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The Post-Apartheid City and the Globalization of Eroding the Landscape of Apartheid

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Dramatic changes in power occurred in 1994 when the African National Congress Party took over governing South Africa and brought an end to the official era of apartheid. Urban geographers have an extraordinary opportunity to examine the impact of the anti-apartheid legislation on the highly segregated cities. The official landscape of apartheid began in the early 1950s. It is a unique landscape because the official planning documents that were prepared and implemented focused on segregating races. Space was set aside for black Africans who were considered temporary sojourners in the South African cities. The black Africans were tolerated because they were needed as sources of labor and when their labor was no longer necessary they would be returned to their areas called native reserves or homelands. In order to accomplish the goals of apartheid, cities were remapped, some neighborhoods razed, and hundreds of households forcibly relocated in order to bring about homogenous sections of white, coloured, Asian, and black South African residents. Under apartheid, residential areas were divided from one another by landscape features, some natural, some specially constructed. Additional landscape features such as railroad yards, industrial parks, highways, rivers, and other features were used as boundaries.

Sweeping reforms brought about with the election of Nelson Mandela changed many aspects of South African society including the use of space by individuals, the so-called petty apartheid. People of all races are now free to use public spaces and transportation, and have access to services that were denied to some during the apartheid regime. The transitional governments that have been in power since

the end of the de Klerk government (1994) have engaged in an extensive program of legislation designed to enable equal access to economic and social amenities. However, no specific urban planning legislation has been enacted to actually undo the geography of apartheid. The geography of apartheid—those specialized landscapes created by the planners—remains in place. The barriers between communities do not appear to be eroding.

In addition, the end of apartheid has made possible the massive rural to urban migration of black Africans hitherto confined to rural homelands. However, this has done little to integrate the population. The new residents have set up squatter settlements on the urban fringes of the older African communities and, thus, have reinforced the apartheid landscape.

In January of 2000, field observations, both structured and casual, were made of housing and retailing districts in three African cities: Pretoria, George, and Cape Town. These observations indicate several possible futures for the restructuring of the post-apartheid city. While these cities cannot provide a comprehensive sample of urban South Africa, they do provide an interesting and useful range of cases. Pretoria, the national capital and part of the major metropolitan area, Gauteng, provides an example of a strong commercial core and governmental center in downtown that has been dramatically affected by white suburbanization. George is a city of about 130,000, governed by a coalition of races and led by people who intend to maintain harmonious relationships and promote economic development for all sections of the community. Cape Town, the second metropolitan area, with a more complex structure than George and Pretoria, has grown tremendously during the '90s due to in-migration of black Africans from rural areas. Cape Town consists of several sharply divided communities ranging from very high income areas, focused on the mountain and seaside resorts, to large coloured districts and a vast area of informal housing called Cape Flats, which is occupied by coloureds and black Africans.

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The apartheid legislation was designed to create an entirely new landscape within South African cities. It is important to note that in addition to urban apartheid, the country as a whole was divided into the area set aside for whites, roughly 90% of the territory, while the major-

ity of the African population was confined to the remaining 10% of the country. The black areas were primarily rural and separated by some distance from the centers of commerce and industry. Recently, legislation has been enacted to revoke the status of homelands, and the provincial structure of the country has been restructured. In addition, ANC legislation has reduced the number of cities in South Africa by roughly 50% and is dramatically increasing the areal extent of the remaining municipalities. This expansion had the effect of combining previously exclusive white cities with more mixed and heterogeneous larger cities. No legislation has been enacted to undo the strict apartheid landscape within the cities, however. The actual cities now have more diversity within their boundaries, but there are still heavily segregated districts in those cities.

The hard landscape of apartheid consists of extensive residential districts, major highways, freeways, railroads, irrigation ditches, industrial sites, parks, cemeteries, golf courses, and major natural landscape features. This geography cannot be undone with the stroke of a pen no matter how well intentioned the residents and leaders of South Africa may be.

It appears that the short-term plan is to recognize the de facto segregation of the cities and to focus instead on the integration of new communities and bringing political power and equity to previously disenfranchised communities. The national government's policies of providing housing grants for impoverished residents and increasing the size of the municipal boundaries seem to be creating cities that provide more political power and economic potential for the previously disenfranchised. But they will remain segregated.

