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► **To cite this version:**

Annika Teppo, Myriam Houssay-Holzschuch. GugulethuTM: revolution for neoliberalism in a South African township. *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue canadienne des études africaines*, 2013, 47 (1), pp.51-74. <10.1080/00083968.2013.770592>. <hal-00834788>

HAL Id: hal-00834788

<https://hal.science/hal-00834788v1>

Submitted on 1 Jul 2013

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Gugulethu™: revolution for neoliberalism in a South African township

Annika Teppo^{1,2*} and Myriam Houssay-Holzschuch³

Résumé

Gugulethu™: la Révolution pour le néolibéralisme dans un township sud-africain. Cet article analyse l'impact de la néolibéralisation sur les pratiques spatiales post-apartheid dans le cas du centre commercial de Gugulethu, nouvellement construit au Cap. Cet impact est analysé à deux niveaux: tout d'abord, du point de vue des processus néolibéraux eux-mêmes et de leur adaptabilité à l'environnement local; puis du point de vue du township lui-même, analysant ce qui rend cet environnement perméable - insistant notamment sur le rôle de médiateurs locaux. Nous étudions la manière dont discours et imagerie révolutionnaires, conception spatiale et ingénierie sociale sont mis à contribution pour le succès de cette entreprise, ainsi que la manière dont cela est perçue dans la vie quotidienne du township. Nous montrons comment des townships comme Gugulethu, dès lors qu'on les analyse dans leur contemporanéité et leur ordinarité, proposent un récit situé de la néolibéralisation, récit servant à légitimer des pratiques économiques visant des profits financiers.

Abstract

This paper analyses the impact of neoliberalization on post-apartheid spatial practices at the new Gugulethu mall in Cape Town. It examines this impact at two levels: first, from the perspective of neoliberal processes and their ability to adapt to the local township environment and, second, from the viewpoint of the township and its permeability to these ideas and practices, specifically emphasizing the role of local brokers. We study how revolutionary discourses, imagery, spatial design and social engineering were employed to promote the business, and how these attempts were received at the everyday level in the township. We argue that contemporary, ordinary townships such as Gugulethu tell a localized story of neoliberalization processes through which global capital is rooted within South African townships.

Keywords: South Africa; Cape Town; neoliberalism; mall; township Introduction

In November 2009 a modern and rather sophisticated shopping mall, Gugulethu Square, opened its doors under the slogan: "What you heard is true!"¹ While other relatively upmarket malls have been opened in black² townships since the end of apartheid, this was the first of its kind in Cape Town. Gugulethu, an African township established during the apartheid era on the sandy flats of Cape Town, was originally built to house and control Africans forcibly removed from informal settlements all over the city. It has all the characteristics of a classic South African township: buffer zones, rows of identical

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matchbox houses and, here and there, churches. The area has a turbulent history and is burdened by poverty, crime and unemployment – the usual and persistent township problems. However, almost two decades into democracy, prominent black Capetonians call Gugulethu home and enjoy the growing fame of its township vibe and social life. It has also become a point of interest for developers and businesses looking to expand their reach, and gain profits from the steadily growing black middle classes.

In our previous paper (2009) on the V&A Waterfront in the centre of Cape Town, we provocatively asked if a revolution could be sustained in a mall. As it turned out, we were not the only ones interested in this relation between malls and revolution. In Gugulethu, developers have toiled hard to turn it around and have the revolution sustain the mall. They have actually employed the revolutionary nostalgia for the anti-apartheid struggle as their symbolic ammunition, and to justify their business practices.

This paper studies the process via which the developers – in keeping with the romantic principles of the “African renaissance” – claimed to reveal, promote and market Gugulethu as a successful, global African metropolis; in other words, as Afropolis (Nuttall and Mbembe 2004). Through this process, the ideas, discourses and imagery of the post-apartheid city as the outcome of the struggle and revolution were employed to justify local barebones capitalism, glorify these new urban developments and tentatively appease the local community. The combination of revolutionary and romantic ideas, together with economic practices of neoliberal capitalism, turned out to be a very successful strategy, which ultimately allowed the land originally promised to the locals to be very profitably sold to outside investors.

We analyse the recent developments pertaining to the new Gugulethu mall through the lens of neoliberalization processes. These processes are in accordance with the point made by Brenner, Peck, and Theodore (2012) that neoliberal processes are so “variegated” that they possess almost infinite plasticity. This adaptability accords them the effectiveness required to permeate local environments – as the case of the Gugulethu mall will demonstrate. Following this line of reasoning, we also use the framework that Didier, Morange, and Peyroux (2012) suggest for analysing the ways in which these neoliberal processes have permeated the establishment of the City Improvement Districts (CID) in South Africa, paying particular attention to the variegation. These authors not only studied the plasticity of neoliberal practices, but also the ways in which the local institutional environment was permeable to them. We are also interested in these dialectics of plasticity/permeability, but not in applying this framework to the study of policies and institutional contexts as previously occurred (see above). Instead, we use it to examine how these neoliberalizing processes inscribe and manifest themselves in the urban spaces and social relations of the townships, taking into account these processes’ symbolic and lived everyday elements at the grassroots level. They are visible in the local workings of the capital, as well as in the party politics and struggle politics, producing new forms of exclusion and inequality, but also new opportunities. We will argue that

from the seemingly incompatible neoliberal and extra-neoliberal elements, a combination of ideas and practices emerges that is not only very telling of the neoliberal processes and their ability to adapt in different environments, but also allows for a deeper understanding of contemporary changes in South African cities.

1. Contemporary townships: the ordinary and the neoliberal

A. The ordinary

The examination of a South African post-apartheid township such as Gugulethu requires preliminary remarks on townships as objects of study. African cities, or African places in the city such as the townships, have often solely been regarded as places of misery and deprivation. Cities are perceived through frames of reference that are often obsolete or have been developed in and for entirely different social and historical conditions (Murray and Myers 2007, pp. 6–7). Nevertheless, the vitality of African cities often seems to be ignored. Abdoumalig Simone (2004) has usefully pointed out that African cities should be viewed as “works in progress” and not as frozen in any specific framework of analysis. Indeed, African cities are complex, dynamic and – as Jennifer Robinson (2006) suggests – ordinary places. Positioning herself within a postcolonial framework, Robinson questions the parochialism of urban studies and criticizes the existing dichotomy between cities of the North (seen as emblems of modernity) and cities of the South (seen as in dire need of development):

[A]ll cities are best understood as “ordinary”. Rather than categorising and labelling cities as, for example, Western, Third World, developed, developing, world or global, I propose that we think about a world of ordinary cities, which are all dynamic and diverse, if conflicted, arenas for social and economic life. (Robinson 2006, 1)

