, which results in a relatively weak connection to surrounding buildings. It is:

- Surrounded mostly by surface parking lots and access roads.
- Physically separated from nearby commercial and residential areas, such as Fourways Mall or office parks.
- The architecture and layout focus on the internal experience, which can unintentionally discourage casual pedestrian access from the outside.

So while the internal space is inviting, it can feel cut off from the broader urban area.

2. Do Occupants of Adjacent Buildings Use the Space?

Yes, despite the disconnection, workers and visitors from nearby businesses and hotels do use Montecasino:

- Office workers and hotel guests come for meals, meetings, or entertainment.
- Locals from Fourways and beyond often visit, especially during evenings or weekends.

However, usage is mostly intentional rather than incidental—it's not a space people pass through, but one they choose to enter for a specific purpose.

3. Can People Easily Walk There? Or Are They Intimidated by Heavy Traffic or Bleak Streetscapes?

Montecasino is not very pedestrian-friendly from the outside:

- It's bordered by busy roads like William Nicol Drive and Montecasino Boulevard, which are heavily trafficked and not welcoming to pedestrians.
- The approach is dominated by parking lots and wide vehicular access points, creating a car-centric environment.
- There are few appealing sidewalks leading in from surrounding neighborhoods.

As a result, walking to Montecasino is possible but unpleasant and often unsafe, especially during high-traffic hours.



Is there a good connection between this place and adjacent buildings? Or, is it surrounded by blank walls, surface parking lots, windowless buildings, or any other elements that discourage people from entering the space?
Do occupants of adjacent buildings use the space?
Can people easily walk there? Or are they intimidated by heavy traffic or bleak streetscapes?
Do sidewalks lead to and from the adjacent areas?
Does the space function well for people with disabilities and other special needs?
Do the paths throughout the space take people where they actually want to go?
Can people use a variety of transportation options—bus, train, car, and bicycle—to reach the place?

■ Placemaking Attributes Applied – Case Study 2: Monte Casino



Access & Linkages

4. Do Sidewalks Lead to and from the Adjacent Areas?

Sidewalks exist, but they are not well-integrated or continuous, especially from nearby residential areas. The emphasis is clearly on vehicular access, and pedestrian infrastructure feels like an afterthought.

So while sidewalks may technically be present in some areas, they do not encourage walkability or safe pedestrian navigation to and from the complex.

5. Does the Space Function Well for People with Disabilities and Other Special Needs?

Yes, within the Montecasino complex itself, the space is quite accessible:

- Ramps, elevators, and accessible restrooms are available throughout the venue.
- Entrances are wide and unobstructed, and there are designated parking spots for people with disabilities.
- Signage and interior navigation are clear.

6. Do the Paths Throughout the Space Take People Where They Want to Go?

Yes. Inside Montecasino, the layout is thoughtfully designed:

- Pathways lead logically to major attractions: the theater, casino, restaurants, cinema, bird park, and shops.
- Wayfinding signage is clear, and the themed environment helps create a memorable sense of direction.

Even though the space is styled like a village, it's highly navigable, and people easily find their way to where they want to go.

7. Can People Use a Variety of Transportation Options—Bus, Train, Car, and Bicycle—to Reach the Place?

Montecasino is primarily designed for access by private car, but some alternative options exist:

- Car: Large, secure parking is available and heavily used.
- Ride-hailing services (Uber, Bolt) are widely used.
- Public minibus taxis and Gautrain buses serve the general Fourways area, though no direct train access exists.
- Bicycle access is minimal, and there is no dedicated cycling infrastructure.

Montecasino offers a well-designed, accessible, and enjoyable internal space, but it suffers from being inward-facing and disconnected from its surroundings. It excels in functionality for car users and people with disabilities once inside, but access via walking, cycling, or public transport is limited and often uninviting. Improving external pedestrian connections and integrating the space more closely with its urban context would enhance its inclusivity and sustainability.

■ Placemaking Attributes Applied – Case Study 2: Monte Casino



Comfort & Image

1. Does the Place Make a Good First Impression?

Yes, Montecasino makes a strong first impression—but this depends on how you arrive:

- If you arrive by car, you're greeted by a grand entrance, well-maintained landscaping, and clear signage. The exterior sets the stage for what's inside.
- Once inside, the artificial sky, cobblestone streets, and ambient lighting immediately create a memorable, immersive experience. It feels like stepping into another world.
- However, approaching the complex on foot from outside does not offer the same charm, as the surroundings are dominated by parking lots and traffic-heavy roads.

2. Are There as Many Women as Men?

Yes, the space appears to have a balanced mix of genders:

- Women and men are equally visible across restaurants, theaters, casinos, and shopping areas.
- Women are present both in groups and individually, which suggests that the space feels safe and welcoming.

The balanced gender presence reflects the fact that Montecasino appeals to a wide demographic, including families, couples, and tourists.

3. Are There Enough Places to Sit? Are Seats Conveniently Located?

Yes, seating is adequate and well-distributed, though most of it is tied to commercial venues:

- Restaurants and cafés offer ample seating—both indoors and outdoors.
- Within public areas, there are benches and sitting areas (especially in the central courtyard and corridors).
- Choice between sun and shade is available, particularly in the Tuscan-style outdoor courtyards.

That said, free public seating is more limited compared to seating within paid venues.

4. Are Spaces Clean and Free of Litter? Who Is Responsible for Maintenance?

Montecasino is consistently clean, well-maintained, and visually polished:

- Floors, restrooms, and public areas are cleaned regularly and thoroughly.
- Maintenance staff are visibly present throughout the day.
- The entire property is managed by Montecasino's private management team, likely under Tsogo Sun, the owning company.

The standard of cleanliness contributes to the space feeling upscale, safe, and professional



Does the place make a good first impression?

Are there as many women as men?

Are there enough places to sit? Are seats conveniently located?

Do people have a choice of places to sit, either in the sun or shade?

Are spaces clean and free of litter? Who is responsible for maintenance?

Does the area feel safe? Are there security personnel present? If so, what do these people do? When are they on duty?

Are people taking pictures? Are there many photo opportunities available?

Do vehicles dominate pedestrian use of the space, or prevent them from easily getting to the space?



■ Placemaking Attributes Applied – Case Study 2: Monte Casino



Comfort & Image



5. Does the Area Feel Safe? Are There Security Personnel Present?

Yes, safety is a high priority at Montecasino:

- Security personnel are visible at entrances, inside the complex, and in parking areas.
- They monitor the space, provide assistance, and help manage crowds during events.
- Security is present 24/7, given the late-night hours of the casino and entertainment venues.
- The entire complex is under surveillance with controlled access, giving it a secure, monitored feel.

This level of security contributes to families and individuals feeling safe, even late at night.

6. Are People Taking Pictures? Are There Many Photo Opportunities?

Yes, Montecasino is very photogenic and designed for visual appeal:

- Visitors often take pictures under the painted sky, near fountains, in courtyards, or beside statues.
- The architecture and interior theming make it feel like a European movie set—ideal for social media sharing and tourist photos.
- Events and performances also offer unique moments worth capturing.

The complex is clearly aware of its role as a visual experience, and people take full advantage of it.

7. Do Vehicles Dominate Pedestrian Use of the Space, or Prevent Easy Access?

Inside Montecasino, vehicles do not interfere—it is entirely pedestrianized once you're inside.

However, getting there is car-centric:

- The complex is surrounded by major roads and parking areas, making it difficult for pedestrians to approach comfortably.
- There is minimal public transportation infrastructure nearby, and bicycle access is almost nonexistent.
- While vehicle traffic dominates the outside, the interior is protected, walkable, and safe.

Montecasino offers a clean, safe, and visually engaging environment that leaves a strong first impression—especially once inside. It succeeds in being a social, inclusive space with balanced gender use, adequate seating, and high-quality maintenance. While vehicular access dominates the outer experience, the internal atmosphere is pedestrian-friendly and welcoming, making it a popular choice for group outings, dates, or family visits. The emphasis on safety, aesthetic charm, and functionality keeps Montecasino a favored destination for a wide range of visitors.



Does the place make a good first impression?

Are there as many women as men?

Are there enough places to sit? Are seats conveniently located?

Do people have a choice of places to sit, either in the sun or shade?

Are spaces clean and free of litter? Who is responsible for maintenance?

Does the area feel safe? Are there security personnel present? If so, what do these people do? When are they on duty?

Are people taking pictures? Are there many photo opportunities available?

Do vehicles dominate pedestrian use of the space, or prevent them from easily getting to the space?

■ Placemaking Attributes Applied – Case Study 2: Monte Casino



Uses & Activities

1. Are People Using the Space, or Is It Empty?
Yes, Montecasino is actively used, and it rarely feels empty.
 - During weekdays, especially evenings, people visit for dinner, shows, or the casino.
 - On weekends and holidays, it is very busy, with families, tourists, and locals filling the indoor and outdoor areas.
 - Even in off-peak hours, some level of activity is always present—particularly in the restaurants and casino.

Its range of attractions ensures a steady flow of people throughout the day and night.

2. Is It Used by People of Different Ages?
Yes, Montecasino is frequented by a diverse age range:
 - Children and families visit the bird gardens, movies, and child-friendly restaurants.
 - Young adults and couples often come for dates, shows, and nightlife.
 - Older adults are commonly seen in the casino, theatres, and fine-dining spots.The space is clearly designed to be multi-generational, and that is reflected in its use.

3. How Many Different Types of Activities Are Occurring at One Time?
Montecasino supports a wide variety of simultaneous activities, though they are mostly centered around entertainment and leisure rather than passive recreation. Activities include:

- Walking and exploring the themed interiors.
- Dining at a wide range of restaurants and cafés.
- Gambling in the casino.
- Watching movies or live shows at the theater or cinema.
- Visiting the Montecasino Bird Gardens (outdoors).
- Shopping at small boutiques or souvenir stores.
- Photo-taking, particularly in the scenic indoor courtyards.
- Relaxing and socializing at lounges, fountains, or quiet corners.

You won't find people playing chess or sports like baseball—it's a commercial entertainment zone, not a public park. But within its scope, the variety of experiences is rich and well-curated.



Are people using the space, or is it empty?

