

# Abstract

This dissertation on the Nature of Cities investigates the link between the presence of nature as place-making tool and the quality of life and prosperity of urban users. Furthermore, it analyses whether the reinsertion of nature into an existing urban fabric can lead to urban regeneration, human well-being and improved resilience in urban environments currently under pressure from climate change.

The research topic focuses on natural and cultural heritage as a catalyst for urban regeneration, resulting in sustainable and productive urban environments. Analysis of case studies and various theoretical positions is used to develop a strategy of implementation that will allow daily interaction with nature, rather than the divide that currently exists between the anthropogenic and ecological spheres in much of our cities.

The proposed study area stretches over the boundaries of the inner city residential suburbs of Berea, Hillbrow and Parktown, Johannesburg. Each one of these suburbs offering different spatial qualities and challenges and representing distinctly varying conditions. As some of the oldest suburbs of Johannesburg they provide valuable natural and cultural heritage that allows a rich background and the perfect canvas on which to explore the importance of the inclusion of nature into our day to day lives. Furthermore, it offers the opportunity to explore the ability of nature's reintroduction to stimulate local economic growth and increased well-being.

The main research question focuses on the role that nature, specifically water can have on urban form and its role in placemaking. It does this by challenging the current implemented response by local council in dealing with natural water sources and storm-water runoff, which in most cases reflects the removal from site by canalization and piping. The aim is to develop a response that will make access to nature readily available to inner city dwellers.