

## Post apartheid Johannesburg planners tell their stories

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### Rationale

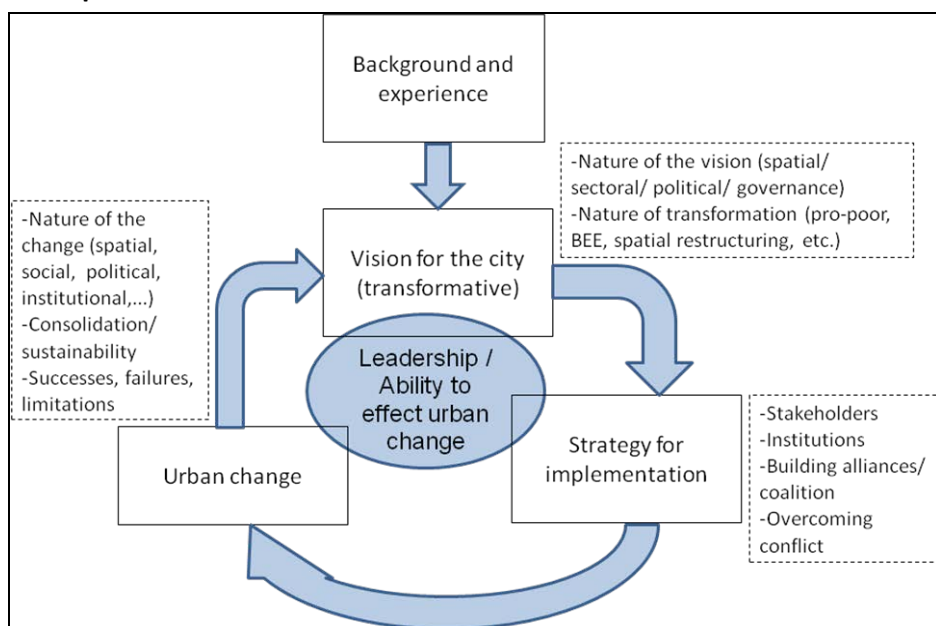
The project is inspired by the book: Krumholz N., Clavel P., 1994, *Reinventing cities: Equity Planners Tell Their Stories*. It is a quite unique book, collating interviews of a number of Equity Planners working in various American municipalities in the 1970s -1980s: talking about their vision and plan, and how they attempted to make these visions a reality. It touches on the politics of planning, the reality of administration inertia or conservatism, of political intervention (good and bad), of media management, of negotiation with business, challenges with civil society, etc. It talks about the reality of planners work in local government – planners with a transformative vision.

No such book exists on contemporary cities; no such book exists on African, or South African cities. It is direly missing, in planning education as well as in research in urban studies, in our understanding of urban politics, policy, and change.

Post apartheid Johannesburg offers a great case study as it hired over the last decade a number of city makers (planners in the broad sense) who wanted to change the city; who had visions and ideas for a post apartheid city – often built in the anti apartheid struggle and liberation movement, but that the challenges of implementation, in a democratic South Africa, might have reshaped or reframed.

The project (that will be located in CUBES) aims at collecting in-depth interviews with Johannesburg high rank officials and politicians who shaped the city in the post-apartheid period, to hear their visions of the city and its transformation, how they tried to implement it, their constraints and the way they overcame them (or not).

### Conceptual framework



### **Our research question – effecting transformative change in the city**

What interests us is the relationship between the vision (with some elements on how it was formed and frame – initially through background and experience, in particular political experience) and its implementation.

This relationship will illustrate the challenges of shifting from a liberation / struggle practice to a constructive/ developmental one.

It will talk to the politics of city making – the processes, alliances, conflicts, one has to go through to make a vision a reality and drive, effect change in the city.

It might also illustrate how the opportunities and challenges of implementation reshape the vision itself.

### **Who we are targeting for interview**

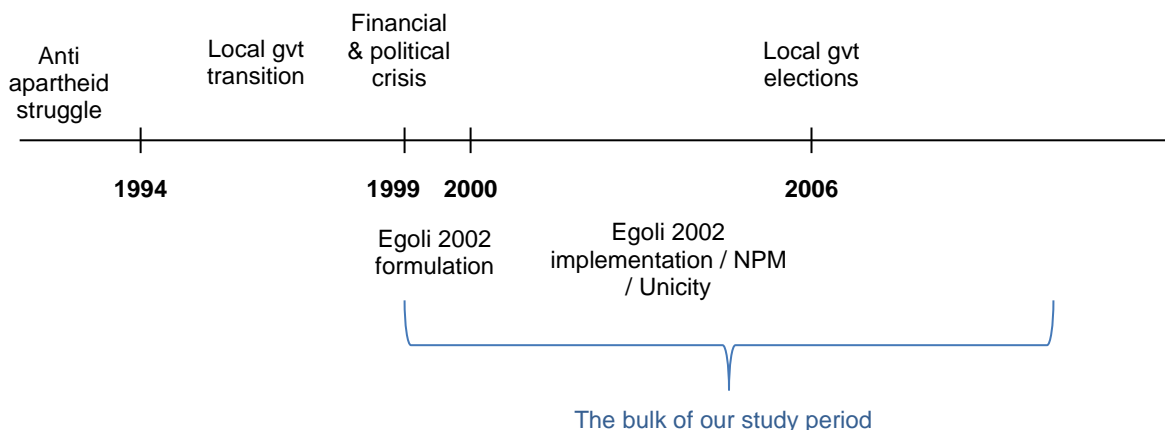
We are interested in hearing the story of

