



# Transformation

*noun*

a thorough or dramatic change in form  
or appearance

## 5. INFRASTRUCTURES OF TRANSFORMATION: A CONTEXTUAL STUDY OF HOUSING IN COSMO CITY

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### Introduction

‘...[U]ntil we can expand our understanding of what takes place in contemporary cities, we are limited in our capacity to develop imaginative solutions to some very real challenges within them’ (Koch and Latham, 2012:516).

As South Africa enters its twenty-first year of non-racial democracy, institutional weaknesses, slow-moving economic growth and unequal wealth distribution, amongst others, present a succession of profound socio-economic challenges. This, together with the pressure of rapid urbanisation, result in cities that are continually being reshaped as the boundaries are drawn and redrawn, local government restructured, economies remade and social connections redefined. As the country’s financial centre, and most populated city (Frith, 2011), Johannesburg represents the extreme of these dynamics, and Cosmo City – a suburb of the city – a microcosm thereof.

Despite its burgeoning economy, and central location within one of the most powerful city-regions in Africa, Johannesburg exists as one of the most socio-economically and spatially fragmented cities in the world. It is a conurbation of a myriad of assemblages; a variegated city of remarkably different contexts within one urban boundary, unevenly arranged into pockets of privilege and poverty, inclusion and exclusion. It has been carved up in the shadows of successive social, political and economic forces that persistently sought to segregate its residents. Attempts to alter this dynamic have been based on urban development paradigms that rely on large-scale infrastructural investment as the means to fundamentally reshape stark inequalities. This belief continues to predominate. PricewaterhouseCoopers’ report on *Africa Gearing Up* (2015) documents that investment in infrastructure is the preeminent component of Africa’s development. In post-apartheid South Africa, rooted in the state’s overarching mandate to reduce poverty by accelerating economic growth (Urban Landmark, 2009), the government introduced a system of developmental local government structures (Parnell, 2005). This manifests in efforts to develop large-scale integrated settlements that “create more liveable, vibrant and valued places” (RSA, 2011:246). This assumption is premised on the principle that ‘integrated’ projects are able to bring people of varied socio-economic and racial backgrounds together.

Yet, the nett effect of public investment remains, in many cases, limited, failing to counteract the deeply divisive and exclusionary forces that persist in urban South Africa.

As such, these solutions rely on the analysis of Johannesburg as the allegory of failed western modernity. Authors like Robinson (2002), Mbembe and Nuttall (2004), and Simone (2004) contend that the city is then read as 'lacking' according to western theorisations, 'a failed and incomplete example of something else', a problem to be fixed (Mbembe and Nuttall, 2004:351). This mode of thinking misses an understanding of the complexity, dynamism and multiplicity of South African society, leaving little room for alternative imaginaries. The challenge for urbanists then, according to Kihato (2007:215-17), is to "develop conceptual frameworks that make sense of urban Africa on its own terms...to find new languages, methodologies and...tools for understanding ... cities". This call requires the city to be explored at "sites ... not usually dwelt upon in research, that defamiliarize commonsense readings" (Mbembe and Nuttall, 2004:352).

Reading Johannesburg for what it is, rather than for what it is not, sets forward the fundamental basis from which to creatively engage with the local particularities, rather than simply applying ideas from other contexts. With a vision for a more fair, equitable and inclusionary city, a close look is taken at Cosmo City. Attention is drawn to the background problem before proceeding to outline the methodology and conceptualisation of its investigation. In focusing on housing, a priority need in the lives of people, its characteristics and functioning are also evidence of the identity of a locality within which social integration takes place. In an exploration of this case, this chapter deepens insights into the theory and practice of infrastructures of transformation relying on Bourdieu's (1984; 2005) concepts, and a distinctive interpretation of his notions of 'habitus'. This chapter moreover seeks to provide an innovative approach to develop more relevant and appropriate tools to guide interventions that contribute effectively to projecting social transformation through integration in South Africa.

### **Problem statement**

In line with South African housing policy, integration is therefore considered in terms of two strongly overlapping correlates. First, social integration across class and race as social interaction (Department of Housing, 1994), although the latter is not explored in this research; and second, spatial integration in relation to geographic proximity associated with design and planning (Department of Housing, 2009). Through an ethnographic study of policy to provide a different perspective, an argument is presented that infrastructural planning and investment should not follow a contextual, technical and generic understanding of societal practices. It contends that, without affording the necessary credence to people's dispositions (see Table 5.1 below), efforts to achieve social transformation will remain substantively unattainable. The research shows more or less equal outcomes for a city's residents results when the relationships between people's dispositions and the built form are recognised.

Table 5.1: Research terminology

<b>DISPOSITION</b>	A way of being, seeing, acting and thinking in the world.
<b>HABITUS</b>	A “system of dispositions, that is of permanent manners of being, seeing, acting and thinking, or a system of long-lasting (rather than permanent) schemes or schemata or structures of conception and action” (Bourdieu, 2005:45).
<b>NIMBYISM</b>	‘Not In My Back Yard’ – a term for those who resist unwanted developments, usually housing for lower-income households, such as RDP housing, in his or her own neighbourhood.
<b>BACKYARDING</b>	The practices of constructing Informal dwellings – of ten intended to be rented out as accommodation—located in the ‘backyard’ of a residential property,, usually increasingly densities in an area beyond planning legislation.

*Source: Authors’ formulation, 2015*

Informing this research is Pierre Bourdieu’s (1984:77) assertion that social reproduction and class domination characterise social life through the ways in which ‘habitus’, as a system of ‘dispositions’ (refer Table 5.1 above) that structures everyday perceptions and classificatory systems in the form of “tastes and distastes, sympathies and aversions, fantasies and phobias” (ibid.). Bourdieu’s analysis moves away from a purely economic account of people’s decisions to enter the housing market. He regards economic decisions as also social decisions that both structure and shape people’s lives, and at the same time, are central in reproducing the stratification of society, common viewpoints today. The housing market situation in Cosmo City is a particularly significant site for this exploration.

Drawing on research conducted in Cosmo City, a large-scale greenfield integrated residential development in Johannesburg, over a two-month period, the suburb is clearly seen as an example of what Mosselson (2015) refers to as a “vernacular form of development...[that] reflects and also responds to the diversity and contradictions of the post-apartheid moment”. Mosselson’s attestation emphasises the importance of contextually sensitive research to arrive at place-specific insights, rather than implanting best practices from project to project (ibid.). Inspired by the National Development Plan’s claim that interventions should “understand the distinct challenges and potential of different areas and respond with a location-specific approach” (RSA, 2011:237), this project moves away from a normative reading of urban development. It seeks to illustrate how a range of imperatives and agendas, a system of dispositions, drive opportunities to more effective integration and therefore envisioned societal transformation.

Three core ideas are associated with this investigation. First, that more innovative research should be undertaken utilising the conceptual and methodological underpinnings as explored through the methodology employed in this work. The purpose is to provide more nuanced understandings that are able to inform policies and interventions. Second, that government policies and interventions should integrate people's dispositions, their ways of "being, seeing, acting and thinking" (Bourdieu, 2005:45), in their frameworks. The concern for dispositions should be replicated throughout government policies to accommodate the complex urban contexts in which it intervention has to take place. Lastly, using Bourdieu's (1984) notion of habitus, a number of practical insights that are gained from the investigation of Cosmo City are given. These insights, and the concerns for the shared views of people, have a place in the mechanisms of government. Significantly, they are able to create new avenues of action to redress an entrenched history of division to ultimately achieve a more equitable urban reality.

### **Understanding Policy and Practice Through 'Dispositions'**

Integration is often thought about as the inclusion of different income groups or races in the same area (Onatu, 2010:204). This idea that there ought to be a social mix is one of the consistent aims of housing policy in South Africa, from the White Paper on Housing (1994) to the Integrated Residential Development Programme (Department of Housing, 2007). Underlying this has been an understanding of integration as providing spatial proximity between different social groups, equality in terms of access to infrastructural provisions, as well as location, in terms of distance from economic centres (Smit, 2007:11). Assessing integration through these understandings is valuable, particularly when considering the effects of government regulation of, and intervention in, the housing market. Yet, beyond these measurements, there is the social world that emerges from housing that should also be considered when performing research. This is because integrated settlements, and the policy advocating for them, may necessarily result from a particular schemata of beliefs that views integration as vital to urban South Africa's future. Moreover, it is practices of the residents that inhabit these settlements that determines how substantively integrated they become.

This particular innovative approach tries to offer a different way of assessing the results of integrated settlements as an attempt to conjure the long-desired "socially and economically integrated communities" (Department of Housing, 1994). To understand how these interventions take place through, and create new, processes that can (re)produce segregation, a different analytical object of concern should be woven into much research work. Bourdieu (2005) argues that these processes can be understood by studying habitus: "a system of dispositions, that is of permanent manners of being, seeing, acting and thinking, or a system of long-lasting [rather than permanent] schemes or schemata or structures of conception and action" (ibid.:45, emphasis in the original). In using this theoretical frame, this research focuses on the shared, mundane practices and experiences of individuals to reveal the system of disposition through which integrated settlements come to be. The argument is that habitus, as a specific concept, can reveal how "privilege and disadvantage are covertly reproduced" (Holt, 2008:231) and how the system inhibits social transformation.

Bourdieu (1984) developed the concept of habitus to understand how class differences were reproduced in France in the nineteen sixties. Central to it, is how status-stratified society, creating distinctions through different tastes, governed access to power. Bourdieu’s research, utilising both survey data and qualitative interviews, focused on the everyday concerns that were not just a consequence but also the cause of social stratification. For example, Bourdieu would look at mundane practices, such as tastes in film, food and clothing, to show how class formation occurred to see how these revealed the different dispositions through which society is (re) produced. This research seeks to show that this choice of indicators that together make up a habitus is central to understanding segregation and societal transformation.