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George is the gateway to the Garden Route in coastal South Africa. The expansion of the city's size has been a brilliant solution to resolving the gerrymandered space created by the apartheid leaders. Two sorts of communities have been incorporated into George. The first type consists of the informal communities of Lawaiikamp, Thimbaleto, and Packelsdorp. These communities were designed and built under the apartheid system to provide edge housing for unwelcome but necessary lower income laborers in George. They were incorporated into the city of George in the 1990s. In 2000, the city of George will become even larger with the absorption of the second landscape type, the pre-

viously incorporated towns of Wilderness and Segewick, as well as the surrounding areas. These formerly all-white communities are located on the high-amenity Indian Ocean coastline. The incorporation of the rural areas and small towns surrounding George makes the African population more powerful for, although the city area will more than double in size, there will be only one additional municipal councillor added to the city council of George. Therefore, decisions by the city council, which will be elected primarily by both black and coloured voters, will determine the economic structure and planning process for the large area. This expansion will create a much more livable city, but there has not been, nor will there be, an attempt to relocate individuals so that racial integration of communities occurs.

This new political power is significant and must not be minimized. However, the landscape still contains some major inequities. For example, under apartheid the coloured and black edge settlements were poorly serviced and contained only the minimum convenience services, such as liquor stores, small stores, barbershops, and beauty shops. The major sources of employment were located at some distance from these communities and the public transportation facilities were minimal. The result is a mismatch between employment opportunities and potential employees. Primary motorized transportation was provided by a system of minivans. At present, the employees must bear the cost of transportation and the inconvenience to get from the fringe settlements to the places of employment. As the city increases in size and as economic opportunities develop in the high-amenity locations along the ocean fringe and bluff, a new transportation system will have to be implemented to connect the segregated housing districts to the growth poles.

Another transportation issue in George (and actually other cities in South Africa, as well) is that the settlements at the fringe, the so-called townships, had limited accessibility. Usually only one or two roads lead into them. This, of course, was a defensive strategy that allowed the white power structure to control these populations in the event of violent demonstrations. In some situations, the cost of the isolation will be minimal but in George it will be significant. Thimbaleto and Packlsdorp are cut off from the main city by a freeway right-of-way. Workers must take circuitous routes to employment and pedestrians crowd the narrow roads. Many people take a short cut into town by running across the freeway. As both the traffic on the freeway and the community population increase, many disasters will occur at these crossing

points. These tragedies will not be random accidents. They are the predictable outcome of apartheid landscapes. They can be avoided by breaking the barriers around Pacaltsdorp and Thembaletu with bridges, pedestrian access, and vehicles.

A series of conversations with political leaders, city councilmen, the mayor, city administrators, and residents of George indicate that economic development and providing housing and equity for the black Africans are the primary goals of the system. In fact, the mayor said quite explicitly that the goal of the city housing plan is to provide housing and equity for blacks, not integration. There are plans, however, for a sizable development to be built by a public and private partnership on city-owned land that will be explicitly integrated. It will be interesting to watch the development of this suburb because the primary population growth of George results from in-migration of both white retirees from further north and impoverished black Africans from the eastern cape. These two populations command greatly different resources and equity. It is hard to imagine these two groups blending in a newly developed community.

The housing policy adopted by George has been focused on rebuilding the informal settlements as formal communities and providing the residents with basic housing and urban amenities. This has been made possible by the national government's grant system, which provides 17,000 Rand per qualified household. The black leadership was very aggressive and used the government grant program to provide 6,000 units of serviced masonry houses in Thimbeleto, Packelsdorp, and Lawaiikamp.

This policy proved to be miraculous and essentially solved the housing crisis in the city of George. It appears that the decision to rebuild in place rather than forcefully integrate calmed the fears of the white population. As a result, there has been essentially no white flight. To be sure, there has been continued expansion of the white communities in high-amenity areas near the Fancourt Country Club and on the mountain slopes. However, there has not been massive abandonment of any part of George by either the whites or the high-status coloured population.

