

THE ROLE OF ETHNIC ENCLAVES IN URBAN REGENERATION: FORDSBURG AS A CASE STUDY

Ebrahim Mahomed

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment,
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Science in Development Planning.

Johannesburg, 2005

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the Degree of Master of Science in Development Planning in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Ebrahim Mahomed

_____ day of _____ 2005

ABSTRACT

The aim of this research report is to determine the viability of the hypothesis that ethnic enclaves have the potential to contribute positively to urban regeneration. This research is motivated by the importance that is placed on regenerating cities at present and by the fact that many cities around the world, including Johannesburg, are intensely diverse and are composed of a significant number of ethnic minority groups. The Johannesburg Inner City area of Fordsburg has been chosen as a case study. The area has for many years been closely associated with the Indian community of Johannesburg and appears to be showing signs of renewed interest and rejuvenation. Secondary research has been employed as a means to structure the theoretical base of the report and to explain current debates regarding urban regeneration and ethnic enclaves. Quantitative and qualitative criteria have been applied in analysing the findings regarding the scenario in Fordsburg.

According to the theory, even in the modern contemporary metropolis, members of society still ascribe to ethnic identities and organise themselves spatially into ethnic enclaves within cities. It is also revealed that urban regeneration can be achieved through several means and that initiatives that target and include ethnic minorities have the potential to produce coherent and desirable results. This includes meaningful input from public sector, private sector and members of community. In analysing Fordsburg, it is shown that the area could definitely be considered as an ethnic enclave and is undergoing a certain amount of regeneration. This regeneration has been mainly driven by the private sector and members of community who identify with the Indian/South Asian enclave. While public sector input has been less significant in Fordsburg's regeneration, it is nevertheless asserted that ethnic enclaves do have the potential to positively promote urban regeneration.

For Abdul Samad and Yasmin

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am thankful for everything that the Almighty has bestowed upon me.

Sincerest gratitude to my supervisor Mr. Neil Klug for effective guidance, elucidation at critical moments and time spent in assisting me on this research report.

I'd like to also thank other members of staff in the Department of Town & Regional Planning at Wits University for their words of encouragement and support.

A special thanks to close friends and colleagues with whom constant reflection over matters at hand always helps put things into perspective. Thanks for the motivation, support and encouragement.

Thanks to Salma Patel for general assistance, critical feedback, thoughtful insight and information when it was needed most – Much appreciated.

I would also like to thank: Mr. Ahmed Bobat and Mr. M.H. Patel of the Oriental Plaza; Mr. Ismail Gattoo and Mr. Rashid Angamia for a real estate perspective; Councillor Junaid Pahad, Mr Yusuf Seedat, S. Mamoojee; and Mr. Hisham Bhamjee for the time that they had taken out to be interviewed. Your feedback has been most beneficial.

CONTENTS

	Page
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Chapter Introduction	1
1.2 Overview: Urban decline and the importance of cities	2
1.3 The topic explained	3
1.4 Aims and objectives	5
1.5 Research method	6
1.6 Structure of report	6
2. ETHNIC GROUPS AND ETHNIC ENCLAVES	8
2.1 Chapter Introduction	8
2.2 Ethnicity: Group boundary maintenance and persistence	9
2.3 Ethnic group prevalence cities: The South Asian/Indian ethnic group as an indicator	13
2.4 The origin and prevalence of Asian American ethnic enclaves	16
2.5 Chinatown: Aspects of a prominent Asian enclave	19
2.6 General characteristics of an ethnic enclave	20
2.7 Chapter Summary	21
3. ASPECTS OF URBAN REGENERATION	23
3.1 Chapter Introduction	23
3.2 Background and possible modes toward urban regeneration	23
3.3 Improving the organisation, tools and leadership capacity in urban regeneration	26
3.3.1 Improving the organisation of urban regeneration	26
3.3.2 Making urban regeneration tools more effective	28
3.3.3 Strengthening leadership capacity	28
3.4 Urban regeneration in practice	29
3.4.1 Urban regeneration in the USA	29
3.4.2 Urban regeneration in Britain	31
3.4.3 Urban regeneration in Europe	34
3.5 Chapter Summary	35
4. THE ROLE OF ETHNIC ENCLAVES IN URBAN REGENERATION	37
4.1 Chapter Introduction	37
4.2 Spitalfields and Banglatown	37
4.3 Renouncing ethnic enclaves in urban regeneration is undesirable	42
4.4 Realising and promoting 'official' and 'unofficial' ethnic enclaves is important	45