Some researchers use this interpretation of habitus to draw out the importance of “bodies... actions and passions” (Dewsbury, 2011:150) to understand and evaluate integrated settlements. The focus is on the social aspects that lead to their development and the lives of the residents within them. It differs from the simplified political economy readings that typify research on African cities (Mbembe and Nuttall, 2004), which, while offering valuable insights into some of the structural causes of segregation, could benefit from the nuances that habitus offers. Habitus provides a more sophisticated analysis because, for Bourdieu (2005), it accounts for the embodied manifestation of economic, social and cultural capital as it considers the position of individuals in society as the result of their ability to access the various forms of capital; with “economic capital being access to financial resources; cultural capital being tastes, distinctions and embodied dispositions; and social capital the ability to access actual and potential resources through social networks” (Butler and Robson, 2001:2146).

The concept habitus as used in this research also encompasses economic decisions as fundamentally social decisions, which is important to consider when researching the evolution of housing developments. Decisions are informed by the particular visions and aspirations of the actors involved. Cosmo City, the research site, is the manifestation of new forms of habitus, new system[s] of dispositions that affect the possibility of the development of future integrated settlements. Moreover, it also affects the possibility of integration of the communities that live within them. Drawing out how the various actors involved understand and act demonstrates how different contestations have arisen in Cosmo City as a particular kind of societal integration took place. Importantly, not only the inhibitors, but also the processes that enabled the transformation of existing social orders receive attention.

## Methodology

### Approach

A qualitative approach was deemed most suitable to apply to Bourdieu’s theoretical framework as well as the research questions. The methodologies employed included semi-structured interviews, observation and spatial analysis. This work was framed around research of secondary source literature that included a focus on housing policy in South Africa since 1994 to provide insight into the desired outcomes of state-led housing interventions. This approach was adopted to extract the nuanced ways the City of Johannesburg (COJ) and key developers conceptualised and implemented Cosmo City; how it was designed by planners; and the ways in which residents in Cosmo City experience and live in such an environment.

## Research sample and interviews

It is important that the collected data reflects the various stakeholders and actors who were involved and affected by the development. In total 11 key informants were interviewed. They included both formal actors who participated in the conceptualisation, development and implementation of the project, as well as residents from each of the three key housing typologies offered in the suburb. The three selected spatial areas were the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) area, the linked housing area and the bonded housing area (as revisited later, refer Map 5.2). The methods used were semi-structured interviews, providing a fairly open framework, allowing for the conversation to move away from the set questions and identify more appropriate ways to understand the subject matter, as Cohen and Crabtree (2006) advocate. The two major sample groups comprised formal actors and households (Table 5.2 below). The formal actors were purposefully selected because of the role they had played in the development of the suburb. The households were chosen to represent the different areas within Cosmo City. Numbers were limited to accommodate the time frame of the project.

**Table 5.2: List of formal actors and households interviewed**

FORMAL ACTORS (X6)	HOUSEHOLDS (X5)
LEAD CITY OFFICIAL (X1)	RESIDENTS FROM RDP AREA (X1)
LEAD DEVELOPER (X2)	RESIDENTS FROM LINK HOUSING IN THE RDP AREA (X2)
LEAD PLANNER (X1)	RESIDENTS FROM LINK HOUSING AREA (X1)
PLANNING CONSULTANT FOR THE CITY(X1)	RESIDENTS FROM BONDED HOUSING AREA (X1)
FORMER PLANNER FOR THE DEVELOPER (X1)	

*Source: Authors' formulation, 2015*

## Observations and spatial analysis

Observation offers a simple and widely used approach valuable in a variety of contexts to inform an understanding of the place-specific intervention – a well-established methodology by Goffman (1963, 1971) and Whyte (1980). Observation, literally observing people in the spaces that they inhabit, prioritises the embodied experience of residents by providing insights into how they use space.

The research was done in three key housing typologies in Cosmo City (Table 5.2 above). Although more time to gather information would be necessary for an extension of this investigation, the allocated time was adequate to assess the daily lives of people in the study areas. The beginnings of a comparative framework could be provided. For each housing typology, the key characteristics were highlighted and specific features and characteristics as well as similarities and differences were recorded. For the spatial analyses, the researchers drafted blueprints to illustrate the layout, aesthetics and built form of each property. Attention was placed on stand sizes, boundaries, openings, the types of objects found within the property and the way people occupied space.

### Limitations

Gathering information to test the applicability of the theoretical assumption expressed about Cosmo City had limiting parameters. First, the results from the qualitative method applied were not generalisable beyond the context and informants from which they were derived. Second, due to time constraints, the sample group remained small, focusing only on one household within each grouping and all residents interviewed were homeowners. Third, the formal actors were interviewed as representing their professional role, which means they had a vested interest in the subject which they portrayed as favourably as possible. Opinions and claims they expressed had to be weighed against other collected information. Fourth, it is important to note that Cosmo City was the first integrated residential development project of its kind in the country. Since its inception fourteen years ago, structures and perceptions of the development have changed, both positively and negatively.

### Housing, Housing Policy and Transformation in Post-Apartheid South Africa

The severe and seemingly intractable challenges confronting housing in post-apartheid South Africa have demanded policy and programmes that strive for multiple ends. A considerable backlog, lack of access to finance, poor affordability, poorly located units and inefficient housing markets are amongst the problems to be faced. Interestingly, threaded through the situation has been a concern for integration against the background of historically segregationist policies and the continued segregation of its cities. To understand the context out of which Cosmo City emerged, and the various objectives hoped for, it is important to first place the suburb in relation to South Africa's housing policy at large. Sights were set on it being the first large-scale integrated residential development of this type in the country. This section outlines the three key areas that government's policies and programmes of the state attempted to address.

#### Housing market

The housing market depends on the supply of housing units, either for households to buy or to rent. In South Africa, the backlog remains substantial. In 2010, it stood officially at an estimated 1.2 million units though this is likely to be significantly below the actual figure (Tissington, 2011). The housing market struggles with constricted supply, particularly for low-income households, which was intensified by the decline for over a decade in the delivery of subsidised housing (Rust, 2015). Low-income households have struggled to access mortgages, limiting access to the relatively small number of units on the market (Kihato, 2014).

Exacerbating this reality, the refusal to lend in inner cities and townships deflated the market in these areas, while adequate access to housing finance in the formerly white-only suburbs resulted in a dual property market at the end of apartheid (Department of Housing, 2004).

To address these issues, in 2004 a voluntary framework, the Financial Sector Charter, was drawn up between banks and government. The intention behind the Charter was to contribute to “the establishment of an equitable society by effectively providing accessible financial services to black people and by directing investment into targeted sectors of the economy” (Banking Association of South Africa, 2003:2). One of the targets included in the Charter was to increase mortgage lending to the ‘gap’ market, then households earning up to R7 500 a month. Nevertheless, access to mortgage finance remains an issue for low-income households, the vast majority of which are black. Currently the gap market consists of households who earn more than R3 500 a month, which is not enough to make even the cheapest, newly constructed house easily affordable. The finance-linked individual subsidy programme pegs this figure as being up to R15 000 a month. The gap market represents households that do not qualify for a subsidised RDP house and also have difficulty in finding a house to buy, implying they exist in a ‘gap’ in the market.

### Subsidies

The White Paper on Housing, published in 1994, and the guiding document for government policy, introduced the National Housing Subsidy Scheme, which provided capital subsidies to beneficiary households to own a house. The National Housing Subsidy Scheme worked largely through government subsidising the private sector construction of houses for households earning below R3 500 a month. These RDP houses, envisaged in the White Paper on Reconstruction and Development (RSA, 1994), are now thought to number between two and three million units nationally.

For households who fall into the gap market, there is the Finance Linked Individual Subsidy Programme (FLISP). The Programme was implemented in 2005, then for households earning between R3 500 and R7 000, offering a capital subsidy that went towards financing the purchase of a house. The Programme has undergone a number of changes since, and, in response to its poor performance, it was relaunched in 2012. It was expanded to include households earning up to R15 000 to account for the all households in the ‘gap’ market (Rust, 2012). Originally restricted to new developments, in 2013, the Programme was extended to the resale market (Rust, 2013). There is also a range of subsidies for the rental market, all trying to increase the supply and the affordability of housing (Tissington, 2011).

## Integration

Policy also considered what kind of cities and settlements resulted from it. Onwards from the White Paper on Housing, published at the end of apartheid, in 1994, three years after the Group Areas Act was repealed, government's integrationist agenda has been threaded through documentation. Written within the imposing spectre of apartheid, the National Housing Vision, the White Paper states that:

*[g]overnment strives for the establishment of viable, socially and economically integrated communities, situated in areas allowing convenient access to economic opportunities as well as health, educational and social amenities... (Department of Housing, 1994)*

This trend has continued as policy has developed, continually noting the intractable socio-economic segregation of South Africa's cities, and explicitly envisioning a more equitable urban reality. The White Paper on Housing (Department of Housing, 1994) states that the land and housing development process had the potential to "contribute to the racial, economic and spatial integration of South Africa". The Housing Act (Department of Housing, 1997:4) states that government ought to pursue this agenda, and prevent any discrimination in the way of access to housing. Breaking New Ground (Department of Housing, 2004:13-16), the update to the White Paper on Housing, has further promoted this objective, particularly under its chapter titled, Promoting Densification and Integration.