Is it used by people of different ages?

How many different types of activities are occurring at one time—people walking, eating, playing baseball, chess, relaxing, reading?

Which parts of the space are used and which are not?

Is there a management presence, or can you identify anyone in charge of the space?

■ Placemaking Attributes Applied – Case Study 2: Monte Casino



Uses & Activities

4. Which Parts of the Space Are Used and Which Are Not?

- The most-used areas include:
 - The central indoor piazza with restaurants and ambient lighting.
 - The casino floor, which draws steady crowds.
 - Cinemas and theaters, especially in the evenings.
 - The bird gardens, during daylight hours.
- Less-used areas:
 - Some corridors or side alleys designed for aesthetics more than function may see less foot traffic.
 - Outer perimeters or service zones are typically quiet or inaccessible to the public.

Overall, nearly every space that is open to the public sees regular use, with activity concentrated in entertainment and dining areas.

5. Is There a Management Presence, or Can You Identify Anyone in Charge of the Space?

Yes, Montecasino is a privately managed property, and the presence of staff and management is highly visible:

- Security staff patrol all areas, providing directions and assistance, while also maintaining order.
 - Cleaning staff are regularly seen maintaining the high cleanliness standards.
 - Customer service desks and information points are available to help guests.
 - For special events or performances, event staff or ushers are also present.
- While you might not see a single person “in charge,” the space is clearly well-managed and professionally operated, likely under Tsogo Sun, the property owner and operator. Montecasino is a highly active and well-used space, catering to a diverse audience across age groups with a broad range of leisure activities. Its appeal lies in its immersive environment and rich programming. Though it's not a public space in the traditional sense, it functions as a vibrant social and entertainment hub. The presence of management and staff ensures that the space remains safe, clean, and efficiently run, contributing to its ongoing popularity.



Are people using the space, or is it empty?

Is it used by people of different ages?

How many different types of activities are occurring at one time—people walking, eating, playing baseball, chess, relaxing, reading?

Which parts of the space are used and which are not?

Is there a management presence, or can you identify anyone in charge of the space?

■ Placemaking Attributes Applied – Case Study 2: Monte Casino



Sociability

1. Is This a Place Where You Would Choose to Meet Your Friends? Are Others Meeting Friends Here? Yes, Montecasino is definitely the kind of place where people meet friends. With its mix of restaurants, cafes, cinemas, and the casino, it's a convenient and enjoyable spot for:

- Catch-ups over meals or drinks
- Group outings to movies or shows
- Celebrations like birthdays or date nights

You'll see many groups of friends and families arriving together or meeting inside, which shows that it is a trusted social venue.

2. Are People in Groups? Are They Talking with One Another?

Yes, the majority of visitors are seen in small to medium-sized groups:

- People are actively talking, laughing, and engaging—especially in seating areas, restaurants, or while strolling.
- While most groups tend to stick to themselves, there's a general atmosphere of friendly coexistence, especially in shared spaces like queues, bars, or live performances.
- You're less likely to see strangers striking up conversations with other groups unless prompted by a shared experience (e.g., asking to take a photo).
- 3. Do People Seem to Know Each Other by Face or Name?

Among staff, hotel guests, or regular casino visitors, there's evidence of familiarity and recognition—smiles, greetings, and short conversations.

- Among general visitors, people mostly interact within their own circles, so it's not a deeply communal space in the traditional sense, but recognition between returning guests and staff is noticeable.

4. Do People Bring Friends and Relatives to See the Place? Do They Point to Its Features with Pride? Yes, Montecasino is a place where locals bring out-of-town guests or family members, often with a sense of pride or enjoyment:

- The indoor “sky,” Italian-style architecture, bird gardens, and entertainment options are unique selling points.
- Visitors are often seen taking photos, giving informal “tours,” or pointing out specific features, especially in the more theatrical indoor sections or near the fountains.



Is this a place where you would choose to meet your friends?
Are others meeting friends here?

Are people in groups? Are they talking with one another? Do they talk to people in other groups?

Do people seem to know each other by face or by name?

Do people bring their friends and relatives to see the place?

Do they point to its features with pride?

Are people smiling? Do people make regular eye contact with each other?

Do many people use the place frequently?

Does the mix of ages and ethnic groups generally reflect the community at large?

Do people tend to pick up litter when they see it?

■ Placemaking Attributes Applied – Case Study 2: Monte Casino



Sociability

5. Are People Smiling? Do They Make Regular Eye Contact with Each Other?

Yes, the general mood is positive and relaxed:

- You'll see people smiling, laughing, and enjoying themselves, especially in dining and entertainment zones.
- There is regular eye contact between staff and guests, as well as within groups.
- The atmosphere is welcoming and comfortable, though not overly informal—more structured than a public park, but still warm and interactive.

6. Do Many People Use the Place Frequently?

Yes, Montecasino has a strong base of frequent users, including:

- Locals who come for weekly dinners, movies, or the casino.
- Professionals using the restaurants for casual business meetings.
- Regular event-goers attending performances or festivals hosted in the theater.

While it attracts many first-time visitors and tourists, there's also a steady stream of repeat users who are clearly familiar with the layout and offerings.

7. Does the Mix of Ages and Ethnic Groups Reflect the Community at Large?

Montecasino draws a reasonably diverse crowd, especially during weekends and holidays:

- You'll see a variety of age groups—from young children to elderly couples.
- The ethnic diversity reflects Johannesburg's multicultural makeup, though, due to its location in a more affluent suburb, it may slightly skew toward middle to upper-income visitors.

That said, the space feels inclusive and doesn't cater to a single demographic.

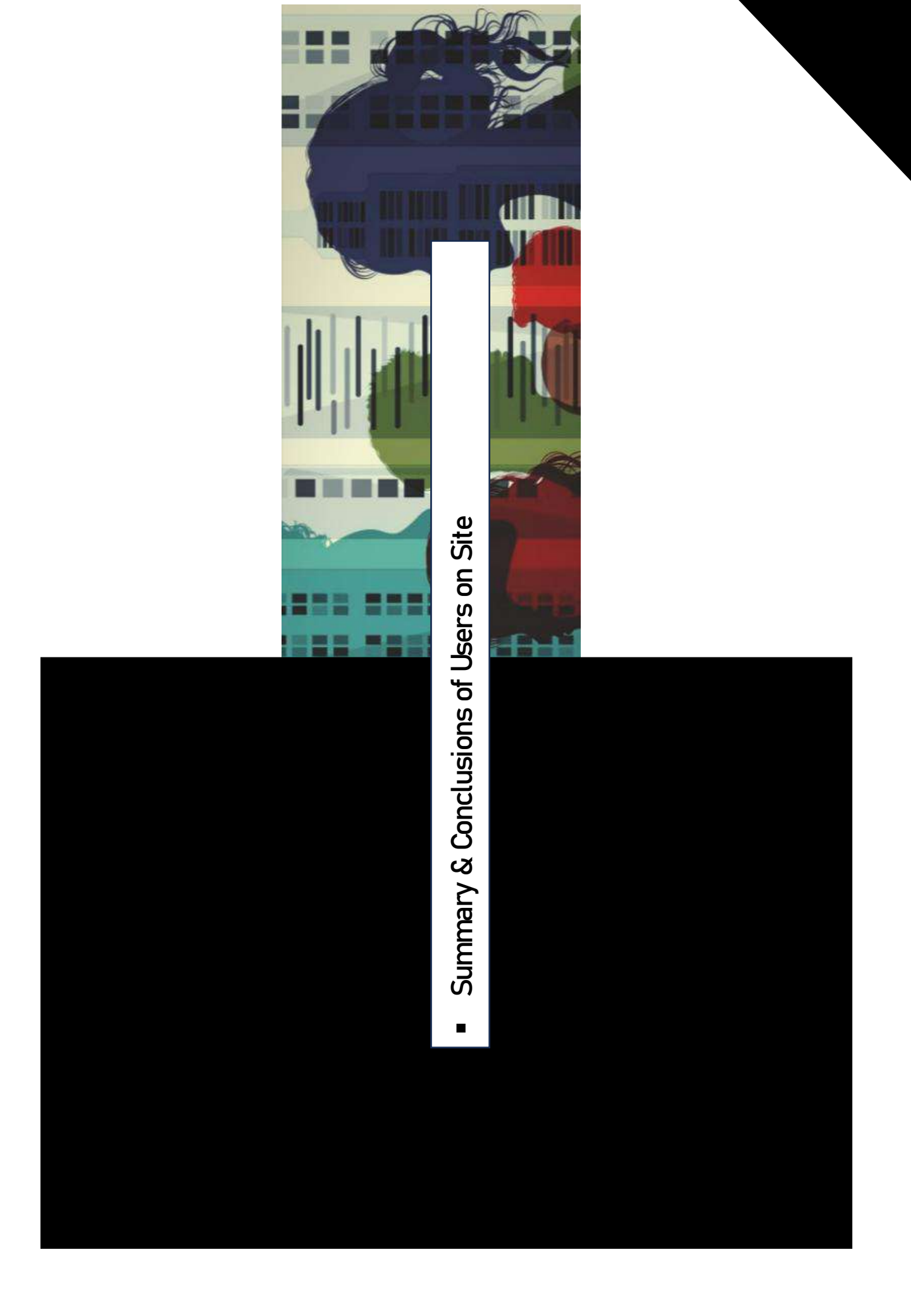
8. Do People Tend to Pick Up Litter When They See It?

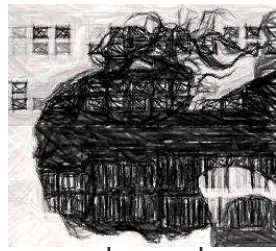
Typically, no—visitors don't tend to pick up litter themselves, but:

- The space remains clean because of proactive, visible cleaning staff.
- The cleanliness culture is strongly enforced, which subtly discourages littering in the first place.

It's not the kind of environment where people take direct ownership of the space like in a public park, but they do respect the rules and upkeep.

