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Culture and Rural-Urban Sustainable Development: Is South Africa Addressing this New Global Agenda?

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PART 1: CULTURE & RURAL-URBAN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: IS SOUTH AFRICA ADDRESSING THIS NEW GLOBAL AGENDA?

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Chapter Number & Title – Chapter 2, Culture and Rural-Urban Sustainable Development: Is South Africa Addressing this New Global Agenda?

Abstract

This chapter discusses whether South Africa is currently addressing a new emerging international urban agenda, particularly fostered by UNESCO, which promotes a cultural approach to rural and urban development. This agenda is rooted in cultural and indigenous planning, which is seen as a condition to achieve sustainability. It is essential to engage meaningfully with local communities and their diversities, and ultimately to enable a post-colonial transition of a deeply divided country like South Africa. To do so, the Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF), a strategic national policy document adopted in 2016, is examined. The aim is to understand whether this framework challenges, or conversely legitimates, existing euro-centric urban models, which are deemed problematic to fully recognise the diversity and the needs of people and places in former colonial countries. The authors argue that the merit of this policy lies in the acknowledgement of the rural-urban interdependencies of South Africa, and the need of increasing community participation, which are both premises of cherishing African cultural values. However, while the diagnosis is correct, most solutions proposed are still primarily western-centric, and the historic roots of inequality are not systematically addressed, with the risk of perpetuating social divisions and culture-deaf urban planning approaches.

Keywords: cultural approach, rural and urban development, cultural and indigenous planning

Introduction

Since the launch of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Global Report 'Culture Urban Future' in 2016, attention has been placed on the role that culture can play for sustainable urban development (UNESCO, 2016). One of its key recommendations advocates for the regeneration of cities and rural-urban linkages as a way to promote a more balanced territorial development, and contextually contain urban sprawl (Recommendation 3.1, in UNESCO, 2016:243). This is part of a broader strategy to promote globally more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements as put forward by the United Nation 'New Urban Agenda' (see SDG n. 11 in: UN-HABITAT 2016). As it will be argued, this recommendation suits the nature of South Africa's urbanisation, and for this reason is given full consideration in this chapter.

While South Africa has developed a variety of regulations, policies and strategies to guide urban development since the end of apartheid in 1994, admittedly it is recognised that cities are faced with a series of persisting problems. South Africa has today one of the highest levels of inequality in the world, and unresolved problems of residential segregation (UN-HABITAT, 2014). Cities have grown in isolated gated communities (Landman, 2004), with massive problems of urban sprawl and informal settlements proliferation (Horn, 2019a). Rural areas, on the other side, show persistence of exceptional poverty *atypical both among middle income countries worldwide and on the continent of Africa'* (Du Toit, 2017). This is a common trait of other Southern African countries where '*a broader rethinking of inherited urban planning regimes to promote urban sustainability with greater equity and resilience*' seems to be necessary (UN-HABITAT, 2014:13).

< INSERT FIG 2.1 HERE>

Figure 2.1 The township of Soweto, near Johannesburg. Photo credit: Giulio Verdini.

Colonial urban planning in South Africa, as in other Anglophone African countries, has historically produced land appropriation, exclusion, and long-lasting inequality (Home, 2015). As a matter of

fact, the recent Integrated Urban Development Framework published in 2016 (COGTA, 2016), the last of a series of planning documents published at national level, seeks to address such problems holistically, with a promising focus on urban inclusion and the enhancement of urban-rural linkages. However, as it will be argued later, the policy is poorly rooted in the cultural context of the country, with the risk of undermining an effective sustainability transition that South Africa requires. This is not surprising, as twenty century modernist town planning principles, as formulated in Western culture and then exported all over the world, are deemed unfit for current urbanisation problems, particularly in Global South cities (Sennet, 2018). Failing to acknowledge the endogenous features of places and the local urban life, they have often proposed abstract solutions today under serious reconsiderations (Watson, 2009a). IUDF, despite its good intentions, seems to fall into this category.

On this basis, the aim of this chapter is to reflect on whether and how South Africa is addressing this emerging new agenda on culture and sustainable rural-urban development. To do so, this chapter will review the adoption of the Integrated Urban Development Framework in South Africa (IUDF), seeking to problematize the top-bottom processes of its conception and thereby criticizing its efficacies in relation to culture-led development and indigenous cultural planning. The chapter is conceived as a commentary primarily focused on IUDF. This national urban policy is discussed with reference to wider urban agendas, international literature and practices, in particular for what concerns the suitability of rural-urban linkages and public engagement policies[1].

Policies for integrated development in South Africa: a short overview.