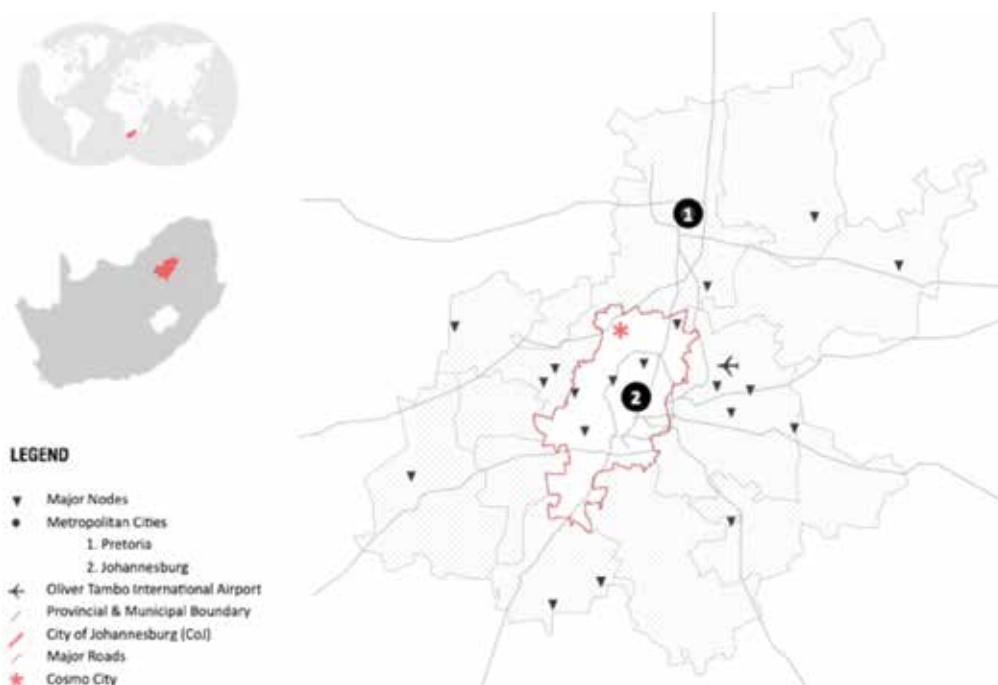
More recently, integration has featured most prominently in the Integrated Residential Development Programme (Department of Human Settlements, 2013), which was introduced to the Housing Code in 2009. The Integrated Residential Housing Programme is largely a practical programme, providing the means for the development of integrated settlements on greenfield sites. "[P]roviding a tool to plan and develop integrated settlements that include all the necessary land uses and housing types and price categories to become a truly integrated community" (Department of Human Settlements, 2009:9). The programme creates a platform that allows municipalities to become developers, and if the municipalities lack the capacity, responsibility can be transferred to provincial government or private developers. The programme allows for different housing typologies in a single settlement, including a mix of RDP, Finance Linked Individual Subsidy Programme, rental and bonded units. In such developments the programme encourages zoning beyond residential use alone.

### South Africa's First Large-Scale Integrated Settlement: Cosmo City

Near Johannesburg's north-western municipal boundary, past townhouse complexes, shopping malls and the Kya Sands industrial park, towards the end of Malibongwe Drive, Randburg, an arterial road 25 kilometres from Johannesburg's Central Business District, lies Cosmo City. It is South Africa's first attempt to achieve the envisioned housing policy. The various required ends were put together and the result is Cosmo City (Map 5.1).

It is a large-scale integrated suburb in South Africa of considerable size developed through a public-private partnership, a joint venture between the COJ, Basil Read, a developer and Kopano Ke Matla, the investment arm of the Congress of South Africa Trade Unions (COSATU). The need arose when residents of Zevenfontein and Riverbend informal settlements lying to the north-east had to be relocated. So the government took the opportunity to use the development to realise the policy imperative of integration. Behind this initiative was the understanding that integration included households of different income levels, giving rise to different classes in a single suburb. By having three housing typologies, households would have access to shared amenities as roads and other bulk infrastructure, schools, parks and other amenities would be provided. Three facilities were offered: RDP units for low-income households; finance-linked units for the gap market; and bonded units for middle-income households. Thus, beyond relocating the residents and attempting to integrate the suburb, the development provided the opportunity to develop much needed RDP units (Onatu, 2010). Moreover, it also increased the supply of units to the gap market and local government's revenue from rates and taxes that could then be used to develop units for middle-income households (ibid.).

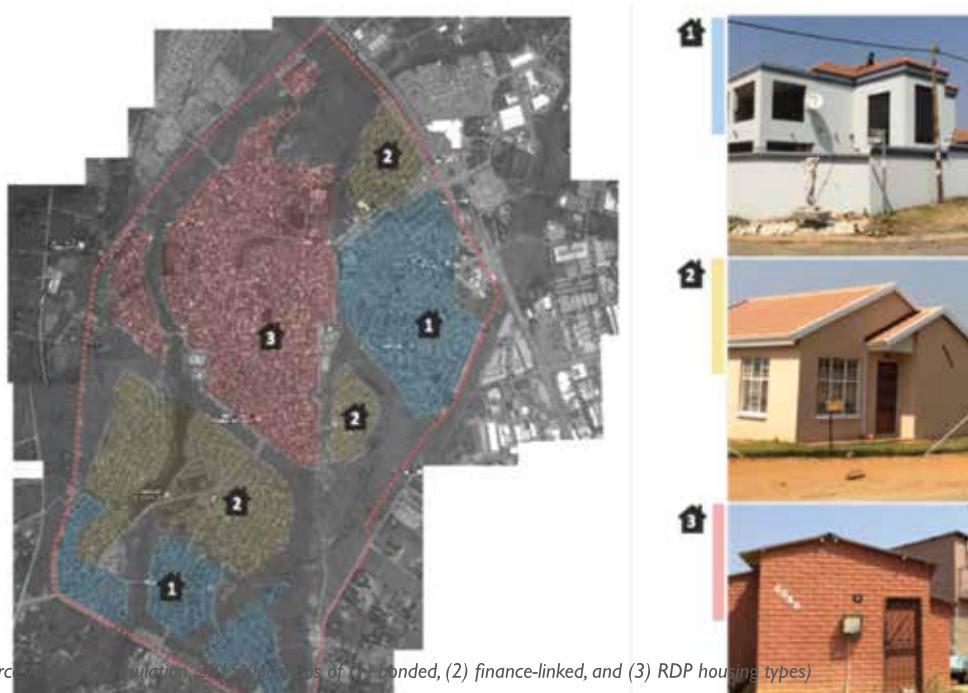
**Map 5.1: Location of Cosmo City in Johannesburg, Gauteng**



Source: Authors' formulation, 2015

Cosmo City is criss-crossed by wetlands, protected environmental zones, fenced off with palisades. These delineate and maintain a sense of distance, dependent on the width of the protected zones, as visible on the map (Map 5.2). They lie between the 3 300 bonded units, the 5 500 RDP units and the 3 000 finance-linked units. The bonded areas, which are on the boundaries of the suburb, consist of conventional suburban houses: plastered and painted, roofed with terracotta tiles, and with walled yards. Private developers bought the serviced stands from Codevco Pty. Ltd, the partnership-based developer of Cosmo City made up of Basil Read (a construction company) and Kopano Ke Matla (a Trust with Congress of South Africa Trade Unions (COSATU) as its beneficiary). They constructed the houses before selling directly to the public (LP, Pers. Comm., 2015). As with the finance-linked houses, which are smaller, Codevco carefully sold the stands in batches, gradually developing the settlement to convince households that purchasing a unit would be a sound investment. It would also allow them to profit off the increase in property values associated with a more established suburb (ibid.). Mortgages were used to finance the purchases of the bonded and finance-linked typologies, with the Finance Linked Individual Subsidy Programme subsidy off-setting the cost for finance-linked housing. Meanwhile, Codevco was also responsible for the construction of the RDP units, for which they received the capital subsidy (FPD, Pers. Comm., 2015) (Box 5.1 records a view of Cosmo City through the eyes of its residents).

**Map 5.2: Location of housing typologies within Cosmo City**



Source: Author's own compilation, 2015 (depicts of (1) bonded, (2) finance-linked, and (3) RDP housing types)

### Box 5.1: Cosmo City through the eyes of its residents

Kabelo<sup>1</sup> owns a house in the bonded areas of Cosmo City (Kabelo, Pers. Comm., 2015). He has lived, now with his wife and daughter, in his house since 2007, having moved from a rented townhouse in Weltevreden Park. Kabelo bought the house—which is on a perimeter road of the area, adjacent to the wetlands—off-plan from one of a small number of top structure development companies that sold units on the serviced stands bought from Codevco. Kabelo's house is around 100 m<sup>2</sup>, and his stand is 250 m<sup>2</sup>— part of the only typology constructed without a government subsidy for the top-structure.

Kabelo's house directly overlooks both the wetlands and the RDP areas beyond it. It is in this RDP area that Joseph lives, with his wife and three children (Kabelo, Pers. Comm., 2015). He received his RDP house in 2007; the top-structure for which was completely subsidised by the Provincial Department of Housing, known today as the Provincial Department of Human Settlements. Through two unsecured loans (one of R20 000, to which he added R60 000 of his own savings; the other worth R70 000), Joseph has built eight backyard rental rooms in a 'U' shape around his 40 m<sup>2</sup> house on the 235 m<sup>2</sup> property. Most of the households in RDP areas have built backyard rooms, the majority of which are for residential rental; the remaining are retail spaces, hosting a wide variety of shops, including spaza shops, salons, shebeens and restaurants. Joseph is unemployed but earns between R800 and R1 200 in rental income from each backyard room. While this is his only source of income, his wife works as a part-time cleaner for a family in Bryanston, five kilometres away. Many believe that the rental accommodation provided by the backyards has increased Cosmo City's population to three times the intended size (LCO, Pers. Comm., 2015).