Montecasino is a place where social interaction thrives in a controlled but comfortable environment. It's a popular choice for meeting friends, hosting family outings, or enjoying entertainment together. The space promotes casual sociability, pride of place, and repeat use, even if deeper, spontaneous community bonding is limited by its commercial nature. Nonetheless, its atmosphere is friendly, inclusive, and well-managed, making it a reliable social destination for a broad cross-section of the community.

- 
- Summary & Conclusions of Users on Site



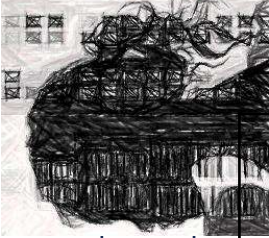
Findings – On Site

With reference to the two case studies, the following synthesis is prepared in response to the aim of the research...

From examining the two selected case studies, and assessing the placemaking principles and design tools that successfully achieve the objectives of public spaces in privately managed public spaces the following outcomes are highlighted:

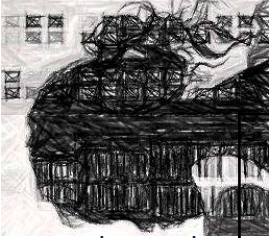
Summary of findings	
Question	
What does Public Space mean to you, and your definition of how to describe these spaces?	Public spaces are accessible areas for everyone, promoting social interaction, relaxation, and civic engagement. They should be inclusive, welcoming, and flexible, accommodating various activities while reflecting the community's cultural identity.
What does the term "Placemaking" mean to you?	Public Space means that the space should be easily accessible to every member of society despite varying degrees of class. Placemaking is the act of formulating space that is activated by people and further defined through their use and engagement with the space and in conjunction with other users contributing to the 'spirit'/ emotive quality of that space.

Findings – On Site



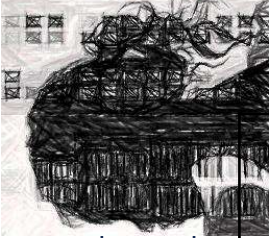
Summary of findings		
Question	Case Study 1: Nelson Mandela Square	Case Study 2: Monte Casino
In your experience, with reference to Case Study 1 and 2, what design elements makes the space attractive to users in these spaces?	At Nelson Mandela Square, its open design, ample seating, and the iconic statue of Mandela make it a popular meeting spot. It's well-known for its fine dining options, but remains enjoyable for those who cannot afford the expensive restaurants, as the square serves as a recreational and transitional space.	Montecasino, on the other hand, is an experiential space that uses its thematic design to replicate ancient European villages, particularly Roman styles. This adds a sense of European charm to the user experience, making it attractive to visitors seeking an immersive, themed environment with diverse entertainment and dining options.
	Case Study 1: Nelson Mandela Square - Broad range of programme: hotel/theatre/ cinema/ nightclub/ restaurant etc. - Walkability through the entire complex - Varying sight lines which allow for the opportunity to see what's happening below and above	Case Study 2: Monte Casino Tuscan style design creating a foreign and therefore 'romantic' allure (Monte Casino) - Broad range of programme: hotel/theatre/ cinema/ nightclub/ restaurant etc. - Walkability through the entire complex - Varying sight lines which allow for the opportunity to see what's happening below and above

Findings – On Site



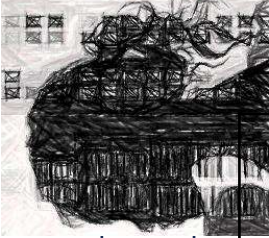
Question		Summary of findings	
With reference to Case Study 1 and 2, what design elements in these squares, in your professional opinion, creates a sense of belonging to the square?		Case Study 1: Nelson Mandela Square	Case Study 2: Monte Casino
		At Nelson Mandela Square, the statue of Mandela symbolizes unity and heritage, fostering a sense of pride.	In Montecasino, the immersive Italian design and pedestrian-friendly spaces create a sense of escape and familiarity, making people feel part of a unique community experience
		Case Study 1: Nelson Mandela Square	Case Study 2: Monte Casino
		A variety of restaurants suited to different consumer needs and budgets that face the squares. - A focal point through a fountain allowing for children to play and clear sightlines for parents to supervise their children. An element of play for children creates a specific sense of belonging with other families/ parents/ children.	A variety of restaurants suited to different consumer needs and budgets that face the squares. - A focal point through a fountain allowing for children to play and clear sightlines for parents to supervise their children. An element of play for children creates a specific sense of belonging with other families/ parents/ children.

Findings – On Site



Question	Summary of findings	
	Case Study 1: Nelson Mandela Square	Case Study 2: Monte Casino
What characteristics of quasi-public spaces do you think, contributes to the popularity of these spaces continuously being used?	At Nelson Mandela Square, the statue of Mandela symbolizes unity and heritage, fostering a sense of pride.	In Montecasino, the immersive Italian design and pedestrian-friendly spaces create a sense of escape and familiarity, making people feel part of a unique community experience
	Both Nelson Mandela Square and Montecasino offer quasi-public spaces that are safe, well-maintained, and accessible, with a diverse mix of commercial, recreational, and cultural activities. The management of these spaces have a clear commercial interest in keeping them attractive and vibrant. They actively use events, advertising, and immersive activations to maintain high foot traffic, ensuring these spaces stay busy and commercially viable, which directly benefits the surrounding businesses.	
What design elements do you think can improve these spaces?	- Access up until the evening/ night - Various events that activate the space - 'Exclusivity' of the space that creates hype and contributes to the desire to be seen	
	Both Nelson Mandela Square and Montecasino could benefit from more green spaces. Currently, there is an overemphasis on hard surfaces, and a better balance between paved areas and natural elements like trees and plants would enhance the aesthetic and comfort of these spaces. Increasing greenery would not only make them more environmentally friendly but also create a more relaxing atmosphere for users, improving the overall experience	
	Larger (and more) seating and landscape design that could contribute to people spending more time enjoying being an observer in the space without being compelled to purchase a meal.	

Findings – On Site



Question	Summary of findings
What design elements do you find most attractive in Privately Owned Public Spaces? (Open spaces, Seating arrangements, Architectural design, Landscaping)?	• Open areas that are not necessarily defined for a single purpose but could serve multiple activities. • Public art installations • Landscape architecture
	Seating with some sort of shading - Incorporation of green space (trees and plants) - Open space with clear sightlines and the ability to feel safe visually
Do you believe the ownership of public space impacts the public / users rights to use it? (Yes, No, Unsure)	Yes
How important is it to you who owns the space? (Not important, Slightly important, Moderately important, Very important)	Not Important
Have you ever been asked to leave or restricted from accessing certain areas within this space? (Yes, No) If yes, please explain.	No

While privately managed public spaces often raise concerns about control and exclusion, placemaking design tools can still succeed when:

- The private actor embraces civic responsibility.
- Community voices are actively included.
- Design prioritizes comfort, inclusion, and flexibility over surveillance and branding.

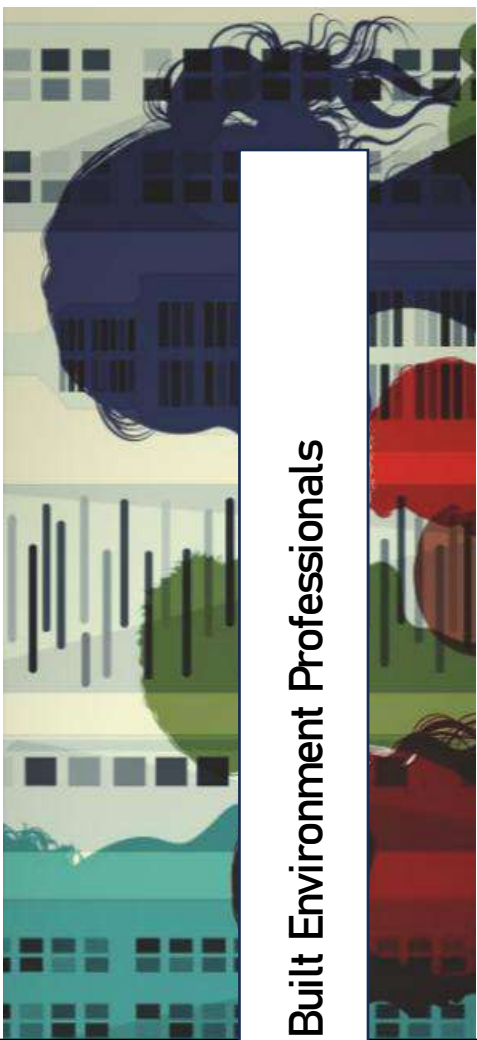
The challenge lies in ensuring that these tools aren't just used to make spaces look public — but to make them truly feel and function as public.

In the Field...

Semi – structured interviews

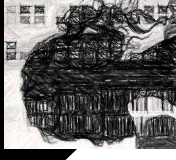
- Built Environment Professionals on their experience in practice working with public space and privately



- 
- Interviewing & Insights from Built Environment Professionals

Attempting to Interview...

- The field work kick off was exciting as I began to reach out to the various companies who worked in the urban design, construction, planning and development space. I mailed, I visited and I was ready to interact.
- However, what the research process does not show you is the challenges of sourcing suitable times with very busy people. I was declined, denied and ghosted at some point. The various process the University of Pretoria Staff had to face to be allowed to interview posed as a delay for my timeframes and again – I had to re – evaluate my data sources (participants).
- After much discussion and query, we chose to focus on solely Built Environment Professionals and not only the professionals of University of Pretoria. I was fortunate room and provision was made on my ethics application for both so this was still “ethical.”
- From here I began the process of sharing my research online and seeking Professionals who were open to participate in my field work process – I was delighted by people's enthusiasm.
- Finally, I felt hopeful...





Tunisia Cassim • You

Development Planning - Public Space Enthusiast - Thinker

4mo • Edited • 

Looking for an Urban Designer / Architect who can assist me with my Master's Research survey in the Design of Public Space.

Please comment your details below should you have the time to engage with me.