In recent years, there has been a proliferation of documents to guide the urbanisation process towards more sustainable outcomes. These include the National Development Plan (NDP), the

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[1] A preliminary version of this paper was presented during the keynote speech delivered by Prof. Verdini at the Symposium 'Culture and Sustainable Rural-Urban Development: Placing Culture-Indigenous Knowledge System in the Mainstream of Sustainable Rural-Urban Developmental Linkages" on the 10 October 2019 in Pretoria, South Africa. Later on, this has been developed jointly with Prof. Sirayi incorporating the discussions generated during the symposium.

White Paper on Local Government (1998), the White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage (1996), the Municipal Systems Act (No. 32 of 2000), the National Environmental Management Act (No. 107 of 1998, amended by Act No . 25 of 2014), the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (No. 16 of 2013), and more recently the Integrated Urban Development Framework 2016.

The policies are aimed at providing principles for integrating and aligning government plans, such as spatial development frameworks (SDFs), integrated development plans (IDPs), built environment performance plans (BEPPs), growth and development strategies, and sectorial plans. The policies are also pointed at ensuring that priorities are set, resources are allocated equitably and implementation takes place in an integrated, effective, efficient and sustainable way (COGTA, 2016: 51).

Based on these legislations, policies and planning frameworks, in particular, it could be indubitably concluded that South African urban and rural areas will never be the same again, provided IUDF is implemented. As commendable as IUDF is, it is unfortunate that the framework is bereft of African cultural values. Also regrettable is the fact that cultural or indigenous planning as a people–controlled planning strategy for rural-urban regeneration, has not been incorporated into the formative processes of the framework. The framework thus appears to be substantively premised on exotic Western planning approaches. More than twenty-five years into democracy, a paradigmatic shift towards a decolonized planning approach is not evident in the IUDF.

The Tenets of Indigenous "Cultural" Planning

History as demonstrated that from the viewpoint of efficiency and decentralization, the Garden City Movement's ideas and practices, grounded in the ideas and practices espoused by Ebenezer Howard, were "easily replicated" in South African suburbs and townships (Wood 2015:572). Nevertheless, Garden City philosophy was largely used to reinforce existing social and political problems. Specifically, through Garden City practices, indigenous South Africans were relocated and settled in size and location-regulated "black" colonial towns where they were used as cheap

labour in the mining and manufacturing sectors (Kadiri et al. 2012). Segregated "white" and "African" cities were also developed, often separated by little more than a "sanitary corridor, an open area, […] military installation, or a railway line" (Silva, 2015:15). In larger cities, intra-urban racial segregation was often practiced and promoted through urban planning. Land use by black South Africans was restricted to housing and local stores to protect the interests of colonial and white businesses in the historic core areas (Kadiri et al, 2012). In some cases, the underlying regulatory and economic facets of the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947 made (and continue to make) access to land/property economically impossible for poor and lower-class urban dwellers (Scholz et al, 2015) – thus perpetuating the economic and racial divisions present in South Africa.

While the policy makers have amended the Town and Country Planning Act 1947, the amendments have often been superficial, offering little in terms of actual change (Kadiri, 2012). Thus, it has proven difficult for many of Africa's urban planners to "decolonize" their planning approaches. Even when Western planning movements have evolved past modernist approaches, South Africa has had difficulty integrating them on a level that has been anywhere near as effective as it has been in the West. It is clear that current Eurocentric planning is problematic and will be unable to offer viable solutions to South Africa's urban and rural problems. It is argued in this chapter that if there is a solution for South Africa's urban planning problems, it clearly does not rest with colonial-era (e.g. City Beautiful and Garden City movement) movements/approaches –Eurocentric planning approaches. Where a solution could be found, however, is, arguably, through an exploration of cultural or indigenous planning.

What is cultural or indigenous planning? Jojola (2008:46) avers that indigenous planning represents both an approach to community planning and an ideological movement. He goes on to suggest that the concept is different from mainstream planning practice because of its development process which incorporates 'traditional' knowledge and cultural identity. Furthermore, it acknowledges an indigenous world-view, which not only serves to unite it philosophically, but also distinguishes it from mainstream planning approach and Euro-American communities.