The governments of George and other South African cities have been charged with developing a new "Integrated Development Plan." Work has just begun on George's plan with the collection of basic data. In January of 2000, the various vested interest groups—the white businessmen and the black and coloured politicians—met in an informal

seminar to discuss potential opportunities and problems in this planning process. Integration of residential districts was not expressed as a goal for the Integrated Development Plan. The chief issues are maintaining the strong downtown core for both commercial and residential uses, providing adequate housing for the black and coloured populations, and somehow coping with the expected in-migration of large numbers of black Africans from the Eastern Cape province. All discussions focused on issues of economic development, education, and social issues, and not on any kind of plan to break down the barriers between the spatial communities.

It would appear that the recognition of the de facto segregated pattern and plans to integrate newer developments provides a compromise among the various power groups in George. All of the ANC politicians readily endorse Nelson Mandela's concept of reconciliation and peaceful economic development. The white politicians and bureaucrats acknowledge the keys of power have been transferred to the majority population. All groups seem to be interested in maintaining a peaceful and prosperous community. The Asian and white shop owners need the black and coloured clients to maintain their economic status. The newly arrived immigrants from the eastern cape need an expanded economy to provide them and their children the economic stability they seek. The growing tourist industry provides opportunities for entrepreneurs in every section of the society as well as a potential demand for semi- and unskilled labor. The high-income developments around the Fancourt Country Club will continue to draw wealthy tourists and retirees from Europe, provided the surrounding neighborhood remains peaceful and comfortable for the visitors. Thus, it appears that all the groups see their mutual dependency and are unwilling to undertake any major restructuring of the landscape for fear of derailing the economic potential of this region.

Perhaps simply too little time has elapsed since the end of apartheid to allow the populations to envision any other sort of landscape patterns. However, judging from the North American and northern European experience, communities based on cultural affinity, ethnicity, and skin color are remarkably persistent. Given the landscape reinforcements within South Africa, it is hard to see how any simple legislation can undo this history.

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George presents us with an optimistic view of the future, albeit one that, for the most part, maintains the apartheid landscape. George has not experienced white flight and the political communication seems to be open and cordial. Pretoria, on the other hand, shows signs of dramatic white flight and the creation of exclusive suburbs beyond the easy range of public transportation. In essence, apartheid has been intensified. Unlike downtown George, the city center of Pretoria has been evacuated by major retailers, entertainment, and restaurant establishments. Even though it is the Capitol, and there are large numbers of white-collar workers within an easy walk or short drive of the city center, downtown Pretoria contains almost no social amenities. It appears that the city center was essentially rebuilt during the 1970s and the early 1980s. Little construction has taken place in the last decade. Malls are underutilized. Streetscapes are lined with informal vendors selling a variety of convenience and durable goods. Shops stand largely idle, with low inventories. There appear to be no concentrations of white professionals — lawyers, doctors, dentists, accountants—in the city center.

On the other hand, major malls and residential districts have sprung up along the freeways in the hillsides toward Johannesburg. In essence, Pretoria looks like a North American city with a downtown buoyed up by governmental expenditures and the heavy presence of government employees but very limited commercial vitality. The shoppers are primarily low income residents from the neighborhoods immediately surrounding the downtown or those riding in the minivans from the townships.

Merchants and government officials seem nervous in Pretoria. Guards are armed and visible. The population hurries along the streets, seemingly in a hurry to be somewhere else. A street population of beggars and homeless is also very visible. This scene contrasts sharply to the walled white communities in the new suburbs.

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Cape Town offers a distinct contrast to both Pretoria and George. As mentioned above, Cape Town grew enormously during the 1980s and ’90s as the restrictions on black labor were lifted. The vast informal settlement called Cape Flats, formerly a township and now part of the metropolitan area, provides a sharp contrast to inner-city neighborhoods occupied by blacks in Pretoria and the new housing in George.

Building programs are widespread in Cape Town and provide both basic and amenity housing for the coloured and black populations. However, the massive scale of Cape Flats has prompted the city to provide basic services to the informal areas: paving streets and providing central water spigots, and, in some places, electricity. The existing policy of building single family detached housing for low income South Africans will not allow the re-housing of the squatters at a comparable density. Therefore, a major planning issue looms. If the high density, informal settlements are rebuilt at lower densities, the low-income populations will be further displaced from jobs and have to endure even longer commutes. Thus, if this plan goes forward, a new transportation system will have to be put in place.