As such, all cities should be “part of the same field of analysis” (Robinson 2006, 108). The framework of the ordinary city is particularly useful in the South African context in which it was developed: the first reason for its relevance is that it goes against the grain of a contestable tradition of exceptionalism in South African studies (for a review and discussion, see Barchiesi 2011; Houssay-Holzschuch 2010; Leilde´ 2008; Sapire and Beall 1995). More importantly, taking it seriously has two crucial advantages: first, – and as Robinson has argued (Robinson 2011) – it allows for international comparisons and the testing of concepts developed elsewhere (e.g. neoliberalism, gentrification) in South African cities. In so doing, second, it frames the analysis of South African cities as contemporary; that is, not frozen in apartheid time, but deeply transformed by contemporary dynamics. It thus follows Elder’s crucial reminder that: “[w]hile the challenges of the apartheid past are deeply embedded in the real and symbolic politics of South Africa . . . , present-day South Africa is also much more than a shadow of things past” (Elder, 2003, pp. 2–3). Consequently, this framework puts the apartheid past into perspective and helps us avoid its overbearing weight for a more accurate assessment of its impact on contemporary dynamics in places such as Gugulethu. For not all that

happens in South African cities is purely about overcoming apartheid inequalities or reproducing its race-cum-class division; there are also new constellations of ideas and practices. We lastly suggest that the ordinary city approach can work on different scales: Robinson's work mainly refers to the metropolitan scale, but is equally useful at the intra-urban level. There is, for instance, ample work on gated communities and the Cape Town (CBD) Central Business District (Lemanski 2007; Pirie 2007), as well as on the malls (Ferreira and Visser 2007; Houssay-Holzschuch and Teppo 2009). Scholars have shown that these global urban forms, originating from the North, are locally hybridized and have thus already moved beyond the North–South divide. We would also like to emphasize that in Cape Town, urban changes are occurring in all urban areas. They are happening in the centre and on the periphery, in rich and poor areas, in white as well as in African and coloured areas. Therefore, research on contemporary South African cities should not reproduce the North–South divide, which Robinson calls into question, within the city. A crucial consequence of this is that contemporary townships also need to be reconsidered as “ordinary” – a task that requires a conceptual shift. They have, largely for political reasons, long been regarded as “spaces of exception” (Agamben 2005; Gregory 2006; Swartz 2010) – yet are functionally and economically integrated into South African metropolises. Jacob Dlamini's autobiographical essay *Native Nostalgia* reminds us that the common understanding of townships is limited to the idea of pain, loss, trauma, poverty and social problems, whereas

[they] have never been static spaces. They have always been creative and dynamic arenas whose very meaning has been subject to contestation (Dlamini, 2009, 126).

More than just fossil spaces of a bygone era, they are hotly contested and eagerly coveted spaces. Moreover, the contemporary processes of change are likely to be more visible and blatant in townships where they have to find new ingredients and ways to adapt to local circumstances in order to successfully permeate the local society and its spaces.

This caveat not to reproduce the North–South divide within the city also applies to research methods and frames: while many analysts have rightly called for more ethnographically inclined research on the everyday life of the post-apartheid era (see Mbembe and Nuttall 2004), it is salutary to consider that the tenacity of the apartheid boundaries also tends to stick in the minds of urban researchers. Geographers, anthropologists and sociologists have tended to reproduce the apartheid boundaries in academic discussions. Many studies on the contemporary South African city (including some of our own and some very recent ones, see Jürgens and Donaldson 2012) still tend to follow apartheid divisions, although there have also been exceptions (Buire 2011). This tendency robs the South African cities of their ordinariness. The lack of ordinariness leads to visions of the city as fragmented rather than interconnected – visions that should be treated with caution in a time when these cities are becoming increasingly connected to global networks, of which Gugulethu is a prime example. Therefore, the framework of the ordinary city should be more systematically applied.

B. The neoliberal

While the townships were practically war zones in the 1980s, they are considerably more peaceful today. Nevertheless, they remain flammable – communities used to fighting for their rights currently fight for the delivery of services by staging “delivery protests” (Barchiesi 2011; Wafer 2012). The contestation in townships did not end after the end of apartheid. They and their residents are constantly called upon to support projects, discourses and visions, whether at the local, national or international levels. Their considerable electoral weight can support or oppose political claims. They are often the turf on which political battles are fought, which happened during the “toilet wars”, which were waged on the crucial issue of the lack of service delivery and involved opposing the opposition Democratic Alliance (DA) and the ruling African National Congress (ANC) (Buire 2011). Sometimes these political battles turn into actual battles. As such, townships can be envisaged as not very permeable environments where one of the prevailing topoi is that of the political struggle.

Even so, townships find themselves entangled with a national, neoliberal discourse that frames South Africa as an emerging country and the continent’s economic powerhouse. Richard Peet has pointed out that, “neoliberal development discourse is utterly unsuited to the conditions prevailing in post-apartheid South Africa” (2002, 66). However, this mismatch has hardly undermined the implementation of neoliberally inclined economic practices and policies in post-apartheid South Africa where, in the early 1990s, they soon overruled the ANC’s original, more redistributive, ideas (Marais 2010). Richard Peet (2002, 79) captured the essence of this ethos: “Acting not in unison but in parallel, global hegemonic and regional subhegemonic forces joined in projecting a discourse seemingly invested with the authority of moral respectability and the scientific aura of truth, one that captured the developmental imaginary to such a degree that even the model’s massive failure to deliver has barely shaken the confidence that unfettered private enterprise will eventually come through.”

As Jennifer Robinson and Susan Parnell point out, urban neoliberalism needs to be understood alongside other forces that shape these cities (Robinson and Parnell 2011, 1095). Drawing on Brenner, Peck, and Theodore (2010, 216), they suggest that there is often an “intensely contradictory blending of neoliberal and extra-neoliberal elements”. Thus the forms neoliberalism takes are always historically defined and dependent.

A vast body of literature discusses the neoliberalization processes and the ensuing tensions between economic growth and social justice in the cities of post-apartheid South Africa³ (for the most recent analysis and an overview of previous work, see B nit Gbaffou, Didier, and Peyroux 2012; Didier, Morange, and Peyroux 2012; Roshan Samara 2011). Yet, B nit Gbaffou, Didier and Morange note that there are some important aspects of this phenomenon that have been remarkably less studied. One of these is the focus “on the development of new spatial products and priorities in cities – the concentration of public and private investment on prime spaces to attract direct

investment” (2012, 1). Simultaneously, their practical workings or spatial manifestations in the townships are surprisingly little studied.

In the subsequent analysis, the Gugulethu example demonstrates how local stakeholders and businesspeople try to implement their neoliberal vision of local development by building classy commercial amenities, localizing them through a productive coupling with township life and with a sense of romanticized revolutionary history, thus allowing a grand future of consumption. This interplay of business and revolution is manifested in the discourses, practices and contestations surrounding Gugulethu Square. It affects the way in which the people of this community perceive themselves, and how they position themselves in cases of disagreement. We are also interested in how this interplay is lived and materially inscribed within the township spaces.