Some seminal scholars define indigenous planning as an up-and-coming paradigm to reclaim historic, contemporary, and future-oriented planning approaches of indigenous communities (global South communities) across western settler states or states with colonial history (Prusak, Walker and Innes, 2016:1). In a similar vein, Jojola and Matunga (quoted in Prusak, Walker and Innes, 2016:3) posit that indigenous planning is regarded as an emergent model in the context of contemporary planning, though pointing out that this approach to planning has been practiced by Indigenous communities for hundreds, if not thousands, of years prior to the superimposition of the settler state apparatus upon indigenous lands and institutional structures. The notion of "hundreds" and "thousands" is corroborated by Bianchini (2013:378) in his reflections about the history of cultural planning. He suggests that some cultural planning central ideas can be traced to ancient civilizations. The ideas include the creation of public squares as centres for social interaction and civic activities, and the integration of public spaces and buildings as venues for theatre and other cultural events into physical planning. Although Bianchini refers to Western civilisations, his observations might apply to all cultures. Thus, arguably, cultural planning, as a specifically ethical, reflexive and critical approach (Young, 2016), when avoids the risk of collapsing into practice of commodification, can be interpreted as another form of indigenous planning. Both terms are, in the context of this chapter, closely associated with community-based planning and place-based (or context-based) approaches to urban problems.

Matunga (quoted in Prusak, Walker and Innes, 2016:4 - 5) suggests that indigenous planning "is a form of planning whose roots and traditions are grounded in specific indigenous peoples' experiences linked to specific places, lands, and resources. In other words, planning within, for, and by the particular indigenous community for the place they call theirs. Importantly, it is not mere spatial planning by indigenous peoples, but has a much broader scope that spans lives and environments of indigenous peoples". It is a kind of planning which is organised and controlled by the people for the people and their own social, economic and environmental benefit. As Dei (2019) suggests, Indigenous planning is "people-centred, community-owned development." It is a project of reclamation & the conundrum of 'Writing and Planning Back'. It is a process of understanding African planning immersed in African home-grown cultural perspectives. In this view, African scholars and planners and those who identify with indigenous planning approaches

have a responsibility to develop a sense of authentic selves as African scholars, planners, Africanists and researchers.

Jojola argues that indigenous planning must respond to the ruptures in its continuity caused by colonial processes of forced removal from territory, and culture (Jojola quoted in Prusak, Walker and Innes, 2016:3). It is against this background that scholars and practitioners refer to Indigenous planning as a paradigm being "reclaimed" as a parallel tradition to settler planning institutions and in response to the "violence of colonialism and apartheid" Walker, Jojola, Natcher and Matunga (quoted in Prusak, Walker and Innes 2016 :3- 4). By extension indigenous planning can be viewed as an attempt to reclaim African indigenous planning perspectives on sustainable development and the land question.

Mutanga (quoted in Prusak, Walker and Innes, 2016:4) asserts that "Indigenous planning has a strong tradition of resistance and commitment to political change in the context of coexisting alongside settler planning systems and the established power relations that give them voice while others, such as Indigenous systems, are silenced. Indigenous planning must be positioned as a theory and practice of internalized self-definition and externalized advocacy". Thus, Friedmann and Sandercock (quoted in Lane, 2001:3) called it radical planning, and more recently, is referred to as insurgent planning since it is focused on the planning work of civil society. Dei (2019) refers to it as, "pioneering new analytical systems, interpretative insights for understanding Africa steeped in our home-grown cultural perspectives".

The process of indigenous planning is based on serious questions. For Indigenous nations, critical questions include the following: "*Whose future? Who decides what this future should or could look like? Who is doing the analysis and making the decisions? Who has the authority, the control, the final decision-making power? Whose values, ethics, concepts, and knowledge? Whose methods and approaches? What frameworks, institutions, and organizations are being used to guide the planning processes that mostly affect Indigenous peoples? Where are Indigenous peoples*

positioned in the construction of that future?" (Matunga quoted in Prusak, Walker and Innes 2013:4).

Dei (2019) refers to African sustainable development processes as "intergenerational transmission of knowledge for development as "dialoguing and living well" [not just 'human well-being']. They put emphasis on a material and non-material relations. Similarly, Matunga (quoted in Prusak, Walker and Innes 2013:4) affirms that development "processes of Indigenous planning connect people (e.g., tribe, nation), place (i.e., land, environment, resources), knowledge (i.e., traditional, contemporary), values and worldview (e.g., attitudes, beliefs, ethics, principles), with decisions (i.e., process, institutions) and practices (e.g., application, approaches), to enhance the well-being of the community".