The massive scale and dense population concentration of Cape Town, with the present array of housing standards and living conditions, provides a third reason for the continuation of a segregated landscape. Cape Town has been politically restructured (expanded) so that low-income and high-income areas are combined in the same political jurisdiction. However, the walled communities of whites occupying the spectacular amenity locations seem to be essentially impregnable to any attempt to forcefully integrate a low-income population. The steep hillsides make construction costs too high to build economically feasible low-income housing projects. Therefore, the development program, which focuses on providing as many housing units as possible, will be guided by the local geography. The high amenity mountainsides will remain the high-income zone and an essentially white area while the low income, essentially black, housing developments will be constructed on the flatter coastal zones toward the suburban fringes of the east and south of Cape Town.

Under apartheid, merchants were constrained to certain residential areas. Black merchants were confined to black areas, whites to white. Asian and coloured merchants had a little more freedom and could be found in city centers, on some white shopping strips, and in the black communities as well as their own neighborhoods. Today, these restrictions have been lifted but the old pattern continues. The squatter communities contain only the most basic retail functions. In the evenings, women can be found grilling beef and lamb over open wood fires and selling it to commuters returning home. Beer is brewed and drunk from large galvanized pails in *shambas*. A few shops are run from people's homes and the formal bars are found on accessible corners.

In the better-off formal neighborhoods, small shops in transport containers or simple buildings can be found. However, most shops of any size are operated by the Asians (Indians) or coloureds. The Asian stores run the gamut from higher end furniture, clothing, and household utensils to the corner convenience stores selling beer, food, and other products for home use. Merchants in George reported an effort by the white merchants and landowners to keep the Asian merchants out of downtown. This resulted in the Asian merchants moving to new highway-oriented shopping centers at the edge of the city. Now the downtown merchants are worried that they have been left behind.

Informal, sidewalk merchants are visible in all three cities. They were most common in downtown Pretoria. Here, hundreds of black petty merchants sold everything from steamed ears of corn to imported Korean leather bags and running shoes. Merchants clogged the sidewalks and lined every business corner. The sales force was predominately women and young men.

Like housing, retailing in South African cities still reflects the apartheid landscape. White merchants have not invaded the black areas and very few black merchants have accumulated enough capital to buy out established white businesses. In George, some of the black political and community leaders have joined in partnerships with white businessmen and developers in an effort to build additional shopping and entertainment facilities along busy streets that are not perceived to be in the historic "territory" of one the groups.

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Reading the landscape of post-apartheid leads one to several conclusions about the nature and persistence of urban morphology and its impact on social behavior. We have to recognize the talents of the city planners during South Africa's apartheid era. They used their power to create sharply divided communities separated by durable barriers. In addition, the movement within the communities and commercial districts was limited to selected pathways. Shopping for daily necessities was confined to few areas and the geography of non-white merchants was limited. Over the years, the barriers were reinforced and a wide range of segregated communities developed. Because all the communities were expected to open onto the urban fringe, it was possible for residents to sort themselves by status and income. With some notable exceptions, the residents of the separate communities devel-

oped a sense of security and control. Now that the black Africans have been empowered, they seem reluctant to break down the landscape of apartheid. In some places, whites have fled the areas controlled by blacks and surrendered urban amenities in return for walled communities in the poorly served suburbs.

The end of "petty apartheid" has made it possible for black Africans to enter public spaces, ride transit, shop wherever they can afford, start businesses, and enjoy the country's amenities. Nonetheless, the sharp edges of the communities are as difficult to erode as the local mountains. Gradual blending of communities will be difficult if not impossible. If and when racial integration occurs, it will be in the new government-aided suburban developments. Only massive white flight from the inner city amenity communities will provide a space for alternative residential patterns. At present, there seems to be little reason to expect white flight in most South African cities and, consequently, the landscape of apartheid will persist long after the last apartheid legislation is repealed. ◉