In the same extension, Jessica, Andile, and their daughter live in one of a collection of finance-linked houses (Jessica and Andile, Pers. Comm., 2015). That there are finance-linked houses in a RDP area is unusual, the result of unfavourable geological conditions that increased the cost of construction beyond the amount provided by the RDP subsidy. The result is the unique (for Cosmo City) adjacent placement of two different housing typologies—the finance-linked units ringed by RDP units. Jessica grew up in Zevenfontein, and moved to Cosmo City as her mother was a beneficiary of a RDP house. Before buying their house with a mortgage and a Finance Linked Individual Subsidy Programme subsidy, the couple lived in a rented backyard room in the RDP area. Samantha, Andile's wife, works for a large company, while Andile is a construction labourer. Unlike Jessica and Andile's house, Lunga's finance-linked unit, like most of the finance-linked units, is in a section of an extension constituted only of finance-linked houses (Andile, Pers. Comm.unicaiton, 2015). Though he works fulltime at an engineering consultancy, his main income is from an events business that he runs from his house. He has extended his house to accommodate this business on his 285 m<sup>2</sup> stand.

<sup>1</sup>As residents interviewed requested anonymity, this and all other names mentioned in this chapter are pseudonyms.

*Source: Authors' formulation*

The land on which Cosmo City was constructed was owned by the COJ (Murray, 2011:198), who also financed the bulk infrastructure (Onatu, 2011). The subsidy for the RDP units was provided, as always for RDP units, by the provincial Department of Human Settlements. The first units were completed only in 2007, as after the 1997 announcements of the plans to develop Cosmo City, fierce opposition delayed commencement until 2006. The 1 100 hectare project was worth R3.8 billion in 2008 (ibid.), with the contributions being 13% from the COJ, 21% from provincial government and 66% from Codevco (ibid.). The final figures are not publicly available, in terms of total cost of the project, the amount contributed by each party and the return on profit for Codevco (PCC, Pers. Comm., 2015).

Cosmo City is now near final completion, with only a final few stands still to be developed. In some cases, households have improved and extended RDP houses with their own financing (Photograph 5.1 below). Cosmo City has been hailed as a success by the COJ (n.d.). Yet, despite a core objective behind the development of Cosmo City being an integrated suburb, many socio-economic and socio-spatial divisions are evident (Map 5.3).

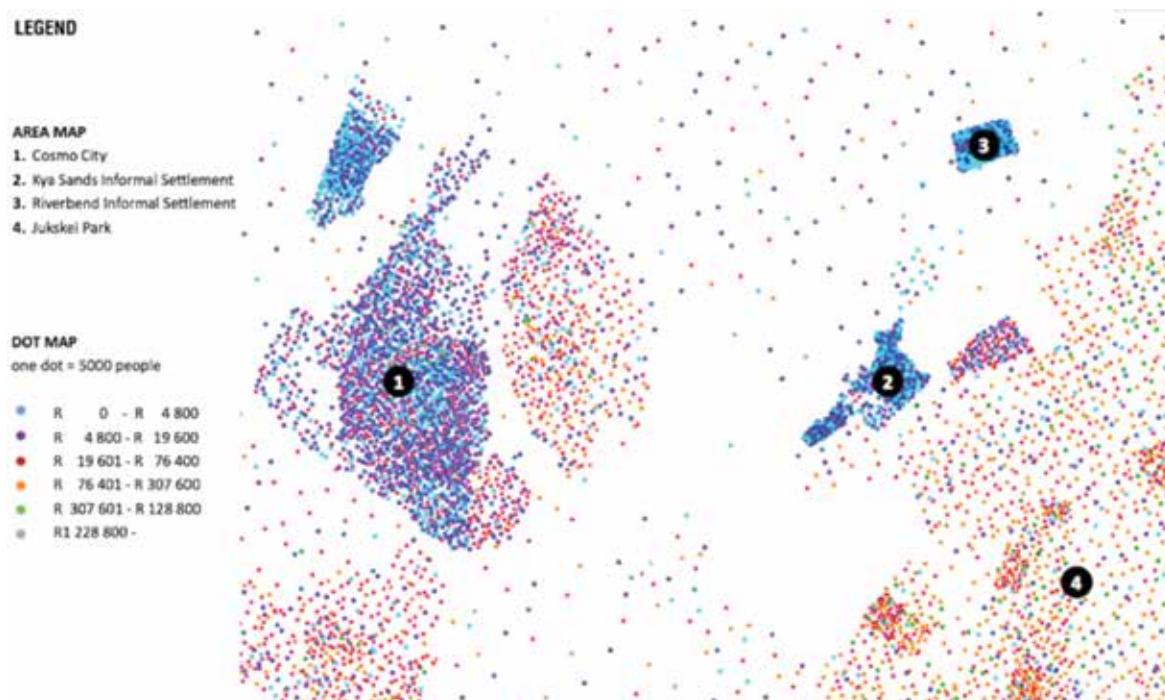
More recently, Codevco started pushing ahead with a similar integrated development, Malibongwe Ridge, on the northern border of Cosmo City. It is denser, the stands are smaller, and a second subsidy was used to create rental units on the ground floor; with the RDP unit above on the first floor. Malibongwe Ridge will, like Cosmo City, include finance-linked and bonded units, though, without the wetlands to develop around, the different typologies will not be as spatially separated. With some of the lessons Codevco learned from the development of Cosmo City, Malibongwe Ridge offers the possibility to develop a more substantively integrated suburb.

**Photograph 5.1: Original RDP houses and privately-extended double-storey RDP unit**



*Source: Photograph from Ivan Turok, 2015.*

Map 5.3: Income distribution map of Cosmo City and surrounds



Source: Authors' formulation, 2015, based on data from Frith (2011)  
(note low-income households concentrated in Areas 1-3 as represented in blue)

### Practices, Preferences and Paradoxes: Understanding Cosmo City

Cosmo City came to be because of the visions and aspirations of various actors that sometimes seemed contradictory. This section explores how the concept of a paradoxical habitus works through Cosmo City. It is one that is both concerned with integration but simultaneously resistive to it. It is used to provide insights into how the dispositions of the various actors involved in this initiative shaped the possibilities and constraints of the suburb's development and its planning. Then finally, it will be applied to analyse the observed everyday practices of its residents.

## Market imperatives and the integration agenda

Given what has been presented already about the current housing context within Bourdieu's framing, Cosmo City can be seen as the result of a paradoxical habitus, a synthesis of market concerns and the imperative for integration. These dispositions identified enabled the development of Cosmo City, an integrated development on what has proved to be well-placed land, where residents have reasonable equal access to infrastructural provisions. Considering conventional developments in Johannesburg, Cosmo City challenges narrow views that Johannesburg, its spaces, government, private sector actors and inhabitants is predominantly subject to financial interests. The existing assumption is that development only acts to maintain segregation or the antithetical view that a truly progressive government pursues only an integrationist agenda. Rather, it is the functioning of the paradox of the habitus that has allowed for progress towards integration. Understanding the prevalent dispositions reveals some of the conditions that shape the outcomes of its development.

### The market and 'NIMBYism'

In north-west Johannesburg, developers have focused their attention on the development of upper income housing, shopping malls and office parks rather than low-income housing and integrated settlements (Murray, 2011). Murray is among a number of writers who see the uncontrolled rate of these developments as the result of a local government that complies with the needs of business over and above those of its residents (Bond 2003; Naidoo 2005), a phenomenon that is part of a larger global trend governing of cities (Brenner and Theodore 2002; Ong 2006). Perpetuating this dynamic is the dogged 'NIMBYism' opposing any proposed development for low-income housing located near middle-income suburbs has to face (Murray, 2011:171-203). From its inception, this opposition was particularly vociferous in the case of Cosmo City. Murray describes, somewhat starkly, "the steadfast resistance of affluent suburban residents to the planned construction of low-income residential development", which, for him:

*exemplifies the kind of protracted and bitter power struggles that have pitted the narrow parochial interests of high-income homeowners against the needs of low-income (largely black) households and desperately poor squatter communities for decent, affordable accommodation close to places of work (Murray, 2011:196).*

The opposition went to the courts, delaying the development by three years. At the same time, there was the fear that the tax base of the surrounding suburbs would be jeopardised through property devaluation caused by the proximity of low-income housing, or middle-class households boycotting payment of rates and taxes, as had occurred before (LP, Pers. Comm., 2015). To avoid this possibility, developers undertook various measures to placate the pre-existing middle-class communities. Beyond engagement with the protestors, it even extended to the planning of the development. For example, out of concerns that the RDP units would result in the perception of the suburb being a township, the bonded housing was deliberately zoned on the boundaries of the suburb (Map 5.2).

The logic of the planners was that entering the settlement through the bonded area would provide passers-by and residents with a more 'suburban experience'. A senior planner involved in Cosmo City explains:

*We started with the high-income [units]—we didn't start with the low-income [units]—to set the scene, to say to people, that is not going to be a normal township, that this project is different (LP, Pers. Comm., 2015).*

Starting the development with the bonded housing was also used to ensure the sale of the units to the middle-income market, as there were fears that, if the RDP units were built first, it may have dissuaded potential buyers to finalise a purchase.