According to Jojola (quoted in Prusak, Walker and Innes 2016:4) "decision-making processes and practices, though variable by community, often have common aspects such as striving for consensus, using traditional values to evaluate options and expected outcomes, and recognizing the wisdom of elders. All of these aspects require time and attention to purposeful elocution to safeguard trust and cohesion within the community". The beauty of the indigenous planning approach is consensus and recognition of the wisdom of elders who are highly esteemed for their historical memory. It further addresses, as Dei (2019) calls it, "myriad manifestations of global poverty (such as economic, social, spiritual, and moral) and "poverty of opportunity" in Africa (for example, access to basic health, jobs, housing and education – rising streetism). Jojola further stresses that "all of these aspects require time and attention to purposeful articulation to safeguard trust and cohesion within the community (Jojola quoted in Prusak, Walker and Innes 2016:4). Thus, Mutanga (quoted in Prusak, Walker and Innes 2016:4) declares, "leadership is another critical factor, where skill, experience, knowledge, and ancestry serve to maintain unity in the community and processes of Indigenous planning".

Indigenous planning is guided by well-defined principles. Jojola (quoted in Prusak, Walker and Innes 2016:4) suggests three principles to guide Indigenous planning process. Firstly, the process

must flow from the indigenous worldview (attitudes, beliefs, ethics and principles). Secondly, the indigenous voices must be heard, and western planners must stop trying to translate indigenous culture and values through the operational logic of settler institutions. In other words, the coloniality of development approach (Western imposition, approach of modernity & professionalization of development - with cadre of experts, specialists, scholars) must be avoided at all cost Dei (2019). Thirdly, the natural self is the essence of indigenous knowledge, African indigenousness and indigeneity, and that what may appear from the outside as a natural progression in community affairs (for example, a new style of housing or architecture, zoning, the urban form) must be assessed through the lens of individual and collective community needs and desires. These guiding principles are in fact a confirmation that, as Dei (2019) puts, "colonialism is not our ONLY story' and 'Europe is not the advent of human history'!" In other words, colonial planning cannot be the only planning approach. There existed indigenous planning approaches before the advent of Western planning. Dei (2019) vehemently argues that we need to confront "the hostility, colonial appellation and apparition of 'Indigenous' (e.g. the denial of Black/African Indigeneity as an important source and site of knowledge)".

Prusak, Walker and Innes (2016:4) avow that "the key characteristics of Indigenous planning are a strong commitment to positive political, social, economic and environmental change, and the centrality of community, kinship and place-based processes and institutional arrangements" – cultural identity. Based on these features of indigenous planning, it could be argued that IUDF can produce the desired results provided it is contextualised – premised on African cultural values and aspirations. In other words, indigenous planning has to be premised in city, town, township and rural-based ideologies and particularised instead of being upheld and applied as a one–size–fits-all planning approach.

Culture and rural-urban sustainable development in global agendas: a post-colonial perspective

In recent years there has been a real cultural turn in global development agendas. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in 2015 by the United Nations, acknowledges culture, including tangible and intangible heritage, and the cultural and creative industries, as a sector which transversally contributes to policies for sustainable development articulated in seventeen goals (SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals) (UNESCO, 2018).

Historically, however, development policies have largely ignored indigenous cultures being traditionally based on modernization principles scarcely considered of local knowledge and specificity of places (Munck and O'Hearn, 1999). It was due to the long-lasting legacy of modernist approaches, derived from the Western paradigm of 'industrial civilization' (Loomba, 1998). Such form of civilization has been developed in the colonial West, and then perpetuated after the Sixties almost everywhere in the World through hegemonic economic policies and the pervasive role of world financial organisations (Young, 2016). It is not a case that until few years ago, global agendas have been reluctant to incorporate such notions at their core, as witnessed in the 2000 UN Millennium Development Goals (UN, 2015a).

UNESCO, on the other hand, has been active, although unheard for long time, in fostering a more profound notion of culture for development at least since the 1980s. In occasion of the launching of the World Decade for Cultural Development, the Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies in 1982 stated in respect to the Cultural Dimension of Development that:

'Culture constitutes a fundamental dimension of the development process and helps to strengthen the independence, sovereignty and identity of nations. Growth has frequently been conceived in quantitative terms, without taking into account its necessary qualitative dimension, namely the satisfaction of man's spiritual and cultural aspirations. The aim of genuine development is the continuing well-being and fulfilment of each and every individual' and 'Any cultural policy should restore to development its profound, human significance. New models are required. And it is in the sphere of culture and education that they are to be found' (UNESCO, 1982).

Undoubtedly, UNESCO has worked since then to develop an apparatus of new conventions, recommendations and major global reports to help developing new models to rethink development from a cultural perspective. Particularly effective has been the urban focus of its recent action. It is in fact in supporting the preparation of the UN HABITAT III Conference in Quito in 2016, to launch the so-called 'New Urban Agenda' - NUA, that UNESCO has given one of the most original contributions to this topic. In the preparatory phase of NUA, which is considered once in a lifetime opportunity to shape sustainable urban policies over a period of twenty years, UNESCO has produced the Global Report 'Culture: Urban Futures. Culture for sustainable urban development' (UNESCO, 2016), aiming to place culture at the heart of urban and rural development policies and practices.