34



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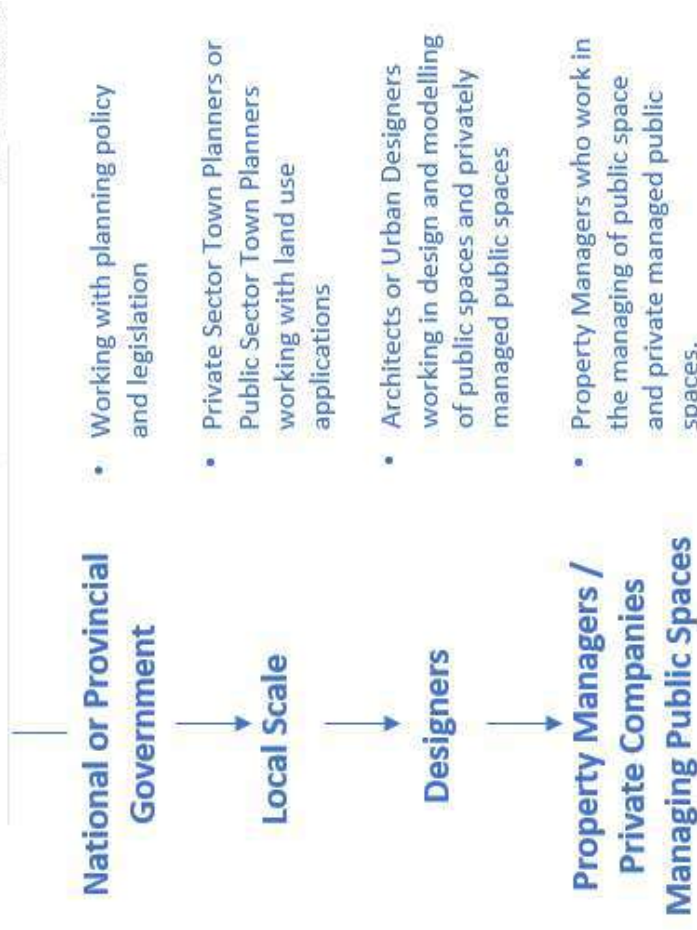
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Targeted Sampling the Built Environment Professionals

"Investigating the Growing Trend of Privatisation in Urban Environments:

Evaluating the Role of Privately Managed Public Spaces in Achieving Public Space Objectives through Placemaking Design Principles"

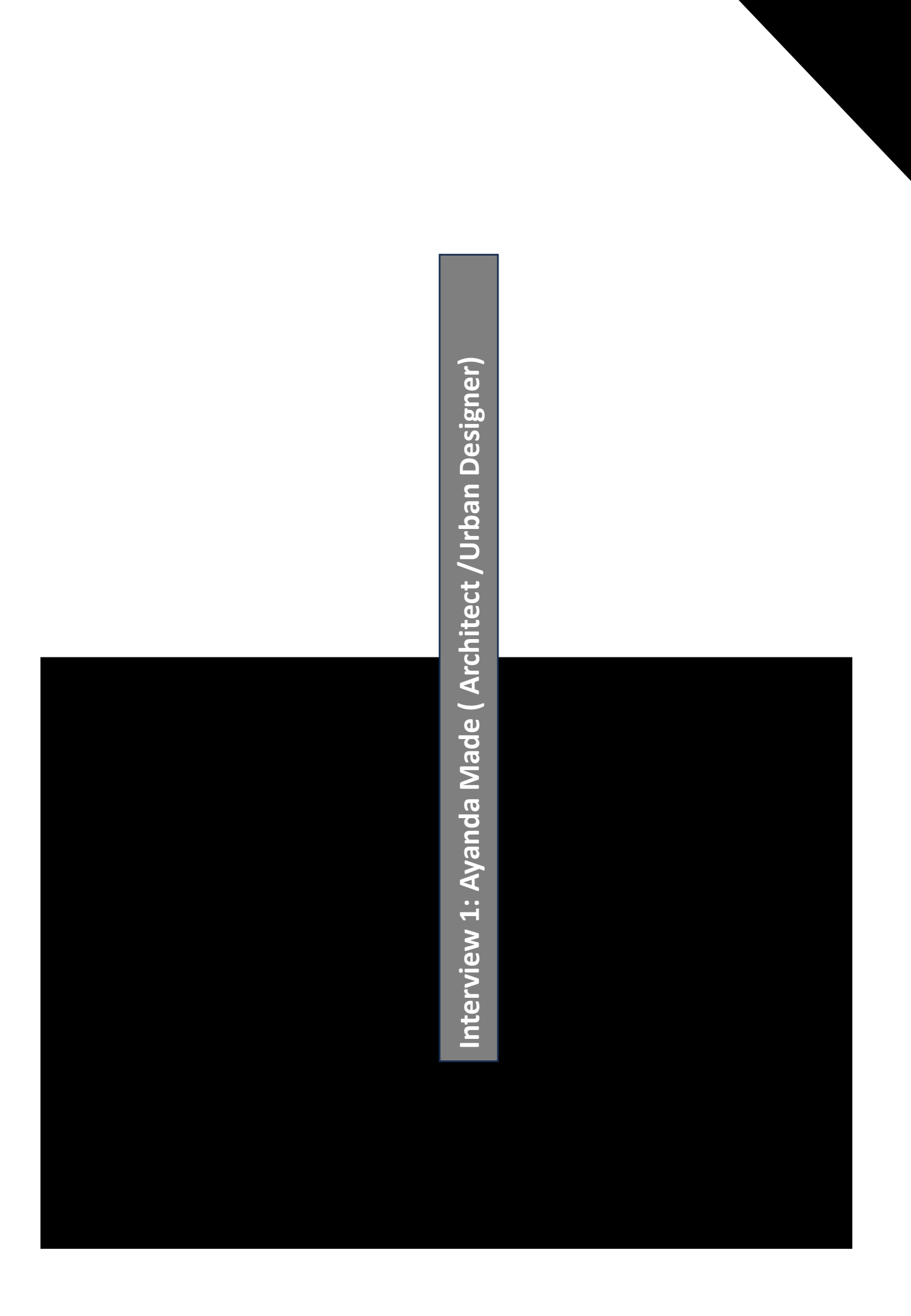
Public Space





Interview Schedule & Participants reflected in the Research Findings

Participant	Profession	Date of Interview
1 Ayanda Made	Urban Designer in Private Practice	Interview Date: 13 November 2024
2 Jacolene Swart	Professional Town Planner worked in Public and Private Sector	Interview Date: 29 October 2024
3 Johan – Calitz Janse van Rensburg	GIS & Data Analyst / Urban Studies	Interview Date: 15 November 2024
4 Puvendra Akkiah	Professional Urban Planner in Private Practice	Interview Date: 15 October 2024
5 Heidi Lu	Architect / Lecturer at University of Johannesburg	Interview Date: 11 October 2024
6 Moabi Dimpe	Architect / Urban Designer in Private Practice	Interview Date: 16 October 2024
7 Rorisang Sojane	Business Development Manager at Excellerate Precinct Management. / Director at the Gauteng Precinct Management Association	Interview Date: 29 October 2024



Interview 1: Ayanda Made (Architect /Urban Designer)

Interview 1: Ayanda Made (Architect /Urban Designer)

Question: What area (private / public) of the development sector do you work in, and how are you involved in Public Space?

Question: What does Public Space mean to you, and your definition of how to describe these spaces?

- Public Space is the street: the only true reflection of public space through its diversity on the street edges such as ownership, land uses, functions and flow of movement of people and cars. The diversity of users represent the true extent of publicness is found in the street. Public Spaces excludes spirit of place, placemaking due to formalisation of these spaces. There is a lack of negotiating in formalised public space, which is an important defining factor for public space to exist. The rigid identities that come with formalising public space use and function, whereas the street has an ambiguity that allows the public to use and negotiate and navigate through without restrictions.

Question: What does placemaking mean to Ayanda?

- Placemaking is not an outcome you can achieve, but a product of a process
- Placemaking is a by – product of building blocks
- Placemaking is not something to be achieved and measured
- Placemaking is a tool that can be used to make spaces a place
- “You know it, when you see it”
- What is the elements of placemaking that contribute to working spaces.
- An elusive objective to pursue as a designers and not just a spatial intervention

Question: What are the elements that connect Private Public Space and Placemaking?

- Identifying factors that connect the user to space
- Concerns of access to the public space as an identity is formed, as result producing private public spaces.
- Rise of monocultural spaces as a result of blanket approaches in the design of public spaces.
- Private Public Spaces create opportunities to tailor designs of public spaces for their users as they form part of larger developments.

Question: What is the key differences between Private Public Spaces in comparison to Public Spaces?

- Power of Identifiers is your ticket to accessing private public space
- Through buying power you can participate in private public space use. These create subconscious point of views of who has access and who does not.
- Central Integrated Development initiatives exclude and dictate users and participants.
- The perception of how we experience space is dictated by preconceived ideas created by the aesthetic and access of the public space or private public spaces.
- Block Ownership Concept: Place and Space being categorised by the type of ownership (public or private) impacts the publicness of the space thus encouraging and or discouraging specific groups of people to use or enter the space.

How does the power of ownership (public / private) impact design of in practice?

- Developers are now targeting a specific market and demographic which then marginalised others in both Public Spaces and Private Public Spaces. However, the measure of success is different for Public Entity Projects in comparison to Private Entity Projects due to the scales of development, the size of the target market and target groups of specific economies. These measures of success are then used as models for approaching public spaces in general and as result fail due to the lack of planning and designing for the user and wider integrated environment. Planning needs to be authentic and conducted for the local culture and representation of these communities. The services provided in space categorises the type of user as a result of the rise in cities of difference we can no longer segregate users in space.

Listen in and
engage with
US...
(part 1)



Listen in and
engage with
US...
(part 2)



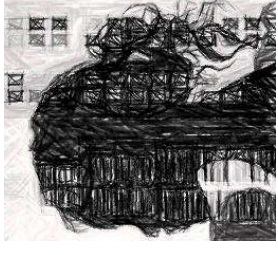
Interview 1: Ayanda Made (Architect /Urban Designer)

How does the power of ownership (public / private) impact design of in practice?