The prominent concern driving the 'NIMBYism' against Cosmo City was that its development was perceived to be a threat to property prices. The issue was salient for all actors as a part of the habitus from which Cosmo City emerged, necessitated a concern for investment. The success of the development depended on the sale of the bonded and finance-linked housing to cross-subsidise the RDP areas. Prospective buyers had to secure mortgages from banks. Yet banks are only willing lenders if the property maintains its value since it serves as collateral security on the mortgage. At first, banks were doubtful that this would be the case. They believed that low-income housing devalued the surrounding houses and were wary of lending for purchase in the first integrated settlement, without knowing how it would turn out (FPD, Pers. Comm., 2015). Those interested shared the same concern, as their choice of a house was most likely one of their more significant investments. Local government had the same view in addition to uncertainty about the value and reliability of the revenue from rates and taxes (Huchzermeyer, 2001:23). In Johannesburg's progressive taxation system revenue is directly related to the value of the house. A former employee of Basil Read confirmed the COJ's concern, stating that the City wanted to maximise its fiscal return from its investment (FPD, Pers. Comm., 2015). Thus the entire development depended on the perceived changes to the value of the housing unit. Property values became a guiding concern evident at every stage of the development.

Historically, there has been a broad unwillingness among financiers to provide mortgages or finance developments for lower-income households. The case of developers in Johannesburg's inner city who struggled to secure financing for purchasing and refurbishing buildings exemplifies this reality. The result was that suffocating the area from investment meant it underwent a period of decline in the late 1990s (Morris, 1999). In this instance, through alternative financiers, developers have been able to invest in and stabilise the area, preserving its low-income housing stock (Mosselson, 2015). These resistive dynamics, based around property prices, not only show the complicated market dispositions with which government has to deal, but it also illustrates that government takes part in the creation of this habitus, sharing the same concerns as other actors. Ultimately, the effect of this way of thinking will inhibit the possibility for more integrated settlements, and more low-income housing being developed. For Cosmo City to be realised as envisaged, action and understanding cannot simply rest on how the market works to reinforce segregation. Rather, the focus for South Africa's first integrated development should be achievement within the experienced constraints.

## A disposition for integration

The presence of the low-income households seems to be the main concern and the biggest obstacle regarding integration when it comes to inclusionary housing policy in South Africa (Klug et al., 2013:668). Yet, existing within the same schemata of dispositions is a desire for a reality that is “reflective of the new democratic dispensation and socio-political context in which they are embedded and demonstrate the ways in which this context produces attitudes, outlooks and habitus” (Mosselson, 2015). The concern of government, local and national, is the preservation and maximisation of property prices, yet with the need and desire to also redress of the legacies of apartheid too as essential. In contrast to Murray’s (2011) criticism of non-acceptance multi-status homes in the same area, developers, at least in the case of Cosmo City, cannot be described as being singularly opposed to the low-income development, as they actively encouraged the integration agenda in this development.

The interviews with the formal actors involved in the implementation of the Cosmo City initiative revealed a disposition towards integration. The lead official in the COJ currently working with the Cosmo City development pointed out that the virtue behind integration in the suburb was equal access to social provisioning (LCO, Pers. Comm., 2015). A former Basil Read employee also emphasised this, explaining that particular attention was paid to ensuring the equal provision of infrastructure for serving different households (FPD, Pers. Comm., 2015). Murray (2011:200) quotes Des Hughes, the then public relations officer for Codevco, saying that Cosmo City “will be a fully established suburb with all the service provided ... serving people from widely varying financial, cultural, and social backgrounds”.

The most striking example that highlights the developer’s inclination towards greater integration is the development of a small number of finance-linked units within a RDP area (Photograph 5.2 below). Geological conditions required additional preparation of the land to support the top structure, making the construction of RDP units not financially viable, taking the value of the government subsidy into consideration (FPD, Pers. Comm., 2015). Because of this, Codevco decided to experiment with the possibility of further integration by adopting the relatively risky strategy of constructing the finance-linked units within this zone (ibid.). This required the placation of the banks by proving that there was existing demand for these units in spite of their location. A survey of potential buyers to prove demand existed for finance-link units in a RDP area was undertaken. It verified that their location in Cosmo City was not a deterrent. The units sold soon after completion, demonstrating that even with the conventions of the planning of housing developments in Johannesburg, as seen in the separate zoning of different housing typologies in Cosmo City, developers are willing to actively go beyond this when an incentive to do so exists.

**Photograph 5.2: Typical finance-linked units in RDP area**



*Source: Google Maps (2015)*

Cosmo City came into existence through contestation, opposition and an obstinate desire to develop integrated housing at a time when there were doubts about their feasibility. The doubts surrounding communities expressed loudly and clearly, as well as local government and banks, about the values of their houses; and about the value of the areal units within Cosmo City as also voiced by households, banks and local government, form part of the paradoxical habitus. Yet, it stems from the very same habitus that represented the initial desire for integration that led to South Africa's first integrated development coming into existence. This is justification for emphasising the importance of understanding the 'actions and passions' (Dewsbury, 2011:150) that are present and through which developments occur. Exposing such understandings open up new possibilities for future developments, as they go against both the gloom of simplistic understandings of an unnavigable market that prevent progressive outcomes; and a situation in which developers are solely concerned with maximising returns (Box 5.2).

## Box 5.2: Finding and recommendation I

### Key Finding

Government and developers partake in the same habitus—both are concerned with property prices and integration. This demonstrates both the limitations of government action, and the potential to leverage the cleavage that is the shared concern for integration.

### Key Recommendation

The geological conditions in the RDP area allowed the developers to experiment with a more substantive form of integration. Considering this, deliberately and carefully created incentives by government for developers who are concerned with integration can allow for further experimentation that opens up new opportunities for integration.

An evaluatory framework that takes into consideration a developer's dispositions—particularly, in this instance, the extent to which there is a concern for integration—should be utilised when contracting for the construction of an integrated residential development.

*Source: Authors' formulation*

In noting the practices and preferences that came to the fore in analysing the events and reactions during the establishment of Cosmo City, the presence of paradoxes is evident and attention now turns to planning for these.

### Paradoxical Planning

A disposition for integration allowed for the development of Cosmo City. The next stage for a large-scale housing development involves appropriately planning it for its future residents. Yet, the views and motives of the formal actors involved in the development are antithetical to the everyday practices of residents in Cosmo City with regard to the planning, design and aspirations for the suburb. Most prominent among these practices is backyarding. This entails the construction, often without planning approval, of additional rooms on the property, predominantly for residential rental accommodation purposes but also for retail activities (Photograph 5.3 below).

**Photograph 5.3: Pervasive construction in backyards on stands in RDP area**



*Source: Photograph from Ivan Turok, 2015.*

Many RDP beneficiaries in Cosmo City have engaged in some form of backyarding on their properties, much like Joseph (Pers. Comm., 2015) who has financed, developed and rented out the eight rooms surrounding his house. The backyards in Cosmo City are often considered the result of relatively large stand sizes and an insatiable demand for well-located rental accommodation, combined with the economic imperative of earning an income. Measuring around 250 m<sup>2</sup>, the stands provide ample space for the construction backyard rooms. Ultimately, the provision of RDP housing has created “cash-poor homeowners who are dependent on income from backyard dwellers’ rent” (Lemanski, 2009:472). In many ways their size is responsible for this practice being perpetuated.

The formal actors interviewed view their visibility as undesirable and presence as unsustainable and their antipathy towards backyarding is clear and explicit. Yet they have undertaken to accommodate the practice to some extent. This has taken the form of developing controls for backyarding while still allowing, and even providing for it. Conservative planning limits these acts of accommodation but it does not attempt to accommodate retail activities. Theoretically, this situation highlights the paradoxical habitus, which consists of dispositions that cater for needs of the residents but which also repudiate them based on normative conceptions of how the suburb should be. Ultimately, what is required, are “more pragmatic approaches and responses to the forms of urbanity” (Mosselson, 2015) that adapt to and consider the practices of residents.

The backyards are the result of a lack of by-law enforcement, which legally allows for the construction of only two additional units on a stand with prior approval (FPD, Pers. Comm., 2015). Before Cosmo City was handed over from Codevco to the COJ, Codevco employed scouts who surveyed the settlement on bicycle.

Any by-law infringements were noted and structures that were in violation were demolished. Since being handed over to the COJ, this level of surveillance and enforcement has not been maintained. This has enabled residents with the space to engage in the practice. Now government, justified by the legitimate concerns about increased pressure on the infrastructural provisioning, wishes to reduce the number of backyards. A Basil Read employee said that it was “unfortunate” that people were constructing backyards rather than beautifying their houses (LD, Pers. Comm., 2015). This is a sentiment shared by the Gauteng Member of the Executive Council for Human Settlements, Jacob Mamabolo at the time, who stated that new integrated developments would be more “beautiful” than Cosmo City, as the backyards have “turn[ed] [Cosmo City] almost into a slum” (Mashego, 2015). But government lacks the scope of action needed to demolish the backyards. Protest demonstrations that prevented an attempt to demolish a small number of backyards in March of this year made residents’ opposition to the action patently clear (Wakefield, 2015).