NUA, informed by the UNESCO Global Report, recognises that '*Culture and cultural diversity are sources of enrichment for humankind and provide an important contribution to the sustainable development of cities, human settlements and citizens*' (UN-HABITAT, 2016). Moreover, while cities are privileged places for nurturing culture and creativity, small and medium towns can also contribute to foster local creative and inclusive patterns of territorial development (Verdini, 2016). It is for this reason that the UNESCO Global Report is concerned with both sustainable urban development and sustainable rural-urban linkages through culture.

It is fair to say that UNESCO has not been exempted by criticism in post-colonial critical studies, particularly concerning its underlying agenda for heritage preservation, rooted in Western ideas of material conservation. This has generated a critical revision of the so-called 'authorised heritage discourse', allegedly perpetuated by international and national agencies (Smith, 2006). While some of the underlying arguments are sharable, it should be recognised that the introduction of new categories of heritage, such as intangible heritage and cultural landscapes, has helped to generate counterbalancing narratives of heritage more suitable to non-western contexts (Taylor, 2009; Verdini, 2017). The cultural shift promoted by UNESCO, therefore, seems to be increasingly less in contradiction with the 'culturalist tendency' embedded in the emerging post-colonial theory (Young, 2016). Such tendency derives from a Marxist reading of the economic dominance of the North over the South, without necessarily advocating for universal (Western) responses but rather

for responses 'to specific historical conditions, without becoming dogmatically fixed' (Young, 2016: 8). Taking Africa as an example, the national liberation struggle has historically provided 'both material and spiritual structures within which African culture can develop and thus prove the natural dialectical correlation between national liberation and culture'. Similarly, culture has inspired economic and social development, as affirmed in the Manifesto of the Organisation of African unity gathered in Algiers in 1969 (Langley, 1979).

The awareness of giving centrality to indigenous cultures in development practices is, therefore, today both seen as an international imperative to achieve sustainability (UN, 2015b), and a condition to enable a post-colonial transition towards more just societies in non-western contexts (Porter and Barry, 2016). Nevertheless, when it comes to urban and rural issues, there is relative lack of critical examinations of policies and practices in different national contexts and a lack of understanding of potential ways to address and revise them effectively. As mentioned in the previous part, indigenous planning is deemed as a suitable place-based and local sensitive practice, with the potential to achieve more community oriented and sustainable outcomes. Yet, there is still a long way to operate a systematic decolonization of urban policies and practice given the current flow of hegemonic global urban models and theories. In this respect, one of the most promising critical fields of research in urban theory is the so-called 'comparative urbanism', which has attempted to challenge universalizing theoretical agendas looking at heterogeneity of urban practices from the Global South (Robinson, 2006).

Along these lines, it will be adopted as a framework to enable a preliminary evaluation of one of the key recent documents of South Africa planning, namely the IUDF, published in 2016. In the context of challenging Western-centric urban theory (Edenson and Jayne, 2012), using IUDF as a starting point, and, at the same time, to address problems which are considered to be more relevant for the South African (and possibly African) contexts, two lenses of inquiry are here proposed:

- The extent to which IUDF challenges urban-centred models of development, acknowledging instead in its analysis the dispersed nature of African urbanisation and their

specific rural-urban linkages. This focus will bring to evaluate the appropriateness of policies to ensure more effective and inclusive city-regions beyond the traditional urban-rural divide interpretation (Tacoli, 2006);

- The extend to which IUDF stimulates a suitable reflection on people's participation and engagement so to acknowledge their cultural distinctiveness, in a context of often deeply high conflict (Watson, 2014). This focus is linked to the emphasis on reinterpreting forms of African indigenous knowledge in the production of cities and villages (Connell, 2007). This focus will bring to evaluate whether the participatory strategy of the document will be really conducive of place-based and people-centred policies, in line with the 3p (people, places and policies) approach promoted by UNESCO (UNESCO, 2016).

In the next section, an overview of the IUDF will be provided and later, these two lenses will be used to unpack the merit and instead the potential shortcomings of this important national planning document to ensure the sustainable future of South Africa.

An Overview of Integrated Urban Development Framework

Over the past years, a variety of policies, legislations and strategy papers have been adopted by the South African Government to guide and frame the realisation of human settlement, and social and economic transformation processes.