In order to carry out this task, we build on the work of Didier et al., who, following Brenner, suggest looking at the differing processes of “variegation”, which they perceive as consisting of two elements: permeability and plasticity. The permeability of local urban contexts means that they transform to accommodate the neoliberalizing phenomenon or process under scrutiny (in their case, the establishment of City Improvement Districts), thus helping it adapt to local circumstances. The neoliberal ideas and processes therefore possess a remarkable plasticity that allows them to find a way to soothe whatever political concerns there are. However, while Didier et al. mainly conducted institutional analysis of variegation, we are interested in these processes’ everyday life and spatial manifestations, social expressions and traces. How did the neoliberal processes of permeability and plasticity occur in Gugulethu around the establishment of the new mall?

We conducted several periods of fieldwork in Gugulethu in 2009, 2010 and 2011, employing an approach both ethnographic and spatial. We carried out participant observation at the mall, as well as in the surrounding township, kept field diaries, took numerous photographs, hung around and talked to the people, asking many questions. In particular, we aimed at places of sociability (eating joints such as Mzoli’s, shebeens and jazz places, e.g. Duma’s Falling Leaves, and churches), engaging people in conversation⁴ about what was changing in the neighbourhood. Our aim was to gain an understanding of the discourses and practices that circulated around the mall; we nevertheless used very open-ended questions, having found in previous fieldwork that this was the best way to obtain a more complete view of the situation, as well as to acquaint ourselves with people’s perceptions.⁵ We also aimed to gain an understanding of the use of space, and how social change was reflected in the township spaces (Gervais-Lambony 2012).

In our previous work on the Waterfront mall, we suggested that “these public spaces [e.g. malls] involve much more than just consumption patterns, as they sustain and support novel ways of asserting social identities in a new political situation. These changes are, however, quite complex and fraught with ambivalence” (Houssay-Holzschuch and Teppo 2009, 352). In this paper, we study the ways in which the neoliberal policies and practices are mixed with other ideas such as the African renaissance and revolutionary nostalgia,

and how they reveal the contemporary dynamics in Gugulethu and beyond.

2. Gugulethu, our pride

Gugulethu, an African township with some 80,000 residents, was built in the late 1950s on the sandy plains of Cape Town. After Langa, it is the oldest existing African township in the city. Gugulethu was dubiously named – and misspelt – “Our Pride” in Xhosa, the language spoken by most of its residents. Like all townships, it is a space originally created to confine and control Africans within a metropolis in which they were not welcome (Western 1996). At the time, Africans living in neighbourhoods throughout the city were forcibly moved to an urban and social wasteland that was to become Gugulethu. In the process, communities were scattered, and crime and poverty increased.

In the decades following the 1960s, the township suffered the typical apartheid cycle of revolt and repression, exemplified by the 1986 police killing of the Gugulethu Seven and an angry mob’s stoning of the American student Amy Biehl just before the first democratic elections. These dramatic events were the most visible examples of an underlying political reality constituted by frequent demonstrations, a heavy police presence and “com-tsotsi”⁶ violence. A local bourgeoisie began to emerge by the end of the 1980s when the government relaxed its stringent housing and property rights regulations in the townships. Local landmarks developed, especially churches. For example, under the guidance of Father Basil van Rensburg, of District Six fame, St Gabriel Catholic Church combined spiritual guidance, social activities and political activism (Houssay-Holzschuch 1999).

Today, there are no political restrictions on the development of Gugulethu and its people. Townships are once again evolving and developing, as are the material and intangible expressions of social differentiation. The increase in social polarization between contemporary South African city suburbs and townships has been thoroughly established, as has the increase in inter-racial and intra-racial differentiation (Bond 2000; Seekings 2008; Seekings and Nattrass 2005). However, this polarization and differentiation also takes place within townships (see Figures 1 and 2): according to the last available census figures, while around 3500 Gugulethu residents earned under 800 ZAR a month in 2001, less than a hundred wealthy individuals brought home more than 12,800 ZAR monthly. This income gap is highly likely to have increased over the last decade.⁷

By and large, many positive changes seem to be taking place in Gugulethu, regardless of the lasting inheritance of poverty and violence that characterizes most townships. Extremely diverse examples include the improvement and expansion of the matchbox houses to better suit their owners’ needs (see Figure 1); the vibrant atmosphere that attracts



Figure 1. Many of the original matchbox houses have been fenced. Extensions, garages, gardens, verandas and, more rarely, additional levels reflect both better material conditions and a sense of belonging to the place. November 2010.

people from all over Cape Town and beyond; interesting new artists such as the group known as the Gugulective, who hold exhibitions in a local shebeen; and a local high school, ID Mkhize, succeeding in increasing its matriculation pass rate to 80%. All this is rather anecdotal evidence but points, despite the tensions, to Gugulethu's positive characteristics. At the metropolitan level, it is slowly becoming known as a place of leisure, tourism and artistic expression.

Gugulethu seems especially interesting and conducive to change for at least three sets of reasons. First, because of its spatiality and location: Gugulethu is relatively close to the city centre and relatively well connected to other parts of the city. This proximity should be seen in the context of the poverty that is not only rife on the Cape Flats, but also moving towards the edges of the metropolis (e.g. Enkanini South of Khayelitsha). Second, its class composition is complex and relatively diverse. Third, its built environment is also diverse, varying from shacks made of cardboard and corrugated iron on the periphery to apartheid matchbox houses, as well as bigger houses built during the late 1980s, and even two-storey condos. Gugulethu is therefore becoming more than just a site of specific

circumstances attributed to South African history, or of glocal socio-economic processes. The changes in Gugulethu are emblematic of the rearranging and complexifying spatialities of the post-apartheid city. Socially, places like Gugulethu show that polarization is only one of the social differentiation processes that are occurring in the post-apartheid city. The development of Gugulethu – a story of an old neighbourhood contested between its previous, mainly working-class, residents and a new elite – is a well-known one. As we



Figure 2. In the local informal settlement of Kanana, the living conditions are extremely hard. The shacks are built of recycled materials, which fail to shelter residents from the sun, wind, cold and rain. July 2009.

place our analysis of Gugulethu within an ordinary city framework (Robinson 2006; Lees 2012), we call this phenomenon gentrification.

In Gugulethu, as in the rest of South Africa, the urban landmarks of this new era are now appearing. These landmarks not only take the classic form of religious sanctuaries, memorials to the struggle or political monuments to nation-building, they also seem to take the shape of malls and other commercial developments (Posel 2010). In Cape Town, several of these spaces combine the nostalgia and uniqueness of past eras, looking back at the “good old times” (Dlamini 2009; Gervais-Lambony 2012). Examples of this vary from the Victorian nostalgia of the V&A Waterfront to the unashamed District Six simulacrum employed at the GrandWest Casino. It thus only seems fitting that in Gugulethu, where the past was characterized by poverty, violence and oppression, such a landmark not only looks back at the successful revolution but also forward to the imagined great and wealthy future for all South Africans. In fact, some township spaces have been turned into the silver screens of dreams of African metropolises.