4.5	Ethnic enclaves are able to promote urban regeneration: a conceptual framework	46
4.6	Chapter Summary	49
5.	URBAN REGENERATION FRAMEWORK FOR JOHANNESBURG	50
5.1	Chapter Introduction	50
5.2	The status of Johannesburg as a prominent urban centre	50
5.3	Decline and transformation of Johannesburg	53
5.4	Policy framework for urban regeneration in the City of Johannesburg	55
5.5	Overview of current urban regeneration initiatives and key projects	59
5.6	Urban regeneration in Johannesburg: positive perceptions	60
5.7	Johannesburg's Chinatown: an ethnic enclave in urban regeneration	62
5.8	The need to consider ethnic enclaves in urban regeneration in Johannesburg	64
5.9	Chapter Summary	66
6.	EXAMINING FORDSBURG	67
6.1	Chapter Introduction	67
6.2	Historical background	68
6.3	From 'Coolie Location' to ethnic enclave: Perspective on Fordsburg	70
6.3.1	The arrival of Indians in South Africa	70
6.3.2	Indian presence in Johannesburg	71
6.3.3	Fordsburg's enduring connection with the Indian community	73
6.3.4	Fordsburg's Indian/South Asian enclave is reinforced	76
6.4	Examination of Fordsburg in the context of urban regeneration	80
6.4.1	Area information	80
6.4.2	Plans, policies and public investment in Fordsburg	82
6.4.3	Private investment and development in Fordsburg	85
6.5	Chapter Summary	88
7.	ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	90
7.1	Chapter Introduction	90
7.2	Analysis	90
7.3	Recommendations	93
7.3.1	Recommendations for Fordsburg	93
7.3.2	Recommendations for Johannesburg in general	94
7.4	Chapter Summary	95
8.	CONCLUDING REMARKS	96

APPENDIX A: SPITALFIELDS STREET MAP

APPENDIX B: CITY OF JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY

APPENDIX C: URBAN DEVELOPMENT ZONE: JOHANNESBURG INNER CITY

APPENDIX D: JHB INNER CITY STREET MAP

APPENDIX E: PROPOSED SITE FOR INDIAN COMMERCIAL CENTRE

APPENDIX F: AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH OF FORDSBURG & SURROUNDS

APPENDIX G: PLAN FOR PROPOSED ORIENTAL PLAZA UPGRADE

LIST OF FIGURES

(Maps, Illustrations & Photographs)

		Page
4.1	Location of Spitalfields in Greater London	38
5.1	City of Johannesburg in relation to Gauteng	51
6.1	Views of Fordsburg Square	68
6.2	Central Johannesburg, 1887	72
6.3	Burning of the 'Coolie Location', 1904	73
6.4	Mass meeting outside Newtown's Hamidia Mosque, 1908	74
6.5	Location of Oriental Plaza in Fordsburg	77
6.6	Restaurants, entertainment and retail activity in Fordsburg	79
6.7	Location of Fordsburg and the Inner City Region	80
6.8	New housing developments in the Fordsburg Area	83
6.9	Private property development in Fordsburg	86
6.10	Oriental Plaza upgrades	87
Appendices:		
A	Spitalfields Street Map	
B	City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality	
C	Urban Development Zone: Johannesburg Inner City	
D	JHB Inner City Street Map	
E	Proposed site for Indian commercial centre	
F	Aerial photograph of Fordsburg & surrounds	
G	Plan for proposed Oriental Plaza upgrade	

NB: Where source is not provided, figure produced by author

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
6.1 Region 8 Population Figures	81
6.2 Ward 58 Population Figures	81
6.3 Information for UDZ Zone 3 - Fordsburg (plus)	81
6.4 Number of Property Transfers in Fordsburg	85

ABBREVIATIONS

CBD	-	Central Business District
CID	-	City Improvement District
CJP	-	Central Johannesburg Partnership
CoJ	-	City of Johannesburg (Metropolitan Municipality)
DFA	-	Development Facilitation Act (1995)
EU	-	European Union
FMBF	-	Fordsburg-Mayfair Business Forum
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
GGP	-	Gross Geographic Product
GJMC	-	Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council
ICO	-	Inner City Office
IDP	-	Integrated Development Plan
ISF	-	Interim Strategic Framework
JDA	-	Johannesburg Development Agency
JHB	-	Johannesburg
JHC	-	Johannesburg Housing Company
LDDC	-	London Docklands Development Corporation
LED	-	Local Economic Development
MTC	-	Metropolitan Trading Company
PWV	-	Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging (region)
RSDF	-	Regional Spatial Development Framework
SDF	-	Spatial Development Framework
UDZ	-	Urban Development Zone
UK	-	United Kingdom
USA	-	United States of America