- Defining the undesirables...
- How we see and experience space is different and how we use space is also a contrasting experience from the designed use and the actual use.
- The user is placed in a position to deliberate whether they want to use a space based on the accessibility, design of public space and type of services offered.
- Public Spaces and Private Public Spaces work because their success is dictated by a specific niche market that these spaces work for a particular group. As a result, in practice we think public spaces work because it works for one specific user group, however true public spaces are co – produced. Thus creates a sanitized space such as private public spaces targets niche market, with controlled environments and user driven results.
- The market has become the deciding factor for planning and designing of public spaces and as result the motivation for the desired outcomes is based off market studies of the population groups and as a result private public spaces work well for as they are tailored from the planning process to design and thereafter the implementation thereof. These private public spaces produce models of influence as a result of safety, care and aesthetic being provided for by private entities attempts to respond to the market. These design approaches begin to create enclaves, by placing perimeters in these spaces, thus creating the private – public dynamic. As designers we follow what sells, and where people go to, which in turn provides the development parameters for newly proposed private public spaces that form part of larger developments overall.

What are the connections that is being made between private sector design and the user?

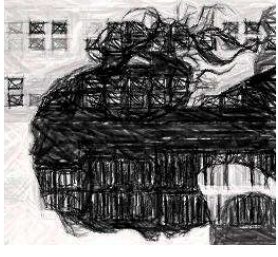
- In private public spaces the planning and design of these spaces are dictated by the needs of the people. There are similar ingredients to designing public and private public spaces, these being common greenery areas, eateries, and convenient stores that speak to people's everyday lives. The paradox of outsourcing management alters the perception of public spaces by creating these manicured spaces, masked spaces, and



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(part 3)



Interview 2: Jacolene Swart (Professional Town Planner)



Interview 2: Jacolene Swart (Professional Town Planner)

Question: What area (private / public) of the development sector do you work in, and how are you involved in Public Space?

Question: What does Public Space mean to you, and your definition of how to describe these spaces?

- Public Space is space that is not owned or related to a specific owner. These are gathering spaces in the city that are free of use, free to access and where anyone feels welcomed to enter without restriction or regulation. The key characteristics for these spaces are diversity of people, flexibility of use and convenience.

Question: What does placemaking mean to you?

- Interpret placemaking as – “What do people like about the spaces they are in.” In her specialisation and research outcomes, placemaking is a connection between human and place. “Space is a place until it is made meaningful.” This is the defining relationship between public space and placemaking that give birth to the different types of public spaces we see created today.
- Connections between Space and Placemaking:
 - Users maintain a space by using the places that are created for them.
 - Safety
 - Spaces that speak to people's needs, wants and trends
 - Sense of identity that people see with the places they interact in
 - An area that caters.

Question: What are the elements that connect Private Public Space and Placemaking?

- Public spaces are decaying in quality which results in people not identifying themselves in these spaces anymore.

Question: What is the key difference between Private Public Spaces in comparison to Public Spaces?

- Space is created beyond the provision of infrastructure, but through its service to the people it seeks to cater for as well. As such function and purpose keep spaces alive, when people do not find use and purpose in public spaces they go to private public spaces. There is a catalyst in the quality of public spaces that is pushing people to private public spaces
- Interaction = meaning = identification
- “Use keeps spaces alive...”

How does the power of ownership (public / private) impact design in practice?

- Ownership whether public or private entities should not be a determining factor of the quality of space, but rather the users that it seeks to serve. The major differences that you will see in the planning and design of public spaces between private and public entities is the purposes that they are developing for.
- Private: User – driven, market driven. Development is shaped by what the target market will use best and what suits the character of the area development will take place in.
- Public: Serving a backlog and addressing the needs and wrongs of the past, as an outcome we see “copy and paste,” designs and characteristics of public space.
- What is important to observe here is the methodological approaches to the planning and design of public spaces in comparison to private public spaces. The research and feasibility studies conducted between these two entities ultimately determine the user's experience. In practice, there is a blanket approach, in which the planning and design of public spaces are through a tick box exercise. For example in reality, the duplication of parks that are only patches of grass in residential areas. These spaces remain spaces with no identity and as a result there is no connection with the communities needs or to serve the currently wider environment. These spaces need to be turned into places, by giving them meaning and identity which can only be done through user – driven design and placemaking principles for creating attracting spaces.

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Interview 2: Jacolene Swart

Question: Why private public space? What is attractive about them?

- Specific provisions
- Not afraid to invest
- Speaks to the current and latest development trends, and needs of the communities they seek to develop in.
- Caters for people's specifics / tailored places for peoples needs
- Encourages people to go there – that is the connecting factor between attraction and placemaking. Attractive spaces are pull factors to people.
- This is clearly observed in the investment in budgets and extent of expenditure that is made for the development of these spaces.
- These are spatial clusters of influence; private public spaces are not built in isolation but rather have a development radius that they wish to reach. This can be seen by the diverse services they provide and the variety that allows different users to be catered too. There is a sense of surveillance created by a space being managed – which turns it into a place, this attracts people.
- Surveillance in Private Public Spaces is an attraction factor for people.
- The selected locations of private public spaces are strategic and as a result located conveniently for the users / communities they target.

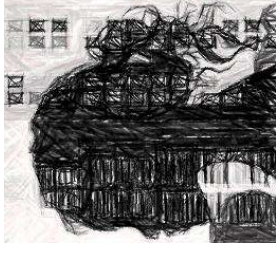
Question: Does private public spaces enhance or restrict public experience?

- Rules guide culture and in order to create a sense of place and community private public spaces are managed and ruled by an agenda. If you understand the rules, its like abiding by a unified culture, which through regulation creates a sense of unity. It is here you can see that people choose the cultures they want to be a part of by choosing the places they want to spend their time in and ultimately form part of.
- The question is not about restriction, but rather what cultures are people choosing to be a part of and not.
- This can only be understood and created through scaling plans to the micro level for public spaces to improve their quality of space as the private public spaces do. Specificity creates successful public spaces.

Important lesson:

Public – complies to a mandate
Private – Tailors to its people

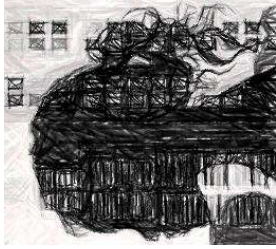
Remember
that
paradox?



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Interview 2: Jacolene Swart



Microsoft Teams

Discussion: Public Spaces

2024-10-29 14:14 UTC

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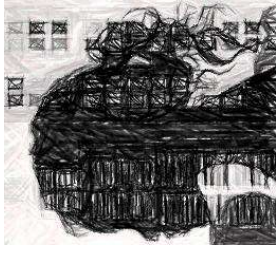
Jacolene Swart

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Jacolene Swart

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Interview 3: Johan – Calitz Janse van Rensburg



Interview 3: Johan – Calitz Janse van Rensburg

Question: What area (private / public) of the development sector do you work in, and how are you involved in Public Space?

Question: What does Public Space mean to you, and your definition of how to describe these spaces?

- Public Space is anything beyond my personal private property boundary. I am involved in the planning and design for the positioning of public space in relation to where people move and pass through space (understanding the human behaviour). Why do people do what they do in around the public space. There is a relationship between flow of people and the position of public space that holds a key interest.

Question: What does the term "Placemaking" mean to you?

- Placemaking is connected to human behaviour – in order to create public space, you need to understand human behaviour. Spaces can be planned and developed but without understanding and incorporating human behaviour they do not connect with the users. For example: "Men design shopping centres for women to shop in without understanding how women think."
- This is why public spaces are lacking in attracting users, they are not incorporating the human behaviours of the users they are catering for.
- For example: "Social Housing, caters for lower income groups with assumption users don't have cars and as result do not make provision for adequate parking."

Question: What relationships connect Public Space and Placemaking?

- There is a lack of money / economic investment in public space as a result placemaking principles cannot be implemented.
- Quality spaces are catered for, they offer diversity in terms of entertainment and food, or greenery.

Question: What is the key differences between Private Public Spaces in comparison to Public Spaces?

- Access

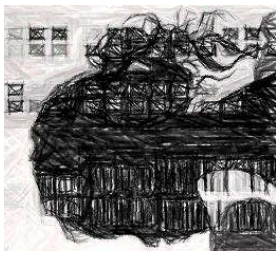
How does the power of ownership (public / private) impact design of in practice?

I think it does in a matter. It also depends the way the public space is. um normally when it's far flung around the townships, um, most of the time is still, but I have been in townships away people that lives close to the to the public park has taken ownership with the park. an someone goes out every day and got every week and cut the grass, you know, just that neighbourhood. I think in in a public private space, it is there is definitely dynamics around where ownership place are all and how well it's managed and how well it's sustained, and for the private se if there's not financially in there's actually no purpose for them to be there, where from a public space, it's more a case of like your social duty to upkeep it actually. and I think that is where government is sort of needs to fulfil that role in general is like it's the best way we can help the world, basically. It just depends on how well it's managed from each side. o someone should have the vision of it, but if that person has the vision, but he's not empowered by the mipality or by someone to make a good place making or to just upkeep on um on the park, then there is no purpose for that person to even go delve into it. Like if he doesn't have a mandate or be to be empowered to do this, then it doesn't actually, you know, you. So I think skills and strategy and um the other one you just mentioned. To create a connection here and you're like, well, how you see it in terms of flow of people, human behavior, access, uh when you look at public and privatized public spaces, would you think does better in terms of principles of what makes public space public I think it's a private and general and it comes down to maybe that like empowerment, like some not everyone has the vision or something, but then also private sector, I think we spoke about shortly on on LinkedIn is that we it's basically a case of like shopping centres, is power spaces, but our public spaces. and it's the case of like they just manage it better because there's a incentive.

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Interview 4: Puvendra Akkiah



Interview 4: Puvendra Akkiah

Question: What area (private / public) of the development sector do you work in, and how are you involved in Public Space?

Advocate for public space in practice and theory. Sustainable goals champion. My experience covers private and public sector, in which I branched out from local government, into strategic planning and global policy contributor for Public Spaces.

Question: What does Public Space mean to you, and your definition of how to describe these spaces?

- Public Space is a product of inclusivity, and the quality is a result of funding.
- Public space has become the poorer cousin the design of cities and towns in the public sector due to the challenges faced with funding.
- A catalyst for spatial transformation of the cities fabric as there is an intersectionality of quality in relation to investment as a result impacting public life and public experience.
- What drives public spaces the development of these spaces – spatial transformation and spatial justice
- “You can’t develop public spaces without. Effectively engaging with the end user, so key is engaging with the communities.”