3. Transforming the township

The contemporary transformation of Gugulethu originates from various directions. A visitor immediately notices how hard ordinary people work to improve their conditions, although with various levels of success. The upgrading of domestic spaces seems endless, with homes being extended, matchbox houses being protected, and careful planting of gardens in the sandy soil of the Cape Flats (see Figure 1). The signs of this home improvement can be seen in multiple yards dotted with sandbags, wheelbarrows and buckets. Gugulethu gives the visitor a very different general impression than it did in the mid-1990s when we began fieldwork there. The matchbox houses have become less monotonous; they have mostly been transformed, improved, personalized and surrounded with elaborate concrete walls. One can see many ornaments and decorations, including lions of Judah towering from porches and garages, proclaiming the occupants’ faith.

Other changes are linked to national, provincial and municipal policies or dynamics (Buire 2011). Informal settlements sprawl in the former buffer zones that border the area (see Figure 2). This is related to a national trend towards social polarization, and to international as well as rural–urban migrations. Gugulethu is one of the fastest-growing townships in South Africa and an estimated 40% of its residents live in informal shacks.⁸ National housing policies result in some shacks being replaced by state-subsidized housing, while other sections of the township remain destitute. Social differentiation has become more visible.

Furthermore, home-grown entrepreneurs are changing the township space as they develop businesses to cater for the needs of the local, economically more diverse, population and reap the benefits of township tourism. Of these entrepreneurs, none is more visible and emblematic than Mzoli Ngcawuzele, the wealthy owner of the very successful venue, Mzoli’s Meat.

A. From township to Afropolis: Mzoli’s vision for Gugulethu

A national celebrity, Mzoli Ngcawuzele introduces himself as the quintessential successful South African post-apartheid businessman. He was nine years old when his family was forcibly removed from the central area of the Bo-Kaap, and had to settle in Gugulethu. Their relocation happened more or less 50 years ago, when the township was being built far outside the city. As a young man, he was known as an athlete, possibly forging important political connections within the anti-apartheid sport movement at the time. In the second half of the 1990s, he entered the business arena, carefully planning his economic success in incremental stages: first, opening a little grocery store; second, moving into catering, and third, after a year of research and marketing, opening a butchery early in 2003. The butchery/sports bar is called Mzoli's Meat, and is located on the NY115, just off the main thoroughfare, Klipfontein Road.

Mzoli's Meat has proven an incredibly thriving venture, drawing locals, Capetonians and tourists to taste its barbecued meat spiced with the special house mix. The patrons sit at tables or, on busy days, on the nearby streets, obstructing them, and drinking beer bought from a neighbouring shop housed in a container. There is often blaring kwaito or house music, but at other times flat screens show soccer matches. The place can equally quickly be transformed into a political stage for an ANC Youth League meeting's speeches and debates. Made safe for tourists, Mzoli's Meat has become a mandatory stop for township tours, has appeared in Jamie Oliver's cooking series, and even sports its own Wikipedia and Facebook pages. Part of this success lies in the careful blending – and branding – of the township vibe with urban African modernity's cosmopolitan feeling.

As a newly legitimate group in the local community, entrepreneurs such as Mzoli Ngcawuzele provide much needed services, but they are also subjected to visible pressure. Entrepreneurs are not always appreciated in Gugulethu, and are even resisted. In a violent and poor post-apartheid township, this can be harmful or downright dangerous for someone aiming to build a business: for instance, it is well-known throughout the township that Mzoli Ngcawuzele's daughter was kidnapped and held for ransom. According to press reports, the entrepreneur has also found dead animals on his doorstep – an overt threat. Since unhappy residents could cause businesses a great deal of trouble, entrepreneurs have to keep their community happy and occasionally need to defend themselves against accusations that they do not have the township residents' best interests at heart.

In his interview, Mzoli Ngcawuzele points out that he is not only “wearing a hat of a businessman”⁹ but is also furthering “a philanthropic agenda . . . to address the question of poverty”. In his own words, he is a “man of mission”.

So I begin to say my vision is to bring White communities, Coloured communities, Black communities together – Chinese, Indians, you name it . . . – under one roof where everyone can begin to say, “Damn, I identify myself with this, you know.” Because this is a way to begin to integrate all communities through a piece of meat, to unleash the racial tensions of the past.

He then goes on, describing how he interweaves the rainbow revolution and his successful business.

Our society includes white or black or coloured, those who are . . . the rainbow nation – what old Nelson Mandela proffered us. Now we are one nation. And this is exactly what we have implemented at Mzoli's.

He describes his vision for the township, and explains that his aims and the material changes in the township run in parallel, are of mutual benefit, as well as being an integral part of the idea of what constitutes the socially ethical in the new South Africa:

We came here to Gugulethu – this was the bush at the time. . . . [W]e have to begin to change Gugulethu to become a suburb for today and not to deliver inferior facilities, and insult our society. (Our emphasis)

His choice of terms is telling; his ambition is to erase the apartheid township and to make it a desirable place; that is, one closer to white, middle-class neighbourhoods (suburbs).

We're spending another R300 million to extend it in a second phase, because we believe Gugulethu has to become a suburb. Around the corner from Mzoli's, we're going to be building another 14–15-storey building, a high-rise residential, because we're creating a lifestyle entity. It's shopping – your Pick'n Pay underneath, . . . your laundrettes, . . . your swimming pools – and above that your medical centre, and above that it is residential.

He sees the development of the place as straightforward progress “from the bush” to an ordinary, normal “suburb”. He thus subtly rejects the traditional South African urban terminology with its residual racial undertones. Mzoli Ngcawuzele echoes Jacob Dlamini's statements, underlining the political stakes of integrating the townships:

Townships must play [a role] in the constitution of the public sphere, the evolution of nationhood, citizenship and identity in post-apartheid South Africa. (Dlamini, 2009, 112)

Mzoli Ngcawuzele's ambition to transform the township both politically and economically is carefully built into his business development plans and proudly displays the kind of “entrepreneur citizenship” praised in the ANC's economic plans (Barchiesi 2011). The success of Mzoli's Meat allowed him to invest his name, reputation, contacts and money and to participate in the consortium that erected a mall, Gugulethu Square. He has become the face of these new developments within the township.

B. The mall of pride

The Gugulethu Square mall is conspicuous in the otherwise nondescript township environment. It is conveniently located on the main township–NY1 axis, and is therefore easily accessible. The location is so convenient that a business had previously been established there. The story of the land under and around the mall is a telling, if complicated, one, and is deeply rooted in the apartheid geography and control of

townships. As was the case with most of the commercial land in the apartheid townships, the Western Cape provincial administration board gave the Small Business Development Company (SBDC) – a Section 21 company¹⁰ – a long-term lease in 1985. This organization, established under apartheid, had to promote business in the townships according to the apartheid principles of separate development.¹¹ Eyona mall was established here in the late 1980s and housed many local small entrepreneurs.