- Relatively **high rank officials and politicians** in the City of Johannesburg (in a position to drive or effect change; initiate new ways of making the city).
- (if possible) no longer working in the City – so that they are free to talk and **able to reflect** on their action, its successes and limitations
- Interviewees need to have a **strong vision for the city** (articulated or through their practice). This vision might be of different nature – geared towards restructuring the city spatially, or developing specific parts of it; focused on one specific sector of activity or service – transport, water, housing, etc.; or looking at forms of governance).
- This vision needs to engage with the notion of post apartheid **transformation** – meaning the determination to break away from the discriminatory practices of apartheid. Transformation in this sense is broad, and so far we have identified **four dimensions**, which might or might not be related and overlapping:
  - o it can mean a pro-poor agenda
  - o a commitment for BEE (black investment in the city; transformation of staff; etc.)
  - o it can be spatial - integrating the city spatially
  - o it can be related to governance (towards a more participatory, democratic governance).

### **Possible strategies in selecting interviewees**

- Individuals with a variety of political backgrounds and forms of activism (racial, social, type of involvement in the struggle)
- A mix of different positions – officials and politicians (NB Equity Planners... was only focusing on officials); sufficiently high rank to effect change but possibly also middle rank officials and politicians.
- Approach could be:
  - o Have a diversity of transformative visions (social, racial, spatial, democratic) so as to discuss the concept and multiple meanings of transformation in the city
  - o AND/OR Have a diversity of selected ‘sectors’ of the city (infrastructure, transport, inner city, etc.)
  - o And interview a mix of politicians and officials in each of the category (2-3 per category), that would more or less talk or respond to one another

## Time frame



## Three challenges

- Immediate post apartheid period interesting but not necessarily the best to study the ability to drive change at the municipal level (too much uncertainty, shifts, negotiations – transitional period) - however need to be flexible on the matter.
- Period post 1999-2000 better in this respect; also a time of crisis and response to crisis (restructuring of the municipality according to NPM – some call it the neoliberal turn of city of Johannesburg). Our position in this respect is not to be normative but to hear how the agents understand this shift, and how it compromises or not / enhance of not, their transformative vision.
- No strict end to our study period (unless it is the 2011 elections) – bearing in mind that it might be more relevant to interview officials and politicians who are no longer working for the city.

## Interview protocol

Due to the possible sensitive nature of the stories told (with some stakeholders still politically active, still working for the City of Johannesburg; active political networks...) and to allow as much as possible free discussion and reflection, the interviews will be conducted as follow:

- Interviewee to be told in advance the nature of the project (in detail), and sent the main questions framing the interview
- Interview to be taped; then transcribed and edited by Claire and Rashid
- Edited transcription to be submitted, discussed, complemented and further edited by the interviewee (in dialogue with Claire and Rashid)

## Final output

A book co-edited by Claire and Rashid

Featuring edited interviews with about 10 officials/politicians of the City of Johannesburg

Each interview to be preceded by a short introduction giving elements of context

Strong theoretical introduction and conclusion

Publisher- to be identified and approached at a later stage

**Research budget**

<b>Nature of expense</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Teaching replacement Claire	R20.000	Requested from School research committee
Transcription 10 interviews 3 hours long (Rate about R600/recorded hour - students)	R18.000-R20.000	About R15.000 available in Claire's research budget
Publication		Depends on publisher – we would need to fund raise if cost involved

**Research proposed time frame**

Oct-Dec 2012 – Refining the research questions, interview guidelines, selection of interviewees – regular meetings between Rashid and Claire

Jan-March 2013 – Conducting the interviews / transcription; looking for publisher and submitting synopsis

April 2013 – Editing the transcripts; drafting chapter contextual introductions

May 2013 – Back to interviewees with transcripts and chapters contextual introductions– checking & complementing;

June 2013 – Finalisation of general intro and conclusion

Early July 2013 – submission to publisher