Question: What does placemaking mean to you?

- Placemaking is going beyond design
- The relationship between people and design
- Place making actually takes a far bigger role in bringing together interested and affected parties or stakeholders.
- Placemaking is the intersectionality between responsibility and responsiveness
 - It’s about clearly understanding exactly what the needs are, what the roles and responsibilities of each of the stakeholders are, and developing a space that is responsive. Responsive in terms of the needs of the Community, but also responsive in terms of how we view sustainable development but responsive in that it is a facility that is going to be used.
- Placemaking is an outcome of engagement regarding the planning and design of public spaces.
- Placemaking is for People
 - Engaging end – users
 - Design elements: material, access, target driven, value is based on serving the needs of the users
 - Inclusivity – How we do create opportunities for inclusivity, through placemaking.

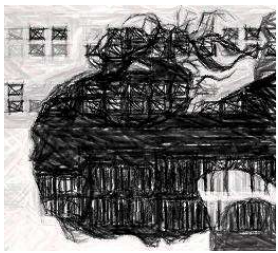
• Placemaking is a process of “Co – creating”

Question: What are the elements that connect Private Public Space and Placemaking?

- The user is the focus
- The planning and design is market driven.
- Private public spaces offer quality spaces but lack the engagement from the public.
- Sterilised Spaces are created by regulations and inhibits the true reflections of public space qualities in terms of access, use and freedom of expression

Question: What is the key differences between Private Public Spaces in comparison to Public Spaces?

- Public Spaces are developed by the city, the end – user forms part of the process of planning and design and co – funded
- Private Public Spaces – imperative to note how we view private public space and privately managed public spaces
- The relationship between use – agency – access
- Private Public Spaces – market driven



Interview 4: Puvendra Akkiah

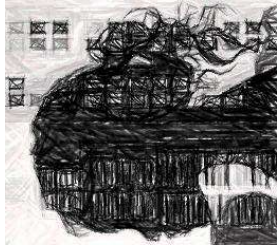
Question: How does the power of ownership (public / private) impact design of in practice?

It's a space for public, but however we must understand that it operates on a on a premise that you will be spending money in that space. So for public space to be truly public space. It should not have come with any conditions. It should be a space, that is that is absolutely free of use and free of access. It's up so whilst you are able to access shopping mall for free et cetera. However, there is an expectation that you will be spending money or you will be using that space in terms of some monetary exchange itself. So from, from my perspective is we really need to change the paradigm around planning and how we plan for public space. And therein lies the role of the built environment professional, and I'm actually. Specifically saying built environment professional and not saying town planner. Because - The role of public space is far bigger than just the town plan and the architect, urban designer, et cetera. It's actually the entire built environment profession coming together and that is one of the sort of challenges that we've currently experienced in public space development. So if developing a new town centre, you will find urban design guidelines coming through with regards to how public space is developed. If you're looking at a much at a more localised macro as a micro sort of perspective from the building design perspective then the architect will. Get involved together with possibly the urban designer to define public spaces within that building. Building context itself now from a planning context, you know whether you looking at local area plans, local area plans, functional area precinct area plans, et cetera. You will just look at the allocation of public space or zoning of public spaces within an entire area. We as the built environment need to engage more on when it comes to place making. Inclusivity, spatial transformation for public spaces in the African context. South African context

Question: Why private public space? What is attractive about them?

I think the only target that public space managed by public institutions should have is the number of people that are actually using that space on a regular basis to actually improve or make impact in terms of their quality of life. But when you look at privately owned, privately managed public spaces, they actually meeting the needs of now, and that is why they continue to thrive in a way, in their own way, in the long term, even though they don't succumb to the.

Interview 4: Puvendra Akkiah



Microsoft Teams

public space design

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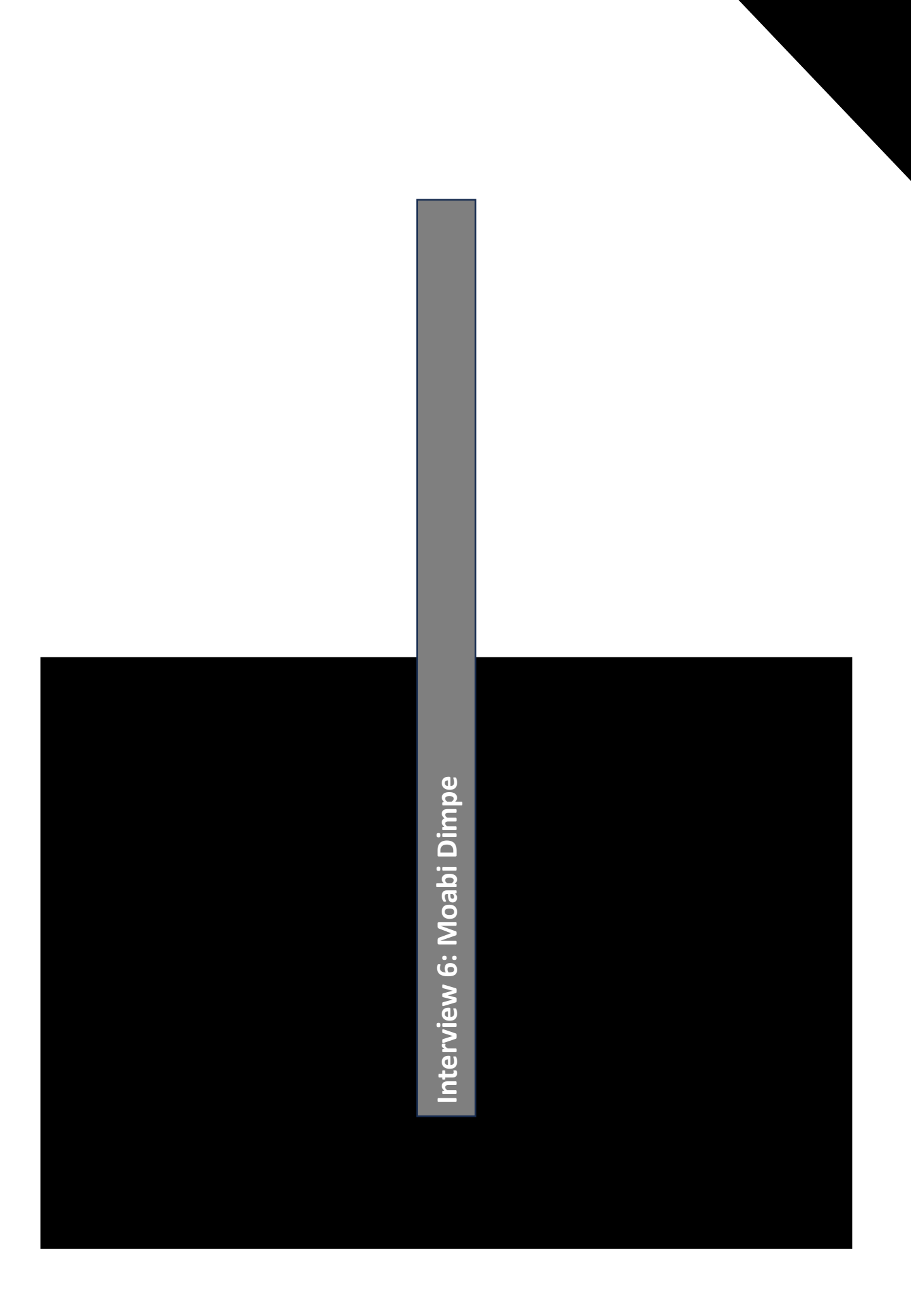
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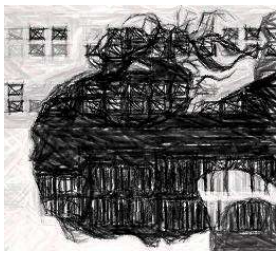
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Interview 6: Moabi Dimpe



Read and engage with US...

Interview 5: Heidi Lu

Question: What area (private / public) of the development sector do you work in, and how are you involved in Public Space? I work in the Private sector. As an Architect my involvement in Public Space varies according to the client's brief - whether the building they require interfaces with the public or not

Question: What does placemaking mean to Heidi?

- Placemaking is the act of formulating space that is activated by people and further defined through their use and engagement with the space and in conjunction with other users contributing to the 'spirit'/ emotive quality of that space.

Question: What is Public Space in your understanding?

- Public Space means that the space should be easily accessible to every member of society despite varying degrees of class.

Question: Describe your experience at the selected private public spaces namely; Nelson Mandela Square and Monte Casino

- Tuscan style design creating a foreign and therefore 'romantic' allure (Monte Casino)
- Broad range of programme: hotel/theatre/ cinema/ nightclub/ restaurant etc.
- Walkability through the entire complex
- Varying sight lines which allow for the opportunity to see what's happening below and above

Question: What design elements make Private Public Spaces attractive to people in your experience in practice?