In 1998, four years after the end of apartheid, the SBDC changed its name to Business Partners Limited. The name change was aimed at distancing the company from the past's racial divisions, at marking a new beginning, as well as at demonstrating that it embraced its new neoliberally inclined business goals.¹² In 2005, Business Partners – still largely a white-run company – sold the land on which the Eyona mall stood to Khula Business Premises, a company owned by the Department of Trade and Industry. According to sources, the price paid was R11.70, which was the approximate rand value of one dollar at the time.¹³ The Eyona Shopping Centre was bulldozed in 2008 to make way for Gugulethu Square. In 2009, the land was sold to the developer West Side Trading, which consisted of Old Mutual, Group 5, and Mzoli Properties (which owned 9% of the shares), while 10% belonged to Khula Enterprise Finance, another state-owned organization.¹⁴ Gugulethu Square mall opened its doors in 2009.



Figure 3. Gugulethu Square mall, entrance to the main building. November 2010.

At first glance, the three mall buildings – South Mall, Main Mall and North Mall – are evocative of an array of vast concrete spaceships that have landed in the middle of the mishmash of shacks, government houses and township streets (see Figure 3). It is

certainly an unanticipated feature in the landscape, where commercial facilities are otherwise spaza shops (small township grocery shops) or containers housing a range of small enterprises, such as hairdressing salons and cell phone airtime vendors.

Finding a big mall in the middle of an African township is surprising, as they are usually found in the city centre or in more privileged, often formerly white, suburbs. However, there are also other malls on the Cape Flats. In fact, developing shopping centres in the townships to take the joys of consumption to the masses, to tackle the lack of commercial services or to simply tap local money has become a trend in post-apartheid South Africa (Posel 2010). In Cape Town, the Khayelitsha mall, the nearby Charlesville mall, and the Promenade mall in Mitchell's Plain offer township dwellers shopping opportunities. But none of these measure up to the Gugulethu newcomer, which is bigger and gaudier – in short, more ambitious in design, business expectations, and social hopes.

Its planning company, Bentel Associates International, is currently run by white South Africans and has won several prizes for its designs. The head architect was Stephen Roberts, whose webpage mentions that

Bentel Associates International has created a community-centred design that will ensure that Gugulethu Square will add to the aesthetics and quality of life in the area and will provide a catalyst for future and sustainable growth in this vibrant township.¹⁵

Despite the mall's conspicuous architecture, it is clear that the planners strove to anchor the mall spatially within its surroundings. Spreading the mall over three different buildings makes it easily accessible to pedestrians. The mall extends rather pleasantly to nearby sidewalks and streets. The taxi rank has been kept in its original place, but has been upgraded, and is now clean and modern. It is in the centre of the mall buildings, thereby keeping the feel of the township inside the mall premises, and adding to a lively urban mood. However, this arrangement does more than enhance the atmosphere; on any given day, the vast free roof parking area is virtually empty, although the mall is bustling with activity. Gugulethu Square is much more accessible on foot and by public transport than most South African malls of this size, thus also catering for the poor who live nearby.

What really differentiates Gugulethu Square from other malls is the treatment of the exterior walls. The grey concrete surfaces have been decorated with three large bas-reliefs displaying the celebrated young poet Mayihlome Tshwete's¹⁶ poem in praise of the heroes of the anti-apartheid struggle (see Figure 4), making the "ubuntu capitalism" (McDonald 2010) underlying this mall visible and concrete:

Unity sutures the battered body of this nation. But only in action: Unity needs you and I to join hands. Let's heal yesterday's wounds together, Give purpose to empty, needy palms.

According to Goss, malls tend to be themed, often exploiting the longing of local societies and acting as the "dreamhouses of the collectivity" (Goss 1999, 45; see also 1993). The

unifying theme of this mall is the pride in the 1994 negotiated revolution – a nation’s pride, and the pride of the people who live in Gugulethu. Pride is a political term here; it is not hard to read beyond the local toponymy and recognize a reference to black Africanist pride and to former president Thabo Mbeki’s notion of an African renaissance. Or, as the architects claim:



Figure 4. Under the Shoprite logo, poetry and sculpture celebrating African pride and future. November 2010.

The theme has been utilized to enhance a sense of locale and community and to engender local pride in the Square.¹⁷

The planners have clearly chosen what they perceive as having meaning for their target audience. The process is cleverly and boldly done, and can be described as iconic branding. Such branding pairs a good product with the more intangible activity of myth-making, and draws its symbolic power from cultural contradictions (Holt 2004, 6–10). Gugulethu mall is not alone in this. Other malls in South Africa have been established along the same lines – Maponya Mall in Soweto (Posel 2010) and Chris Hani Crossing mall in Ekurhuleni (named after the late leader of the South African Communist Party and chief of staff of the armed wing of the African National Congress) show that this is no exception.¹⁸ The ideas of Ubuntu capitalism – an ideal combining “African Wisdom and Western business” that harnesses an “African worldview” to serve the ends of neoliberalism – are prominent in these endeavours (McDonald, 2010, 139–143).

One of the main contradictions is, however, that this mall looks very much like other malls criticized for being “White spaces” in South Africa (Houssay-Holzschuch and Teppo 2009). At first glance, Gugulethu Square might not evoke the Deep South or early twentieth-century Art Deco meets Taj Mahal world (as do other Cape Town malls in Tygerberg and Century City, respectively), but it is spectacularly modern, even modernist, in its architecture and seems somewhat severed from the township’s surrounding realities despite the street-level connection. The advertising campaign promoting the mall to investors and tenants reflected this contradiction. Using the slogan “going Gaga in Gugu”, it presented the mall in a big picture, but in this picture the people walking on the streets outside the mall were all – quite unlike the real situation – white.

Selling African revolution to white people with whiteness shows the multi-dimensional plasticity of neoliberalization processes. However, these images, which superimposed the white city on to the township, were just a part of an early campaign to attract white money into the township. They were also a marker of the extent of this process’s plasticity, which then took revolution and struggle as its themes.

Thus, after having sold the mall to white investors with whiteness, the developers began selling it to locals with Africanness, having melted into the cocktail a good dose of revolutionary poetry and children’s pictures (see below), the whole theme very visibly proclaiming the South African revolution on the outer walls. Its plasticity is manifested in the way it uses the legitimacy of both the anti-apartheid struggle and the post-apartheid democratic state – that is, the South African revolution – to its advantage. Nevertheless, between those walls is a very ordinary South African mall in which successful retail chains occupy space and the local small entrepreneurs are not represented.

An oddly hybrid cultural brand such as this must be carefully managed. According to the principles of branding, people must perceive the mall as a place that reflects their innate value and identity, and the mall management must strive to maintain people’s emotional bond with the brand (Holt 2004, 22). At Gugulethu Square, the attempted bond is not nostalgia for the Cape Town of good old times as at the V&A Waterfront mall, but nostalgia for the revolution and sustaining it. The message is clear: the revolution was a

success, now enjoy it; you deserve it. Political pride is thus a justification for consumption – or, more bluntly, consumption is staged as the end, if not aim, of the political struggle (Posel 2010). Thus, the mall is typically a post-apartheid brand that builds identity by spatial means. This startling combination of proud nation-building, revolutionism and consumerism is also reflected in the interior.