However, these policies, strategies and legislations, have been considered inadequate to address their problems. In other terms, they are seen as Eurocentric; top-down modelled and suffer a dearth of transparency. For instance, the policies and strategies were crafted in a milieu bereft of systems and programs necessary for comprehensive engagement with the actual communities as part of the policy formulation, negotiations and decision making processes, notwithstanding the policies continue to be touted as policies of, and for, public interest.

The notion of public interest is, however, problematic in many different ways. In their critical observations of the concept of public interest, Sandercock and Kliger, (1998:226), argue that "Twentieth century planning has been founded on a notion of 'the public interest' which has become increasingly problematic as one after other social group has argued that they have been excluded from public policy processes and outcome. The historic notion of "public interest" assumed the ability of a certain well – educated personal standing outside social processes and deciding what is best for everyone else". Similarly, Kiernan (quoted in Lane, 2001:6) observed that "Planners have long claimed that they work in the public interest, invoking this idea to help them rationalize the fact that there are both "winners and losers" in any decision made about resource allocation and use. The notion of "public interest" has been used to mask the highly political nature of planning which privileges some and marginalizes others by denying multiple interests in favour of a dominant, unitary interest." In fact, this notion has strengthened rational planning by referring to the authority of Western rationality and disregarding other forms of knowledge (such as indigenous knowledge), which might trenchantly inform land resource planning decisions (Sandercock, 2003) quoted in Lane (2001:7). Due to these reasons and some challenges, these policies were and still are not effective.

Deducing from the current physical, social and economic challenges in South Africa, it could be argued that these policies have so far failed to achieve the intended purpose of raising the standard of life in the country. The IUDF is regarded as the government's policy position to guide the future growth and management of urban areas (COGTA, 2016:16). At the national level, the IUDF could be viewed as a response to the National Development Plan: Vision for 2030 which states that,

> "*By 2050, South Africa will no longer have: poverty traps in rural areas and urban townships; workers isolated on the periphery of cities; inner cities controlled by slumlords and crime; sterile suburbs with homes surrounded by high walls and electric fences; households spending 30 percent or more of their time, energy and money on daily commuting; decaying infrastructure with power blackouts, undrinkable water, potholes and blocked sewers; violent protests;...*" (NDP, 2011: 233). At a continental level, the IUDF is premised on the African Union's Agenda 2063 and its strategic goals. From a

global context, the IUDF is largely based and premised on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the UN Assembly in 2015. Goal 11: 'Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable' is directly linked to sustainable urbanisation (COGTA, 2016:16).

The IUDF aims to guide the development of inclusive, resilient and liveable urban settlements and to solve the unique conditions and challenges facing South Africa's cities and towns.

The overarching question with regards to the strategic goals is, what is new? These strategies have been put forward in previous Local Government policy strategies! The same applies to the policy levels.

While these policy levers are intended to address rural-urban challenges, the efficacies of the policy are yet to be realised. For example, palpable incertitude still remains regarding the formulation and implementation processes of the framework. For example, questions linger as to whether the policy could be defined as a community-based policy, culture-led policy, people-centred policy or community controlled policy (Dale 1993; Jojola 2008). Furthermore, some of the critical questions to be raised are, was the formulation of IUDF a community process controlled or led by a temporary citizen's steering committee appointed by the municipal or local government? Is the IUDF adaptable and portable? Was it developed by the people, with the people, and for the people? Also, was the crafting process a top-down approach with rigid methodologies tailored for the institutions?

These questions do arise in view of the content of the framework and the manner in which it was framed. Dealing with these questions will go a long way to address the effectiveness of the policy and the sense of direction in which the country is taking. We are of the view that national policies at the national level, continue largely, to benefit the elite or the super structure of the society while continuing to succour high-profile institutions and organisations. On the other end, community driven policies or planning approaches are local-people-focused. Indeed, people-centred policies are fundamentally about rural and urban linkages and local communities. In fact, people-centred

or community driven planning approach is in compliance with a series of UNESCO documents and report (UNESCO 2016, 2019)[2],, and with the objects of the Protection, Promotion, Development and Management of Indigenous Knowledge Act which aims to promote public awareness and understanding of indigenous knowledge for the wider application and development thereof (see Protection, Promotion, Development and Management of Indigenous Knowledge Act, No 6 of 2019).

In light of the foregoing, the IUDF is poised to yield little or no success if there are no substantive measures to substantially involve the target communities in the further development, enrichment and articulation of the policy.