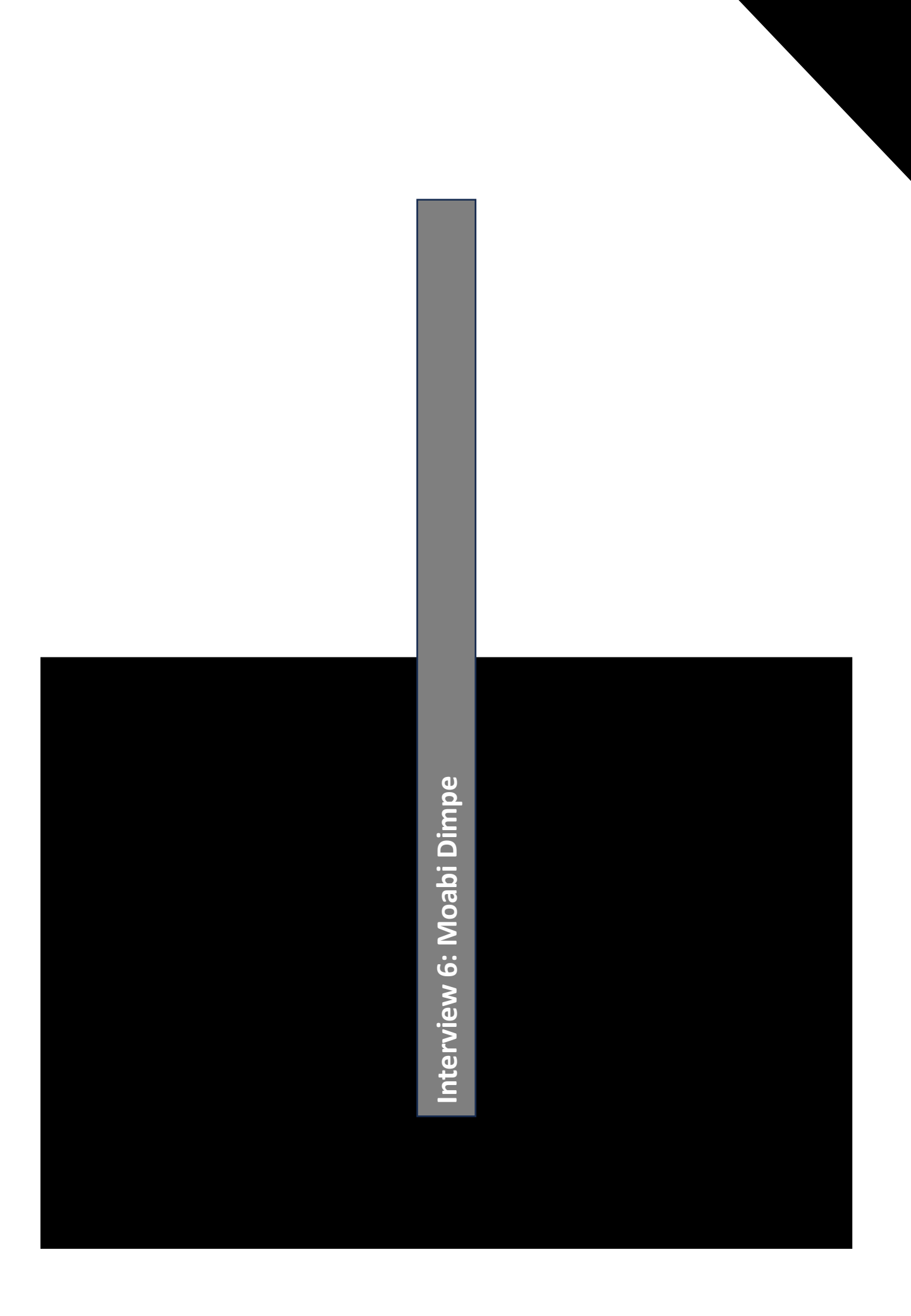
- Seating with some sort of shading
- Incorporation of green space (trees and plants)
- Open space with clear sightlines and the ability to feel safe visually

Question: What are the elements that connect Private Public Space and Placemaking?

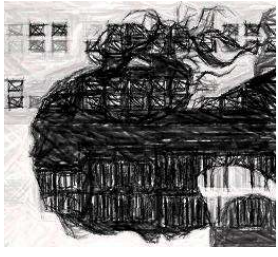
- Access up until the evening/ night
 - Various events that activate the space
 - 'Exclusivity' of the space that creates hype and contributes to the desire to be seen
- Question:** How does the power of ownership (public / private) impact design of in practice?
- It could restrict the experience.

Question: Why do you think private public spaces thrive?

- The human desire to belong, be a part of a wider community, and be seen (especially in the era of social media) is what attracts users.



Interview 6: Moabi Dimpe



Interview 6: Moabi Dimpe

Question: What area (private / public) of the development sector do you work in, and how are you involved in Public Space?

- I work in both the private and public sectors within the development of social, affordable, and student housing in Johannesburg. My involvement in public space comes from integrating public-use areas into residential projects. These often include designing shared spaces such as parks, pedestrian walkways, and public plazas within or adjacent to residential developments to enhance livability and foster a sense of community. These public spaces offer residents a place for recreation, social interaction, and relaxation.

Question: What does placemaking mean to Moabi?

- To me, Placemaking means creating spaces that are accessible, functional and give a sense of ownership to those who interact with them.

Question: What is Public Space in your understanding?

- Public spaces are accessible areas for everyone, promoting social interaction, relaxation, and civic engagement. They should be inclusive, welcoming, and flexible, accommodating various activities while reflecting the community's cultural identity.

Question: What are the elements that connect Private Public Space and Placemaking?

Question: What is the key differences between Private Public Spaces in comparison to Public Spaces?

Question: Describe your experience at the selected private public spaces namely: Nelson Mandela Square and Monte Casino

- At Nelson Mandela Square, its open design, ample seating, and the iconic statue of Mandela make it a popular meeting spot. It's well-known for its fine dining options, but remains enjoyable for those who cannot afford the expensive restaurants, as the square serves as a recreational and transitional space.
- Montecasino, on the other hand, is an experiential space that uses its thematic design to replicate ancient European villages, particularly Roman styles. This adds a sense of European charm to the user experience, making it attractive to visitors seeking an immersive, themed environment with diverse entertainment and dining options.

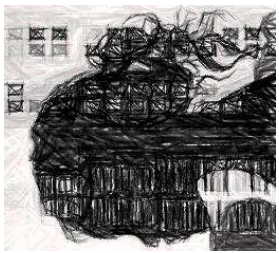
Question: What design elements make Private Public Spaces attractive to people in your experience in practice?

- Open areas that are not necessarily defined for a single purpose but could serve multiple activities.
- Public art installations
- Landscape architecture
- Both Nelson Mandela Square and Montecasino offer quasi-public spaces that are safe, well-maintained, and accessible, with a diverse mix of commercial, recreational, and cultural activities. The management of these spaces have a clear commercial interest in keeping them attractive and vibrant. They actively use events, advertising, and immersive activations to maintain high foot traffic, ensuring these spaces stay busy and commercially viable, which directly benefits the surrounding businesses.
- Both Nelson Mandela Square and Montecasino could benefit from more green spaces. Currently, there is an overemphasis on hard surfaces, and a better balance between paved areas and natural elements like trees and plants would enhance the aesthetic and comfort of these spaces. Increasing greenery would not only make them more environmentally friendly but also create a more relaxing atmosphere for users, improving the overall experience

Question: What is your preferred space to spend time in, public spaces or private public spaces? Why?

- Private Public Spaces
- Safety, cleanliness and maintenance. Various events that activate the space

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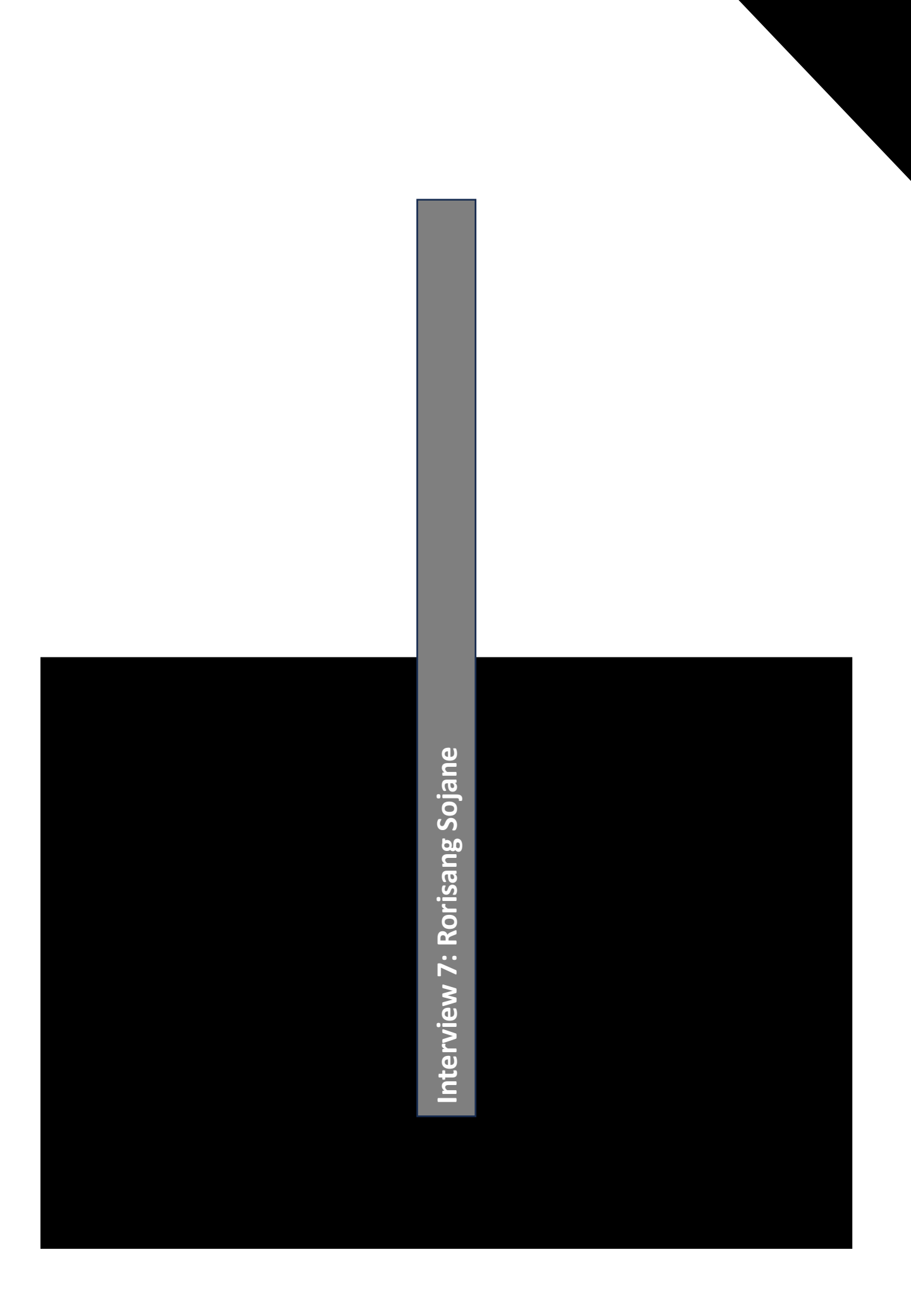
Interview 6: Moabi Dimpe

Question: How does the power of ownership (public / private) impact design of in practice?