In contrast to this revanchist approach expressed by some of the formal actors (LCO, Pers. Comm., 2015; LP, Pers. Comm., 2015; LD, Pers. Comm, 2015) and the Member of the Executive Council for Housing, there have been attempts by the same actors to integrate the practice into the suburb. A feature of Cosmo City’s backyards is that “all are constructed out of bricks, rather than the more impermanent corrugated iron and wood found in other suburbs” (Rubin and Gardner, 2013:23). This can be considered the success of the municipal induction programme for RDP beneficiaries. According to Joseph (Pers. Comm., 2015), the beneficiaries were informed that they were permitted to construct backyards if they were in brick and if they received planning approval. Most residents adhered to these instructions; Joseph, for example, accessed an extremely expensive unsecured loans (his second, at an interest rate of 35%), and used his personal savings, to construct his eight brick backyard units. Later, he attempted to formalise his dwellings, paying a consultant to draw property plans and submit them to the COJ for approval. Though Joseph’s attempts were ultimately unsuccessful, they illustrate the partial effectiveness of the induction. The attempt to control and regulate backyarding highlights the formal actors’ nuanced approach to the practice. It shows the importance of adaptive strategies that arise when an awareness of the practices of the residents exists. Many of these ought to be considered, as they are often necessary and arise out of severe socio-economic circumstances.

In contrast, and with an awareness of the failure to limit the practice of backyarding in Cosmo City, stand sizes have been drastically reduced in size from approximately 250 m<sup>2</sup> to 80 m<sup>2</sup> in the new Malibongwe Ridge development. This leaves no space for such constructions whatsoever. The planners and developers, in an attempt to cater to needs of the beneficiary households, as well as the COJ’s requirement to accommodate households who do not qualify for the RDP subsidy effected a compromise. They decided to include two rental units on the ground floor of each unit, with the RDP house located on the second floor. The rental units are meant to replace the practice of backyarding, providing formally planned rooms that households can rent out. This demonstrates a habitus that has emerged from contextually embedded experiences and knowledge of urban South Africa and RDP developments.

Rather than using design to limit the possible acts of households, this was an effort to source the second subsidy to provide the rental units. Consideration is given to the needs of residents, catering for a set of practices that may otherwise have been excluded from planning. Yet, as flexible and aware as the habitus is, there are limitations to what is possible due to the adherence of normative conventions that can neither accommodate, nor design for all the retail activities that exist in backyard structures, predominantly those along the more traversed streets of Cosmo City (Photograph 5.4 below). These structures are occupied by spazas (informal convenience stores commonly found in poor South African communities), salons, car repairs workshops, taverns and a variety of other shops. Due to zoning regulations in Cosmo City, not only are these structures illegal, so too are the retail activities conducted within them. The first attempt to address the needs of these smaller traders in Cosmo City was the designation of 18 areas for small businesses. These areas, primarily located at intersections adjacent to housing, were meant to be formally developed to allow for local economic activity. This followed the COJ's objective to have informal trade taking place within markets rather than along street edges (Benit-Gbaffou, 2015).

**Photograph 5.4: Construction of structures for retail along busier Cosmo City streets**



*Source: Photograph from Ivan Turok, 2015.*

The zoned sites have not been developed, and are now used by informal traders, and for dumping, as they do not accommodate the established practices of backyarding for retail. In contrast, spaza and other shops have thrived along the busier streets, particularly in the RDP areas. The view that retail should be zoned separately exists even when there is awareness that households will establish stores out of their houses; a Basil Read employee stated, “people will [invariably] make their homes an informal trading area” (LD, Pers. Comm., 2015). This illustrates the limitations of the habitus. An awareness of the practices did not result in innovative attempts to accommodate them in the built form of new developments (Box 5.3 below).

### Box 5.3: Finding and recommendation 2

#### Key Finding

Planners, developers and government officials who are embedded in the Cosmo City development have an increased awareness of the social dynamics within communities, and can therefore intervene more appropriately to accommodate the needs and acts of communities.

#### Key Recommendation

Many RDP households are cash-poor and will develop backyards to derive the potential rental income. Although sourced for the new Malibongwe Ridge development, providing subsidies for the construction of backyards may not always be feasible. Thus, RDP houses should be carefully designed to accommodate the future construction of backyards by the beneficiaries, as this will be a likely outcome considering the RDP housing typology and the opportunity to create an income. Given the socio-economic context, in line with the adaptation of RDP units to accommodate backyard rooms, the lack of accommodation of retail space in residential units should be reconsidered.

*Source: Authors' formulation*

### Residents' Habitus: Aspirations and Distinctions, Lifestyles and Fears

Framed within an existing social order, residents' habitus drive particular practices and ways of engaging in the world. This order is reproduced, according to Bourdieu (2005), through social class which is not simply the sum of economic resources, but also enacted through the socio-cultural context that influences individuals' styles of life, perceptions, classifications, tastes and preferences. As the materially constitutive element of these practices, housing forms a particularly significant system in which residents' habitus predominates. The decisions people make are shaped by their socially produced aspirations, identity and classificatory systems. Thus, the section that follows moves beyond a traditional economic reading to establish a more nuanced understanding of how housing markets function through the manifestation of the cultural, aesthetic and moral evaluations people make. It also looks at the practices that members of particular classes adhere to or diverge from. Simply put, in investigating such practices through a spatial lens, an understanding arises of how integrated developments create both barriers and conduits between different social groups. Furthermore, this mediates people's positions within society.

## Aesthetic aspirations and distinctions

In Cosmo City, the ways in which single-family homes are marketed have come to symbolise a particular type of cultural representation, beyond market rationality alone. Advertisements, used by developers, highlight the cultural tropes that are mobilised to sell a particular form of suburban life. Kabelo, who moved from a townhouse complex in Weltevreden Park, first saw “the graphics from a brochure [for the bonded housing] and [was] very impressed” (Kabelo, Pers. Comm., 2015). The advert showcased a young family, with two happy children, a loving mother and wife, and a caring, successful father, complete with a lush green garden, place for a ‘braai’ (barbeque) area and luxury family sedan (Figure 5.1). Cosmo City developers use the nuclear family as the prevailing trope through which to impart the ideas of prosperity, security and success.

Figure 5.1: Graphics used in developer’s brochure of Cosmo City’s bonded housing



Source: Mitula Homes (2016)

Although Kabelo attributes location and affordability as the primary factors for choosing to buy his fully bonded house in Cosmo City, what is evident is that beyond economic imperatives alone, the development offers the kind of suburban house to which the resident's interviewed aspire. They conform to the dominant societal cultural tropes and standards. The modern exterior wall (Photograph 5.5 below), the neatly manicured gardens and ornately painted pot plants in Kabelo's house (Figure 5.2 0) are therefore an expression of the conventional middle-class aesthetic and a lifestyle to which, in many ways, he aspires. Realising this particular aesthetic form is a recurring and cross-cutting narrative amongst social classes in Cosmo City. The lead developers speak of their hope for the distinctions between housing typologies to disappear as residents increasingly invest in their homes over time (LD, Pers. Comm., 2015; LP, Pers. Comm., 2015). Although residents like Andile and Jessica cannot afford one of the fully bonded houses to which they aspire, the exterior of their finance-linked house is nevertheless the picture of traditional suburbia complete with colourful flower beds, a dog kennel, and even a space allocated to build a garage for the car that they do not yet own (Figure 5.3).

Joseph's 40 m<sup>2</sup> RDP house (Figure 5.4 below) follows similar aesthetic cues to create "a nice place like the houses in the [Cosmo City's bonded areas]" (Joseph, Pers. Comm., 2015). He has planted a 3m<sup>2</sup> rose garden along four of the short five metres of the house's front wall, paved portions of the outside area, and installed a retractable green awning over the front door. In these ways, the provision of freestanding housing units, across mixed-income markets in Cosmo City, have partly reduced aesthetic delineations between housing typologies. To some extent, this has blurred the boundaries between the different classes who live in them. However, the different barriers to entry into the market for different social groups perpetuate existing social structures.

#### Photograph 5.5: Modern exterior walls



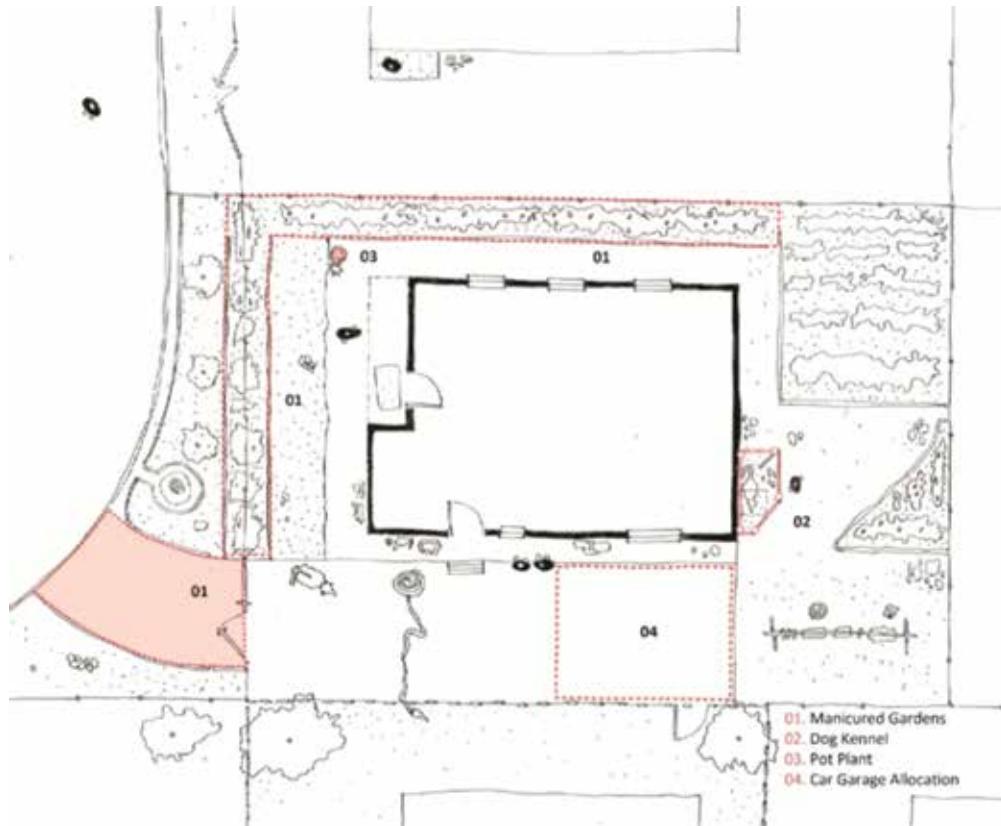
Source: Photographs from Ivan Turok, 2015, (from left to right: bonded unit, finance-link unit and RDP unit)