The interior of the mall is timeless, as is typical of all malls (Goss 1993). In the township context, it is a staggeringly luxurious space with its shining glass walls, shop windows and floors covered with glossy white porcelain tiles. The impression, reinforced by the mall's easy access from the streets, is that of entering a truly sophisticated shopping centre.

The shops of popular South African retail chains line the alleys – Pep Stores, Mr. Price and Ackermans, all of which sell cheap clothes – as well as Clicks pharmacy. These have not been seen in Gugulethu before. In the malls of the historically white areas, these are the cheap outlets, and in upmarket South African malls some of them do not even appear. In Gugulethu, however, they are very popular. Fashion boutiques and more upmarket clothes shops such as Truworths are present in Gugulethu Square, but seem relatively empty. One of the most upmarket boutiques, LA jeans, even closed down during our 2010 fieldwork. The most popular grocery shop, Shoprite, is located in the square in the centre of the shopping mall. In the middle of the square, a staircase descends from the roof car park (see Figure 5).

In the long corridor of the main building, the theme of pride continues. The floors are decorated with political poetry – huge black letters on the shining white floors. Smaller side corridors provide exits. On the floor of the central staircase are the words: Gugulethu – our pride and Africa! Rise to the accomplishment (see Figure 5).



Figure 5. In the centre of the mall, next to Shoprite grocery store, people queue to have their HIV status identified. November 2010.

Despite all this pomp and circumstance, one cannot shake the feeling that there is a discrepancy because some of the main shops usually present in South African malls are absent. There is, for instance, no bookshop; the familiar CNA is missing. The most upmarket retail chains, such as Woolworths or Pick'n Pay, are absent – although they do feature in Mzoli's future, still unconfirmed, plans. Nor is there a proper food court and many of the popular fast-food outlets are missing. Food is sold at, for example, Debonair's pizza, which is mainly a take-away outlet. The famed KFC and a low-quality Hungry Lion are situated at the entrances next to the taxi ranks, turning their greasy backs to the rest of the mall. In the South Mall, there is a Spur, a well-liked South African fast-food chain, but the locals do not seem to frequent it much. Furthermore, a typical mall feature, namely a space for just hanging around, is missing. There are no cafe's, and very few benches. The act of just shopping and loitering around seems to be much less favoured here than in other Cape Town malls (Houssay-Holzschuch and Teppo 2009). In fact, the missing food court and the location of fast-food outlets actively discourages any form of mall sociability. In their stead, there is an abundance of security arrangements,

which reflect the prevailing poverty and harsh realities of the surrounding community. Guards are visible everywhere on the mall premises, and a security guard told us that, in case of theft, all five exits could be blocked immediately. Thieves would therefore be caught long before reaching the street. Is Gugulethu Square, then, a “mall minus”, lacking facilities essential to its success?

Although the mall in its current form showcases luxury and exclusiveness through its architecture, design and Afrocentrist message, it mainly caters for the working class. The really well-off residents of the township – the local African elite and “black diamonds” – shop elsewhere in other, more upmarket malls. For them, and for the local trendy youth, Gugulethu Square is not exclusive enough nor is the range of products quite extensive enough. The fear of shoplifting keeps the local clothing boutiques from offering leading Afro-chic brands, such as Stoned Cherrie, which are found elsewhere:

People stole the clothes. [Designer brands] were on offer at the beginning but were later taken out. Now people come in, ask for them, and are disappointed. They have to go to Century City, Cavendish or, of course, Waterfront to get them. (Sales assistant, Foschini, 4 November 2010)

Prestigious labels and ostentatious consumption that normally characterize the most sophisticated malls are lacking here. Local trendsetters and upwardly mobile young adults find Gugulethu Square wanting even in respect of hamburgers and “mallinging” (Hopkins 1991). The young “black diamonds” to whom we talked consistently used the V&A Waterfront as a benchmark for what a mall should be, as the above quotation shows. Even the local youngsters said that if they had the money to eat out, they would much rather visit the Waterfront Spur, as they “do not trust the local one, and the product is much better there”. Therefore, neither the “café society” that is so emblematic of many malls (Laurier and Philo 2006) nor the diverse social layers often found in malls are present. The



Figure 6. Two visions of Gugulethu. November 2010.

famous vibrant township social life is also lacking here. As such, Gugulethu Square presents shortcomings like, but less blatantly than, other newly built township malls (Le Gorre 2010). An example is the Khayelitsha mall, which opened in 2005 and spreads discount stores over an exposed, wind-swept, sandy area. Although Gugulethu Square has

very few high-end, or even middle-end, shops it should still be noted that it falls somewhere between clearly middle-class oriented places such as the classy Woolworth shop in the Mitchell's Plain Liberty Promenade and the decidedly "mall minus" in Khayelitsha.

The most telling of all the decorations are placed on the walls of the mall's very small second floor, which is the only public gateway to the roof parking (see Figure 6). Drawings by local children have been magnified and transferred onto huge murals. Two of the drawings are particularly noticeable as they depict Gugulethu before and after the new mall. The drawing of the old township shows a place of poverty, crime, drunkenness and deprivation; people are being robbed, begging money from one another or rushing to a shebeen (a township pub) early in the morning. This drawing is in stark contrast to the other, more hopeful, picture of the new Gugulethu. Here, the suburb is shown as an example of shining modernist perfection, with square buildings, straight walls and numerous consumption opportunities. However, there are no people in this picture, none at all.

4. Tensions: rights to the city, rights to the mall

The mall is a gaudy newcomer, sitting uneasily in the township landscape. However, as described, it is not only odd on a spatial level, but is also struggling to fit in with its social environment. It has been a source of conflict regarding space and resources. It reveals that, while neoliberal practices are extremely plastic, to the point of absorbing revolutionary rhetoric, the permeability of the local township society was far from evident and required the residents' help.

The ambivalence that the local people feel towards the mall is tangible. They told us that they frequent the mall supermarkets, as their prices are lower than those of spaza shops. Initially, however, they had hoped for more than just low prices. Unemployment is rife in the community, and many had harboured hopes of finding employment in the new facilities. Such expectations were bound to create frustrations, all the more so because many employees we spoke to either came from other African areas or were just redeployed between branches.

I am unemployed I would work in a supermarket here if I could, but it is hard to find a job there. Many of the salespeople were already hired when it opened. I do not know anyone from Gugulethu who works here. (Woman in the checkout queue at Shoprite, 1 November 2010)

The local civil society is very vocal, leading to internal dissent, heated debates and occasional violence. Various individuals and groups lay claim to the community, and what the community is and should be, and promise to fulfil their expectations of development in the township. These interest groups are new and unpredictable, often consisting of ad hoc strategic or tactical alliances. The processes of change involved are messy and fraught with tensions. In itself, the community is far from permeable, as a

strong element of the township's identity and pride is resistance to – or disillusionment with – outside intervention laced with money and power. Therefore, when Gugulethu Square was being built, there was conflict at two levels – commercial and political. These levels were often and unsurprisingly combined as both were entangled in the discourse of marketing the mall.