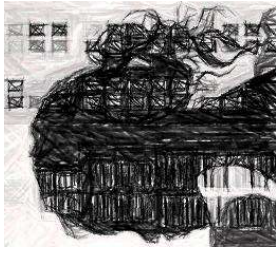
- Yes, restricts experience

Question: Why do you think private public spaces thrive?

- They thrive because thrive because they are carefully curated, maintained, and designed to attract and retain foot traffic, which is crucial to their commercial success. These spaces are typically located in high-density areas, close to retail and entertainment, ensuring convenience and frequent use. The private owners, motivated by the need to drive revenue through surrounding businesses or nearby developments, invest in high-quality design, cleanliness, and safety, often offering a superior experience compared to publicly owned spaces. Additionally, they host events and manage security, creating an appealing environment that encourages repeated visits. The continuous flow of people is essential for generating revenue, so owners are committed to maintaining these spaces to ensure their profitability and desirability, reinforcing the symbiotic relationship between well-maintained spaces and economic return.



Interview 7: Rorisang Sojane



Interview 7: Rorisang Sojane

Question: What area (private / public) of the development sector do you work in, and how are you involved in Public Space?

I work in a joint venture between private and public entities, in which we are hired to manage space. The Excelerate Precinct Management forms part of City Improvement Districts for the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan area in which property owners agree on a contractual basis of the managing and upkeep of their properties. They are governed by the SID Act of the City of Johannesburg which manages their practice in public spaces. The job includes; improvement of the spaces they govern as such there is monitoring, managing and maintaining operations that are designated by the landlords intentions for the area or site.

Question: What does placemaking mean to you?

- Aspects of Placemaking is reflected in the vision of the landowner that hires the management company such as Excelerate Precinct Management. Placemaking is not at the forefront of their function but is as a result of their work. However, these are governed by what the landlords and entities can afford, shaped by the concerns they have of their users they seek to cater too, and the integration of their intentions into the wider context that will ensure a return on their investment.

Question: What is Public Space in your understanding?

- Public Space means a space used by the public and design for the public. It is imperative to note that management can be misconceived in literature as it is exercised in practice for example; Excelerate Precinct Management are caretakers that protect the interests of the landlord and "add on a service," that compliments public and private public spaces. These are not entities that define public verses private spaces use and their regulations.

Question: Describe your experience at the selected private public spaces namely; Nelson Mandela Square and Monte Casino

- Tuscan style design creating a foreign and therefore 'romantic' allure (Monte Casino)
- Broad range of programme: hotel/theatre/ cinema/ nightclub/ restaurant etc.
- Walkability through the entire complex
- Varying sight lines which allow for the opportunity to see what's happening below and above

Question: What are the elements that connect Private Public Space and Placemaking?

- Space is subjective to the user
 - Basic services and safety are considered
 - Pathways of access are monitored, well maintained and clean
- Question:** What is the key differences between Private Public Spaces in comparison to Public Spaces?
- Communication with the public about their design follow different processes
 - Transparency in terms of public engagement
 - Disclosed budgets are allocated and managed differently for either space.
 - Monitoring and evaluation processes are regulated differently.

Question: What design elements make Private Public Spaces attractive to people in your experience in practice?

- The lack of care, and apathy towards public spaces is a result of why users find private public spaces more attractive. This apathy is revealed in the lack of effort and initiatives taken by Public Entities to care for the upkeep and maintenance of public spaces, hence the establishment of private entities such as Excelerate Precinct Management.

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"Investigating the Growing Trend of Privatisation in Urban Environments: Evaluating the Role of Privately Managed Public Spaces in Achieving Public Space Objectives through Placemaking Design Principles"

Tunisia Cassim
2730521

MSc Development Planning

“Investigating the Growing Trend of Privatisation in
Urban Environments:

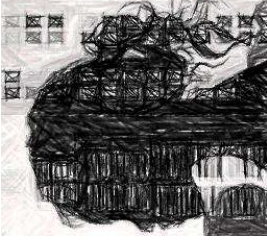
Evaluating the Role of Privately Managed Public
Spaces in Achieving Public Space Objectives through
Placemaking Design Principles”



- Initial Research Report submitted – 28 February 2025
- Newly Revised incorporating comments from examination outcome received
8 September 2025
- Revised Examination Report to be submitted 24 October 2025



- The newly revised research report submitted 24 October 2025 makes reference to the Fieldwork Journal to illustrate the practical work and application undertaken by the researcher during the research journey from 20 January 2025 to 24 October 2025.

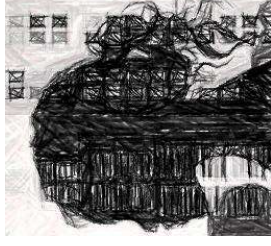


Conclusions & Outcomes

The theoretical similarities between public spaces and privately owned public spaces (POPS) lie primarily in their intended purpose—to serve the public. Both are designed to facilitate accessibility, foster social interaction, and support urban life through amenities such as seating, public art, and landscaping. In both cases, these spaces function as vital elements of urban integration by promoting inclusivity, cultural expression, and a sense of place. Their physical features often reflect a shared intent to create environments that accommodate recreation, transit, and gathering, contributing to a cohesive urban fabric.

However, significant differences emerge when examining the ownership, governance, funding, and intent behind each space. Public spaces are publicly owned and managed, legally protected by public regulations, and funded by government resources. They are, in theory, universally accessible and shaped by policy mandates. In contrast, POPS are owned and managed by private entities, often with restricted access governed by privately determined rules. Although they must align with constitutional rights, their use is shaped by commercial motives and private investment, resulting in curated experiences aimed at attracting and retaining foot traffic for economic gain.

Additionally, while public spaces are created under the directive of public interest and long-term urban policy, private public spaces are often shaped by market demands, user trends, and the return on investment for developers. This creates a divergence in the motivations driving their design and management. Legal protections also differ, with public spaces safeguarded by state institutions and POPS subject to private enforcement with public oversight. In summary, while public and private public spaces may appear similar in form and function, they diverge in their underlying principles of ownership, governance, funding, and intended outcomes. Their distinctions raise important questions about equity, accessibility, and the role of private interest in shaping spaces meant for public life.

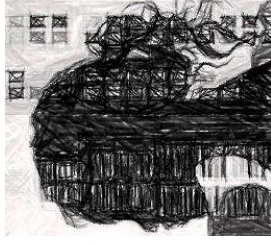


Conclusions & Outcomes

Privately managed public spaces (PMPS) partially achieve the objectives of traditional public spaces by providing accessible, well-designed, and well-maintained environments that support social interaction, movement, and leisure. These spaces often offer high levels of safety, cleanliness, and user-focused amenities, enhancing the overall urban experience. However, they fall short in fulfilling the deeper democratic and inclusive aims of public space. PMPS are typically governed by private entities, which can result in limited access for marginalized groups and restrictions on political expression or spontaneous public gatherings. This undermines the role of public space as a platform for civic engagement, social equity, and the right to the city. While PMPS contribute positively to the urban landscape, their commercial motivations and selective inclusivity mean they do not fully realize the broader social and democratic functions of truly public spaces.

In Nelson Mandela Square, the objectives of public space are partially realized through high-quality design, symbolic representation, and general public accessibility. The square offers a clean, safe, and aesthetically appealing environment that encourages social interaction, supports tourism, and integrates cultural identity through the prominent statue of Nelson Mandela. These elements foster a sense of place and belonging, aligning with key goals of public space. However, as a privately managed site, its use is subject to commercial interests and behavioural restrictions, limiting spontaneous civic expression and full social inclusivity. While the space effectively functions as a vibrant urban node, its governance and design primarily serve consumer-oriented activities, illustrating the trade-offs inherent in privately owned public spaces.

At Montecasino, the objectives of public space are achieved primarily through thematic design, controlled accessibility, and a curated user experience, though these are closely tied to commercial and entertainment purposes. The space is designed as a themed, immersive environment, replicating a European village, which offers visitors a unique and visually engaging experience that encourages social interaction, leisure, and repeat visits. It includes public seating, open walking areas, and entertainment options that create the feel of a communal space. However, as a privately owned and managed precinct, access and behaviour are regulated to maintain a specific atmosphere aligned with the brand and commercial goals. This results in a safe, clean, and vibrant environment, but one that is commercially exclusive, limiting informal use and broader civic expression. While Montecasino succeeds in offering an attractive and user-friendly public realm, its function remains primarily commercial, highlighting the selective inclusivity and market-driven nature of privately managed public spaces.



Conclusions & Outcomes

The outcomes recorded in the fieldwork journal reveal a critical tension at the heart of the research problem: while users express a preference for traditional public spaces, they consistently choose to spend more time in privately managed public spaces due to their higher standards of cleanliness, safety, and service delivery. On-site observations and participant feedback highlight that these privately managed spaces offer qualities that are increasingly absent from public spaces—namely, a sense of care, relevance, and consistent user experience. Participants also pointed to the deterioration of public spaces, citing a lack of maintenance, inadequate safety measures, and poor alignment with current community needs. These findings underscore the urgency for rethinking how public spaces are planned and maintained, and highlight the value of placemaking as a strategy to bridge the gap. Placemaking, when genuinely collaborative and context-sensitive, holds the potential to restore the functionality and inclusiveness of public spaces by embedding social, cultural, and physical identities into their design. This research, therefore, advances the discourse by seeking the perspectives of built environment professionals to better understand the design and planning frameworks that make privately managed public spaces increasingly attractive to the public—and how these practices can inform the revitalisation of traditional public space.

The End

- Interviewing & Insights from Built Environment Professionals



6 August 2024

Cassim, Tunisia Mekeyla Akbar
2730521

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL

Perception of Quasi - Public Spaces

This letter serves to confirm that the Ethics application for the above titled study has been approved. The researcher has been granted clearance to proceed with the research study or project.

Protocol/clearance number is: **SOAP041/05/2024**

Yours sincerely

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