Figure 5.2: Socio-spatial floor plan of bonded unit



Source: Authors' formulation, 2015

Figure 5.3: Socio-spatial floor plan of finance-linked unit in RDP area



Source: Authors' formulation, 2015

Joseph, for example, is not able to afford the upgrades he would like to do to get his house to look “like the [luxury] house [he] saw in Limpopo” (Joseph, Pers. Comm., 2015). Often, despite their attempts to achieve a particular suburban aesthetic feature, the financial limitations of lower-income households galvanise the differences. Their inability to create the desired aesthetic effect is obvious to the observing passers-by. Barriers to class segregation that many of the residents so fervently attempt to transcend, sometimes unsuccessfully, make further integration impossible. Aesthetic distinction is something that residents seek to achieve. Like Lunga (Pers. Comm., 2015), in the finance-linked extensions, who deliberately tries to maintain a symbolic indication of difference and financial success.

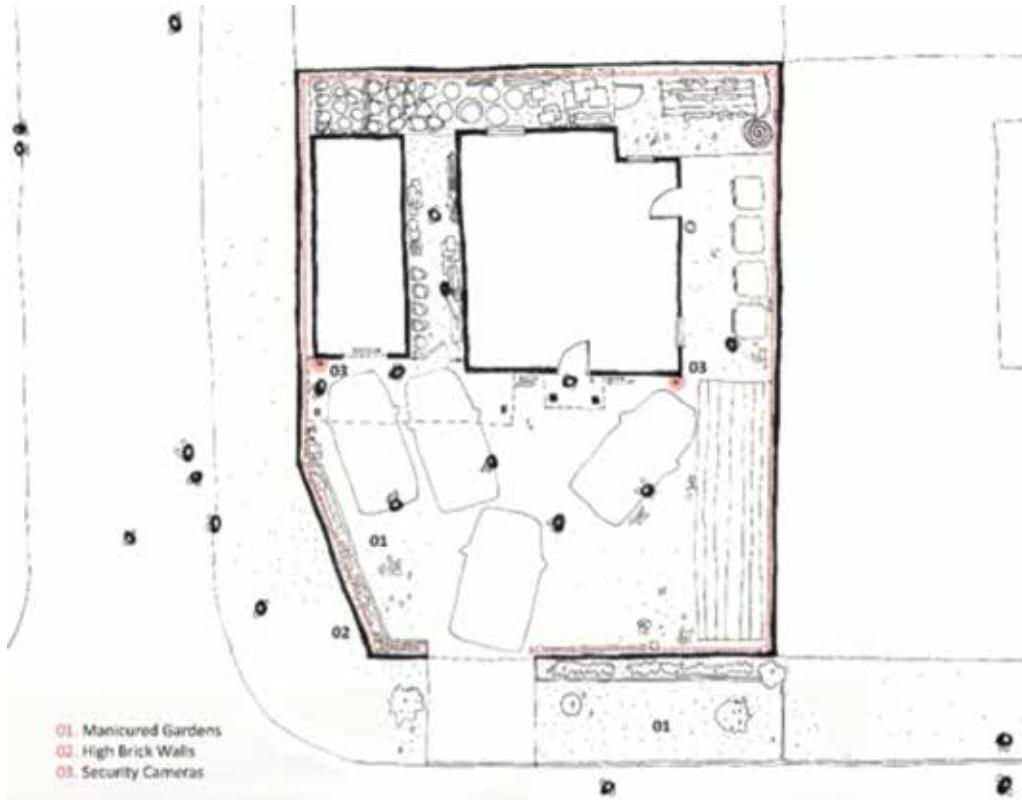
Figure 5.4: Socio-spatial plan of RDP unit



Source: Authors' formulation, 2015

At the inception of Cosmo City, developers built both finance-linked units and RDP units with the same textured face-brick (Figure 5.5). This later led to finance-linked homeowners protesting, as they wanted their houses to be distinguishable from the houses in the neighbouring RDP extensions. In an effort to ensure market desirability, developers responded by plastering the walls of finance-linked houses that followed in the next phases of construction. It is therefore evident, that buyers are as concerned, if not more than general, and influenced by the status of the house they are purchasing, and the image that it portrays, than they are about its affordability.

Figure 5.5: Socio-spatial plan of finance-linked unit



Source: Authors' formulation, 2015

Thus, on one hand, residents' aesthetic preferences illustrate their shared aspiration to meet particular cultural representations by employing patterns of distinction. In doing so, social differences are reduced. On the other hand, their action also elucidates how social stratification is reproduced. It represents a disconnect between people's habitus, their aspirations, and their objective means to realise them. Ultimately, the habitus that the homeowners of Cosmo City seek and try to develop aspires to a home ownership model that is often unrealistic, because of many households' limited financial reach. This also means that they are continually unable to completely realise their idealised aesthetic standard. Thus, the housing habitus of the residents of different social classes in Cosmo City simultaneously enables and inhibits integration (see Box 5.4 on the right).

### Box 5.4: Finding and recommendation 3

#### Key Finding

In understanding homeowners' aesthetic aspirations, preferences, and need for distinction, we can begin to understand how socio-spatial integration is either enabled or inhibited.

#### Key Recommendation

This provides the platform from which more meaningful policies which take aesthetics into account can be developed, and used as a tool for more effective social integration, and ultimately transformation, in greenfield integrated residential development projects.

*Source: Authors' formulation*

### Between township and suburb

Importantly, housing does not simply represent residents' tastes and desires; it also epitomises different ways of being in the world and relating to social orders (Bourdieu, 1984). Cosmo City reveals a hybrid suburban way of life that moves beyond the Howardian assumption of northern suburban housing habitus (Drummond et al., 2013). Ebenezer Howard's visionary solution to the urban problems of Victorian England, which focused on suburban development, was published in the second edition (1902), under the title, "Garden Cities of Tomorrow".

Cosmo City is a suburb that is neither uniform nor unchanging, despite the fact that City officials and planners envision it taking a very particular form. Following Drummond et al.'s (2013) reading of the so-called Anglo-American model of suburbia, such an envisioning limits more nuanced understandings of the everyday experiences that shape the complex and layered cities of the Global South.

The townhouse complex in which Kabelo (Pers. Comm., 2015) previously lived imposed tight controls on things like sound levels and visiting hours, which he explains as a key reason for moving to Cosmo City. With little garden space in the boundaries of his property, Kabelo has appropriated the publicly-owned pavement across the road where he has planted grass and trees. He maintains it as meticulously as he does the rest of his house (Figure 5.2). For him, it provides, as he explains, a "nice place" to host friends for 'braais' (barbeques) and parties with music, without being limited by the restrictions imposed in the more established and historically white suburban areas.

Yet, Kabelo also paradoxically speaks of envisioning a quiet, ordered life that the extension in Cosmo City provides. Andile and Jessica share this seemingly paradoxical habitus. They too ascribe to an ordered middle-class lifestyle, but one that allows for, and embraces, the “disorder of township life” (Jessica, Pers. Comm., 2015). This, Andile calls a “suburban-township”, a place where he does not have to “compromise his African well-being for [white] culture” (Andile, Pers. Comm., 2015); where he can play loud music; visit friends; and watch the soccer on the pavement or in the street; without complaints from neighbours (Figure 5.3) and Photograph 5.6 below). These viewpoints illustrate that, within the sphere of formal regulation, adaption needs to be accommodated. These are not antithetical ideas, but can be blended in ways that make everyday life possible, and even enjoyable.

**Photograph 5.6: Township or suburbia?**



*Source: Google Maps (2015) (using the street-facing entrance area to sit and socialise)*

In this way, Cosmo City is not simply a place where different housing typologies offer homeownership for residents of varied socio-economic backgrounds. It offers the potential for residents to move up the ranks of existing social orders. But it is also a place where residents’ dispositions and aspirations, while seemingly paradoxical, represent the ways in which greenfield integrated residential developments are accepted for their “idiosyncrasies, experiences and possibilities” (Mosselson, 2015:16) rather than for the more imitating image of western modernity found elsewhere. Instead, it rather represents what Mosselson (ibid.) sees as the manifestation of new ways of living beyond the historical reminders that apartheid townships so vividly bring to bear. Significantly, this framing allows for alternative theorisation around new forms of habitus, the emerging space of the African suburb or the African modern vision (Nuttall, 2004) (Box 5.5 on the right

## Box 5.5: Finding and recommendation 4

### Key Finding

Cosmo City is an example of a more shared, public way of life, although within a suburban setting. Despite this, the “township-suburb” is designed in accordance with ‘western’ ideals of suburbia implanted from elsewhere. There is little consideration for how residents use (sub)urban space beyond the conventional conceptualisation that government and developers envision.

### Key Recommendation

Perhaps then more attention should be paid to the urban design of the suburb, with a shift in focus from that of the individual houses to a more nuanced consideration for how shared public space may be planned and included.