This conflict began during the construction of the mall, which severely antagonized the local businesspeople. Their opposition was based on their having to make way for the development, which would also provide stiff competition. At that time, discussions about the mall comprised the developers' praise, the locals' ambivalence and strong opposition. Indeed, in 2008, when building commenced, the Eyona commercial centre had to be demolished, thus driving out the previous entrepreneurs, some of whom had been doing business at Eyona for 25 years. These business people contested the post-revolution community development narrative – skilfully delivered by Mzoli Ngcawuzele – fiercely, exposing the bare bones of very ordinary predatory capitalism:

Evicted carwash owner Maurice Tena dismissed philanthropy as the driving force behind Gugulethu Square. “The local small business people in Gugs will taste none of this massive cake,” he said. “This cake, like all other major developments in the country, will benefit those driving black 4 £ 4s already [a reference to Ngcawuzele's large black Jeep Commando]. I was evicted from my shop to make way for this development. We have no guarantees that we will benefit. Other people – white people and the black elite – will benefit from this mall.”¹⁹

The chairman of the Lagunya Business Association, representing about 150 shops in the Langa-Gugulethu-Nyanga area, confirms their bitterness:

We did not know this Mzoli because he came to us to [and said] do the development. We said, “All right, but . . . you don't do the development, you'll only channel the development from the people who's going to do the development,” which was Old Mutual [one of the main South African financial services groups]. . . . “We want a partnership with them [the developers], 51/49 in our favour, because we have the land.” That was refused. That guy Mzoli ran away with that, he never came. He is lying.²⁰

At the time of the eviction of the original entrepreneurs, the local press reported on the hardships that some of Mzoli's direct competitors had to endure. One of the best known of these competitors was Skhoma Butchery.

Police were called in to monitor the demolition and eviction of a butchery next to an Nyanga [sic] development, after local residents rallied at the gates demanding that the authorities leave.

Police cordoned off the entrance to the gate, while angry residents watched and shouted as bulldozers and trucks removed fridges and equipment, then tore down part of the Skhoma Butchery. The butchery is making way for the Gugulethu Square Mall, which is under construction and owned by prominent local businessman Mzoli Ngcawuzele.

Thandi Koyana, who runs the butchery, a family business, said it had been established by her

grandfather and had been open for 25 years. Koyana watched in dismay as the windows were torn down and kilograms of meat were left lying on the concrete in the sun. Fridges, counters, tables, cupboards and other equipment were strewn in front of the gate.

“They just arrived here without a warrant or anything to take my things,” Koyana said.²¹

This brutal approach is indirectly confirmed by Mzoli, who emphasizes his “very aggressive marketing strategies” and his “top-down approach”. He admits that trying to find consensus through negotiation and compromise is a serious impediment to progress:

You know, if you start from the bottom up, there are a lot of bottlenecks that you encounter, because some people don’t want to understand the whole approach, or what you want to achieve . . .

In 2011, after a legal battle and a court order,²² Skhoma Butchery was eventually given premises in Gugulethu Square, where they now run their butchery and braai (barbeque) business. They were luckier than other businesses, which were resettled a couple of blocks away at a more rundown facility. These former Eyona mall business people pointed out that they are suffering financial losses. The relocation costs and the competition established by the mall have, according to their estimates, greatly reduced their average daily income from around 2000 ZAR to 400 ZAR, the equivalent of US\$200 to US\$40.

In addition, the opponents of the mall point out that it does not provide jobs for the locals, and that it damages local entrepreneurship. They also maintain that the businessmen are really out to oppress the poor, using the might of the party in power:

This man is named Mzoli Ngcawuzele and his band of thieves are the local ANCYL and former MK [Umkhonto we Sizwe, the armed branch of the ANC] members. He is the owner of the (in)famous Mzoli’s Butchery – playground of tourists, MPs and the township elite. But he has not stopped there. . . . As one local resident puts it, Mzoli is using his fortune as a platform to evict the poor from Gugulethu.²³

This statement is evidence of the strong and sometimes violent political conflict surrounding the mall. But other political rivalries are also played out, although on a more subtle level. The first one is alluded to in an AEC statement: a strategic alliance with the ANC, both nationally and locally, is believed to explain Mzoli’s financial success. His local ties – with the police and/or MK members – and whether they support the forceful implementation of his vision, are difficult to prove, although Mzoli’s Meat does host ANC meetings. Nevertheless, his financial ties with the national elite are well known: Human Settlement minister Tokyo Sexwale’s Group 5 is one of the mall’s financial stakeholders. An unsurprising consequence of these alleged and actual ties with the ANC elite is that Mzoli’s antagonists tried to draw support from the opposition party. Indeed, the Lagunya Business Association claims that they received support from Helen Zille, the former mayor of Cape Town, Premier of the Western Cape, and leader of the Democratic

Alliance, the biggest opposition party. The links to party politics are too complicated, deep-rooted and opaque to examine in the space of this paper. Whatever the facts, an interesting racial undercurrent emanates from the sidelined business people, who recognize that “some sharks even come from our own people. Now there are big fat cats.”

As explained earlier, in 2009 the land was sold to the developer West Side Trading, which consisted of Old Mutual, Khula Enterprise Finance, Group 5 and Mzoli Properties, after many changes of ownership. In March 2012, Westside Trading sold their shares to an outside investor, Synergy Income Fund, which is partly owned by multinational owners, including the SPAR retail group.²⁴ Even if possible inaccuracies are taken into account, the chain of ownership of the mall and the land under it becomes clear and familiar: from state to local developer, from local developer to multinational investors.

The irony remains that, with the exception of Mzoli, the people in the township never had ownership of the land. In the complicated ownership process, the character of Mzoli is central, as he was the point of entrance for global capital. A local role model, he had the local knowledge, influence and leverage to make Gugulethu permeable enough for the venture to succeed. One should not, however, overly emphasize Mzoli’s role. Rather, it was what he represented that was needed; had it not been him, it would probably have been someone else.

From the perspective of small local enterprises, the picture is bleak: major retail chains such as Spar, Shoprite, Woolworths and Pick’n Pay already dominate 94.5% of the retail market in South Africa (Botha and Van Schalkwyk 2006; Chikazunga et al. 2007), and the township malls ensure that this will continue to be the shape of things to come.

From our interviews, it became clear that many locals are not against having a mall per se; rather, they just don’t agree with the process by which it was developed and how it is used. They were worried about the fate of the local shopkeepers, and they pointed out that the mall does not employ as many local people as promised or hoped for. Ultimately, the general feeling is that the opportunities granted by the mall were far fewer than the exclusions it brought about.