Merits and demerits of Integrated Urban Development Framework

Our analysis of IUDF in relation to culture will be located within observations on what a post-colonial approach to urban planning might mean in the context of South Africa. A post-colonial approach to policy formulation, overall, should be capable to challenge western and urban-centric theories on the nature of cities (such as Scott and Storper, 2015), suggesting to look at other forms of urbanity (rural-urban, as suggested in Verdini, 2016); diversity of places, indigenous knowledge and local cultures, (Robinson, 2006; Edenson & Jayne, 2012), overall placing the creation of livelihood of ordinary people at the center of planning efforts (Watson, 2009b).

It is moreover essential that any integrated policy must be sought horizontally across sectors, to stimulate synergistic effects of all dimensions of sustainability, and vertically between policy

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[2] In particular the Outcomes Document of the International Conference CULTURE 2030: Rural-Urban Development: The Future of Historic Towns and Villages conference held from the 10th to the 12th of June 2019 in Meishan, People's Republic of China. This document included leave no one behind' through rural revitalization and spatial equity; inspiring communities through culture, quality education and citizens' engagement; the safeguarding of cultural heritage and innovation for environmental sustainability and resilience and integrated policies to strengthen rural-urban linkages towards sustainable rural revitalisation The conference material is available at: https://en.unesco.org/news/culture-key-rural-urban-development-historic-towns. The outcome document is available at:
https://en.unesco.org/system/files/meishan_outcomes_2019_en.pdf .
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levels, to achieve greater coherence of policy and actions within the region and to avoid contradictions across levels (Fudge, 1999).

First and foremost, it is remarkable to notice the efforts of IUDF in addressing explicitly the rural dimensions of urbanisation, recognizing how crucial rural-urban interdependencies are in understanding South African urbanisation. A future set of integrated policies should therefore be put forward to acknowledge that: distinctions between the urban and rural are blurred and this should be more carefully reflected in strategies, such as those addressing poverty (COGTA, 2016:25); and flows of capital, people, goods and services already exist and this should be facilitated (COGTA, 2016:30).

However, while the diagnosis is exemplary, the solutions provided tend to look, quite uncritically, at consolidated Western models. It is in fact emphasised the sprawling nature of South African cities advocating for 'steering urban growth towards a sustainable growth model of compact, connected and coordinated cities and towns', largely relying on Transit-oriented-development (TOD) models to promote densifications (COGTA, 2016: 37). Without denying the merit of such policies in certain contexts, and the overall reinforcement of a more comprehensive urban policy for South Africa (Everatt and Ebrahim, 2020), it is definitely under estimated the potential fallacy of the compact city discourse (Neuman, 2005), given that not only the urban form, but also people's aspirations and income, might be factors affecting mobility (Hall, 2001). More importantly, in the context of South Africa, post-apartheid compact city policies have proved historically to reinforce social divisions between wealthy and poor (Schoonraad, 2000). Therefore, cities with high level of social polarization, persisting poverty and deep historic social tensions, should instead privilege other pro-poor and inclusive policies (Watson, 2016) such as community-driven upgrading of housing and infrastructure (Brown, 2017) and the facilitation of low-cost mobility (Uteng and Lucas, 2018). This would ensure to really capturing the endogenous features of South African cities, promoting equity and ensuring, in the long-run, more effective urban transformations.

< INSERT FIG. 2.2 HERE>

Figure 2.2 Sprawling cities and informal settlements near Pretoria. Photo credit: Giulio Verdini.

Concerning citizens and participation, instead, the IUDF, tend to emphasize the need of empowering communities (COGTA, 2016:91), without really engaging neither with their specific cultural diversity nor with the historic roots of inequality. The question here is both theoretical and practical. As argued in 'Epistemologies of the South' (Santos, 2014) the idea of western civic engagement and participation has been historically shaped by social struggles for emancipation, evolving into new forms of social regulations. In the Global South this has been instead systematically prevented. Moreover, in South Africa after the euphoria of the liberation and early post-apartheid, enduring economic stagnation and unemployment have left scepticism and anger, as witnessed during the University students' protests in 2015-2016 (Natrass, 2017). This has generated advocacy for the so-called rights-based city (i.e. decent housing, public services, and so on) acknowledging that marginalized groups, like urban poor, have been often institutionally excluded from the government support structure (Parnell and Pieterse, 2010). This seems to suggest that, without adequately placing the topic of people's cultural diversity in a wider discussion of resource distribution and right to the city, the claim for their empowering might appear rather weak or even instrumental to more opaque underlying agendas.