*Source: Authors' formulation*

## Fear of crime and the segregated city

Superficially contradicting this, but part of the same paradoxical habitus, is, ironically, little tolerance for the alternative livelihood practices associated with ‘township’ or ‘informal’ life. Residents in Cosmo City, many of whom are originally from townships, find themselves caught in the habitus of an established suburbia. As such, a powerful sense of ‘NIMBYism’ prevails in favour of suburban envisions. As Drummond et al. (2013:48) explain of cities in the Global South, some suburbs have been “subsumed under the negative image of ‘spontaneous’ or informal [urban] settlement” typologies. In the case of Cosmo City, the tendency for residents to form strong associations has typically tended to prevent particular forms of ‘vernacular development’ from happening.

Spaza shops, in many of Cosmo City’s bonded housing extensions, are perceived as a magnet for opportunistic crime due to the pedestrian activity they attract. According to Kabelo (Pers. Comm., 2015), at residents’ association meetings that he attends, the shared view is that RDP dwellers seem to be the perpetrators of crime of this nature, attributing it to their need to engage in it due to the poor socio-economic conditions. Residents further consider the lack of by-law enforcement, as exemplified in the pervasive and often illegal backyarding in the RDP extensions, as the “cesspool” from which a range of “illegal activities fester”, describing it as “chaos there” (ibid.). He presents the idea that the bonded, and to a lesser extent the finance-linked housing extensions, are different from the RDP extensions. This is not simply a geographical point of reference but one which refers to the ‘others’ who reside within it; people who, by Kabelo’s (ibid.) account, are not “literate and professional”, people who are “of a different calibre”. These categorisations represent qualities that are seen to be lacking in the ‘other’ and are ideals that come to constitute various class identities. This translates into the reproduction of subjects and practices based on class, who live according to the rules of distinction.

With only a 1 km wide wetland area between the RDP and bonded housing extensions at certain points in Cosmo City, Kabelo says he “never thought it would be arranged like this” (Kabelo, Pers. Comm., 2015). He imagined the RDP area would be further away, and out of sight from his house. Andile, despite not living in a fully bonded extension, echoes this sentiment: “If I buy a bonded house [one day], I don’t want to see RDPs” (Andile, Pers. Comm., 2015). Residents’ fear of the perceived imminence of crime in the extension have resulted in the domestication of public space defined as a controlled and “fully self-contained environment where the anxieties of public encounter are largely absent” (Koch and Latham, 2012:3).

Expressed as a way to reduce crime and increase property values, the community is building a 2.5 m high wall around the periphery of their extension (Photograph 5.7 below). This effort to keep pedestrians out, mainly those coming from the RDP extensions, has been approved by the COJ. Following Haferburg’s (2013:262) assertion, this is a “spatial arrangement that continuously [sends its] often not so subtle messages to [social actors from different classes]”. Through a particular habitus, wealthier residents adjust the symbolic and material meaning of the built form, in an exercise of domination and control. Lower-income residents, like Andile, often walk through the area to draw inspiration for the house they aspire to build one day. They therefore remain segregated from wealthier areas in which they “do not belong” (Andile, Pers. Comm. 2015).

**Photograph 5.7: Wall to be built along existing fence separating bonded housing and RDP areas**



*Source: Photograph by authors, 2015*

Nevertheless, fear of crime is a reality that not only affects the middle-classes. Much like Kabelo, who has built high boundary walls, Lunga has also built high walls and added three surveillance cameras on the exterior of his house (Figure 5.2; Figure 5.5). Joseph would also like to build exterior walls and increase security around his house, but financial constraints mean that for now, he is forced to rely on the voluntary security patrol group that he and his neighbours have established.

Security measures are considered integral for proper protection of property investment as well as social order. This is particularly so in the context of Johannesburg and its environs, where fear, both imagined and real, has come to characterise much of people's daily practices. Thus, the habitus that circulates within it too is affected. While Joseph and Andile hope to live in Cosmo City's bonded extension one day, Lunga, like Kabelo, aspires to move to a "quiet [gated] suburb [near Midrand] with a big yard and peace of mind" (Lunga, Pers. Comm., 2015; Kabelo, Pers. Comm., 2015). Gated communities therefore become "important spaces in which ideas of what is and how to be middle-class are played out" (Drummond et al., 2013:49). As such, multiple issues are brought to bear around the physical form of development in Johannesburg. Security in integrated residential development is seen to reduce the crime rate, creating an important sense of safety for households. Yet such measures simultaneously perpetuate patterns of social exclusion, and therefore reduce integration. Ultimately, then, although Kabelo "wants to co-exist" (Kabelo, Pers. Comm., 2015) with residents of different socio-economic backgrounds, as Andile contends, "classes are not equal" (Andile, Pers. Comm., 2015). Therefore practices that maintain orders of separation perpetuate (Box 5.6 below).

#### Box 5.6: Finding and recommendation 5

##### Key Finding

The residents' habitus, and the decisions that they take around the issues of fear of crime, has social ramifications. Particularly where higher income household areas segregate themselves from lower income household areas, for example, where walls are built around entire extensions, limiting interaction between classes and, therefore, reducing integration.

##### Key Recommendations

When walls are built, entire extensions become gated and limit access to, usually lower income residents outside of these areas. In this way, local government (COJ) follows market logic and favours protecting property prices over the segregatory impact such decisions have on communities. Therefore, the state becomes complicit in segregating residents along class lines, despite the mandate for such projects to realise social integration. To this end, local government should implement policy that prevents it from supporting segregatory practices, encouraging temporary solutions rather than permanent alterations to the built form.

*Source: Authors' formulation*

## Conclusion

Post-apartheid, South Africa's housing and human settlements policies have attempted to redress a history of extreme inequities. While the priority has been to provide housing, relatively successfully policy has also maintained a continuous concern for how this inequity manifests in segregated cities such as Johannesburg. A particular example is through the distinctive provision of RDP units. Integrated developments are one approach government has adopted to alter these dynamics, with only partial success. In an attempt to begin to reveal why this is the case, this research points out that integrated developments should not only be assessed according to narrow understandings of integration but to also give credence to social processes to the extent that is necessary. In employing the theoretical concept of habitus as the framing device through which to read such processes, particular insights are provided concerning the dispositions of developers, local government officials, planners and residents. In turn, the potential for more substantive and equalising social transformation is revealed.

Despite the envisioned project of integration, this adopted approach illustrates that government and developers are an integral part of a paradoxical habitus that both limits and enables the possibility to achieve such a goal. One shared disposition creates a risk averse, sclerotic professional practice that maintains separation simply to protect property prices. While in another instance, established planning conventions result in the lack of accommodation for the everyday practices of many disenfranchised urban residents. As many of these practices tend to limit the more nuanced approaches of the professional actors, their habitus simultaneously encompasses a shared desire for social integration. The physical embeddedness of professional actors in the spaces in which they act, in some instances, fosters a habitus that is exposed to and aware of the practices of residents. This has contributed to "more pragmatic approaches and responses to the forms of urbanity which currently define the area" (Mosselson, 2015), Cosmo City in this case.

As habitus involves enduring schemata, it will be impossible, and undesirable, considering the limitations imposed by market forces and design conventions, to completely overcome the inhibitors to integration. Importantly then, is the necessity to uncover the conduits through which more substantive attempts at integration are enabled. Further to this end, these conduits should be informed by the habitus of residents. Residents' aesthetic preferences illustrate aspirations for particular representations that inform the social distinctions that prevent or encourage integration, and reproduce or reduce social stratification within Cosmo City. Residents' ways of being have importantly resulted in a new South African suburban form, one that provides spaces for differing practices. These require careful consideration and planning. Yet, residents' fear of crime continues to shape the way in which interaction between different social classes occurs in the suburb, most often exacerbating segregation. These practices and distinctions play out within all communities, acting as a centrifugal force for effective social integration. Therefore the potential for societal transformation across the divided reality that is urban South Africa does exist.

## Replicability

Beyond the findings that resulted from this research, and forming the overall agenda of the research, is the attempt to understand, assess and evaluate integrated development projects differently. Rather than looking at more reductionist concerns for equal access to the provision of infrastructure and services, integrated settlements should also be assessed through their own attempts to integrate socially. This importantly compelling challenge is further stimulated when it plays out in a largely segregated populous confined area with different dispositions at play.

Attention should focus on the feelings, tastes, social distinctions and concerns of the relevant actors involved. These ways of being form an important dynamic that shapes the planning, both intangible and physical, of integrated developments, as well as the social relations that take place within them. The research therefore offers a conceptually and methodologically innovative approach to deal with such challenges. Replicating it in other contexts could provide the necessary tools to arrive at localised, place-specific insights. It simply requires a shift in focus as it is ready for adoption. More importantly, it is desirable, as it arrives at a robust understanding of how to account for the enablers and inhibitors of integration that shape the success of such developments more holistically.

What approaches like these shed light on, beyond simply building integrated settlements, are the less tangible barriers to integration that also address the forms of hierarchy, distinction and prejudice that still so strongly divide our urban environments. It is this very aspect that limits the potential for re-ordering historical social structures. Since the aim of this research was to emphasise the need to account for the role that social conventions play in government's realisation of policy objectives, it offers a second opportunity for replication. Ways must be found to include what government can do to take cognizance of all operating dynamics. Despite the challenge this presents, it opens up an opportunity for government to adopt innovative approaches to deal with a host of urban challenges. New ways of seeing and thinking about urban South Africa can reveal more effective ways to realise genuine social transformation more than two decades after democracy.

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