As a very public township hero and sportsman, Mzoli Ngcawuzele is a textbook cultural icon who can be used in the branding process (Holt 2004, 3 – 4). However, being a hero is a double-edged sword, as his position in the community is largely based on it. Therefore, losing the trust of the community means reducing his value as a broker and brand icon. Hence, he has a real interest in defending his reputation. What better way could there be than for him to present himself as the uplifter of Gugulethu in the name of black pride and in the terminology of black consciousness?

It’s a philosophy . . . to say black man, black woman you are on your own. That pride must come back. You create your own middle class. (Mzoli Ngcawuzele)

Contemporary, ordinary townships such as Gugulethu thus tell us a localized story of neoliberalization through which profit-seeking business practices are legitimized by grounding them in revolutionary discourses, imagery, spatial design and social engineering. In Mzoli’s accounts, this industrious, enlightened, and progressive businessman ties together neoliberal business practices and the African renaissance in the name of the greatness of the suburb and the victorious South African revolution. He presents the market as a route to redemption from squalor and poverty, as well as from the longstanding degradation of black Africans. These ideas have taken the form of spatialized pride in the middle of a township, but on whose terms? Using pride as a theme has its price, as it instrumentalizes the anti-apartheid struggle of the townships as a tool of global neoliberalism.

This process of land privatization was also ingeniously managed, as it involved neoliberal practices and the local context, linking struggle-based African pride, Ubuntu capitalism and new economic opportunities. It also highlights the utter plasticity of neoliberal processes, and the ways in which they adapt to the local environment. All the things that were promised – jobs, money, services - are sorely needed in the community, especially if guaranteed by a local broker, who is also an important figure. And for many, a new mall represents development, hope and new opportunities to work and consume. These feelings in the community were endorsed by the revolutionary poetry on the mall spaces. Table 1 sums up some aspects of the neoliberalization process in Gugulethu.

Table 1. The permeability/plasticity of neoliberalism in Gugulethu.

Variegation/elements	Local permeability – which makes the township more receptive	Plasticity of neoliberal processes – how neoliberal practices are adapted to fit the township environment
Spatial	Underdeveloped township space Substandard services	New modernist mall Revolutionary rhetoric inscribed on mall spaces
Community	Social capital of a local facilitator (Mzoli) Local and national political support	A financially-rewarded role model acts as local broker and guarantees delivery and development Ties with national commercial chains
Ethos	Hope of delivery Pride in one’s community Consumerism	“Development” rhetoric (bringing opportunities, jobs, services) Ubuntu capitalism Consumerism

Despite the developers’ best attempts to brand the mall as an object of African pride rooted in and marketed with revolutionary history, the community clearly did not swallow this exercise in Ubuntu capitalism and plastic neoliberalism. It is no wonder that the

people of Gugulethu are profoundly suspicious of the wealthy, no matter what their skin colour. They have seen and heard too much propaganda, and have had too many top-down decisions imposed upon them in the past to actually buy into the myth.

Acknowledgements

The authors express their heartfelt thanks to Belinda Dodson, for organizing the AAG session from which this paper stems, and her editorial guidance; to Ilse Evertse for her keen, proof-reading eye; and to the two reviewers whose comments and constructive leads helped us improve the paper. Annika Teppo would like to thank the Academy of Finland, the Finnish Cultural Foundation, Jeja-Pekka Roos and Anne Haila at the Department of Social Research at the University of Helsinki, Myriam Houssay-Holzschuch was funded through the Institut Universitaire de France and two Agence Nationale de la Recherche projects (project PERISUD No. Suds-07-046 headed by Jean-Louis Chale´ard; project MEDIAGEO No. ANR-09-BLAN-0351-01 headed by Isabelle Lefort).

Notes

1. <http://www.gugulethusquare.co.za>.
2. According to the apartheid Population Registration Act of 1950, every person was a member of a racial group: white, African or coloured, later to be complemented with the fourth category of Indian. This categorization was also hierarchical: whites were regarded as the dominant group, and enjoyed many privileges, Africans were in the worst position and coloureds fell somewhere in-between. The respective quality of the spaces allocated, even between African and coloured townships, reflected this racist hierarchy. In this paper, and while aware of the political implications of each term, we will follow the usual conventions and use the above categories as they are understood in the South African context.
3. For a clear and concise account and key questions related to these discussions, see, e.g. Be´nit Gbaffou et al. (2012, 877–9).
4. These conversations were mostly held in English.
5. In this, we also follow Western’s (1996) practice.
6. The *comtsotsi* term was coined in the 1980s to describe young people involved in both political activities and criminal violence, the former being used as a justification for the latter.
7. Unfortunately, more recent figures are unavailable, as the results of the 2011 census will only be known in 2013.
8. http://www.alhdc.org.za/static_content/?p1/472.
9. All quotes by Mzoli Ngcawuzele are taken from a personal interview by the authors, Cape Town, 3 November 2010.

10. In South African legislation, Section 21 of the Companies Act of 1973 allows for a “non-profit company” or “association incorporated not for gain”. Section 21 companies resemble business- oriented (for profit) companies in their legal structure, but do not have a share capital and cannot distribute shares or pay dividends to their members. Instead they are “limited by guarantee”, meaning that if the company fails its members undertake to pay a stated amount to its creditors (<http://www.etu.org.za/toolbox/docs/building/lrc.html>). In practice, these companies were often parastatal organizations, or at least they had deep-running connections with the ruling party politicians (as well as business life).
11. <http://www.abahlali.org/node/4612>.
12. Another example of this is the Citizen’s Housing League, which provided housing and social services on the Cape Flats, and changed its name to Communicare at more or less the same time (Teppo 2004).
13. <http://www.abahlali.org/node/4612>.
14. <http://antieviction.org.za/2008/11/20/media-david-vs-goliath-in-gugulethu> (accessed August 17, 2012)
15. Lois Aitchison, FVS Marketing & PR, 2009. <http://www.designmind.co.za/profiles/blogs/gugulethu-square-bentel>.
16. The son of the late Steve Tshwete, an anti-apartheid activist and ANC minister in the Mandela and Mbeki governments.
17. <http://architectafrica.com/gugulethu-square>.
18. We thank Philippe Gervais-Lambony for pointing the Hani mall case out to us.
19. P. Joubert (2008). David vs Goliath in Gugulethu. Mail & Guardian Online, Johannesburg, 21 November
20. InterviewwiththechairmanoftheLagunyaBusinessAssociation,bytheauthors,10November 2010.
21. N. Prince (2009). Outcry as developer bulldozes butchery. Cape Argus, Cape Town, 3 September.
22. <http://antieviction.org.za/2009/03/26/court-settles-sisters-dispute-with-mall-developers>.
23. <http://antieviction.org.za/page/2/?s1/4mzoli>.
24. http://www.iolproperty.co.za/roller/news/entry/controversial_gugulethu_square_mall_purchased.

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