In addition to that, any urban development policy framework must be crafted in compliance with the principles to ensure that the policy is efficacious to strengthen the local community and deal with urban complexities and uniqueness of a place and its community. If the IUDF is conceived to be part of the broad strategic approach for urban and community development connected to zoning, and to economic and industrial goals, it is crucial to substantively integrate culture into other planning processes and documents (Ghilardi 2001; Mercer 2002). This is not the case in regard to IUDF. Cultural planning, or even more explicitly indigenous cultural planning, is not suggested as a methodology for dealing with the socio-economic challenges. It is unfortunate, as cultural planning could enhance the value of culture and uses it to influence all policy portfolios cutting across traditional divisions between the public, private and voluntary sectors, government departments and different professional specialisations. It can be instrumental in creating

development opportunities for the entire local community. Cultural planning demands the recognition of the distinctive resources of a place (rural-urban) in the first instance, and then the development of policies rooted in those resources (Ghilardi, 2005).

Community mapping and strategy building as key characteristics of cultural planning are not reflected in IUDF. Community mapping is a technique that can be used to define a community's cultural activities or resources, capacities and needs. Supporting and connecting those resources with cross-departmental and cross-sector collaboration is also an important aspect of any integrated planning approach. Strategy Building is an important process for identifying and evaluating potential resources which need to be placed in a strategic framework where catalyst actions are identified – with a clear vision of what the community seeks to achieve. The foregoing should be complemented with dealing with the question of who should lead out in the process, as well as, why, and for whom this process has to be set in motion (Ghilardi, 2005).

The principles mentioned earliar in this chapter are of great importance taking into account that culture is viewed as a contributor to the formation of collective cultural identities as it comprises the aspect of who the people are; their backgrounds, tastes, rituals, experiences, diversity, talents and aspirations for the future), practices, and values that feed feelings of belonging, neighbourhood identity, community participation while it serves to guide decision processes in policy making (Pløger 2001 & Vojtíšková, et al 2016).

< INSERT FIG 2.3 HERE>
Figure 2.3 Downtown Johannesburg. Photo credit: Giulio Verdini.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the context of urban policies and planning in South Africa, particularly looking at IUDF, one of the most recent and important policy documents at the national level. It has inquired whether and how South Africa is addressing a new emerging culture-based agenda for urban sustainability promoted by UN SDGs and UNESCO.

The opening assumptions recognise the strategic importance IUDF, but also the concern that the framework is bereft of African cultural values and therefore might be premised on unsuitable Western planning approaches. Moreover, while new approaches of indigenous cultural planning have been internationally developed, particularly in British settler-colonial States such as New Zealand, Australia, Canada and USA (Porter, 2010), these remain largely unexplored in South Africa. Same can be said for more recent studies on translating indigenous rights to the cities, such as in South America (Horn, 2019b).

Theoretically, the 'culturalist tendency' of recent post-colonial critical studies would suggest looking at both emerging non-western approaches, grounded in 'Southern theories' and diversities of endogenous cultures. However, as Watson suggests, 'the question often raised is: what "conceptual lenses" can be used to develop such theories (theory), given that available perspectives all arose in the global North' (Watson, 2014:27). The response lies in the practice of ordinary urban planning practices, already taking place in some cities of the Global South, and looking at opportunities, for example, linked to: the experimentation of new forms of infrastructures, the engagement of youthful urban population, new emerging forms of State-civil society relations, and networks promoting social cohesion (Watson, 2014).

In the context of this chapter, two angles of observations have been privileged: the aspiration for urban efficiency and the containment of urban sprawl, based on the international compact city discourse; and the one for communities empowerment, based on the participatory discourse. As demonstrated, the two proclaimed goals reveal a Western bias, potentially leading to ineffective measures, or, even worst, to new forms of inequalities and spatial divisions. The suggestion of this critical review is to place more explicitly such effort in the context of clear commitments to social economical, and indeed cultural, equity.

It must be said, however, that IUDF sets an important precedent in challenging pure urban biased models of development, de facto legacy of the colonial period, acknowledging instead the dispersed nature of African urbanisation and their specific rural-urban linkages. This opens up important avenues to further understand the functioning of South African city-regions, alongside

the original contribution of indigenous knowledge and culture to shape them. It is a promising perspective to experiment post-colonial and place-based strategies. It is also an opportunity to reinterpret culture, in urban and rural local contexts as a means of promoting civilization, communication, creativity and also enriching aspect of life (Sirayi, 2008).

Further research and experimentations in practices are needed to effectively shape a future agenda for urban sustainability in South Africa, based on culture and, contextually, conducive of more harmonious rural-urban linkages. It is an agenda centred on marginalities, no matter if located at the hearth of deprived townships or remote rural villages.

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