

**PLANNING IN THE AFRICAN CONTEXT: RECONSIDERING CURRENT APPROACHES TO GATED COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

By

**Karina Landman**

CSIR Building and Construction Technology  
PO Box 395  
Pretoria  
0001  
Tel: 012 2084  
E-mail:klandman@csir.co.za

**Abstract:**

*This paper argues that future planning practices should focus on a more dynamic approach to space in the African context and be clear about the meaning and implementation of the governance of place in South Africa. It uses the issue of gated communities to illustrate the case. The paper briefly reviews the past and present approaches to planning in South Africa to highlight the major paradigm shifts and current challenges. It then discusses the spread and nature of gated communities in the country, as well as the challenges it poses to especially local governments. Finally, it argues for a more dynamic approach to gated communities in South Africa and explains the implications thereof for planning and local governance, both in terms of spatial planning and land use management.*

**Introduction**

The turn of the century is marked by major changes in western societies. Global economic and technological changes have caused social and political upheavals at national and local levels, often forcing governments and other role-players to find new responses to major issues. Greater mobility and decision-making based on global competitiveness have often given rise to a perception that local authorities seem to lose control over their territories. Other challenges include a more sophisticated populace who are concerned about the sustainability of the environment as well as those marginalised in a post-industrial area, who increasingly experience a deterioration of their living conditions and often limited participation in shared political or cultural experiences. These challenges indicate that the relationship between the state and society is moving into new and somewhat unknown directions. Voting behaviour is changing and traditional channels of representative democracy are often bypassed. In this climate, spatial planning systems, as a major component of state-society relationships, needs to respond in appropriate ways to address these challenges. This inevitably calls for new approaches to governance and thus a need for new approaches to space (Madanipour, Healey and Hull 2001).

This has also been the case in Africa to some degree, especially in South Africa. South African cities are changing dramatically. The first all-inclusive elections in 1994 marked the turning point and introduced a new era of democracy. The road to democracy is not without challenges. In the aftermath of political transition, the country faces many social and spatial changes, as well as challenges such as poverty, unemployment and high crime levels. It is estimated that more than 50% of the population lives below the poverty line and that more than 30% of the population is unemployed. Overall crime levels increased by almost 5% between 1997-98, 7% in 1998-99, and 7.6% in 1999-2000 (Shöntheich 2002). Yet, at the same time government is placing an increasing focus on global competitiveness. The country's macro-economic policy is in itself a response to globalisation, seeking the full integration of the country into the global economy, making it an attractive location for foreign investment, enhancing the role of the private sector, and reducing

the role of the central state (Paycroft 2000). Cities are increasingly basing their decisions on this issue of global competitiveness. This often results in growing tensions between equity and efficiency, where cities are expected to operate efficiently (economic, process and service efficiency), while at the same time providing support towards greater equity through poverty alleviation and the provision of basic services (du Plessis and Landman 2002).

Meanwhile, the face of South African cities changes rapidly. Spatial transformation is at the order of the day. Changes in the built environment take various forms, ranging from urban upgrading projects to address the imbalances of the past and the conditions in poorer areas, to responses from citizens to protect themselves from crime, such as gated communities. As in the case of planning in general, South African planners also need to reconsider past and present approaches to planning and governance to address rapid spatial transformation at the turn of the century.

How are we to address these challenges? Is it through new approaches to space as international experience suggest? If so, what do new approaches to the interpretation of space imply? According to Madanipour, Healy and Hull, "spatial planning systems ... are all about the way the physical resources of places are used and developed. In this sense, they have a strong emphasis on place, space and territory" (2001:2). They argue that if spatial planning systems are really to be transformed and used as valuable mechanisms for governance, these new forms governance should be linked to new ways of thinking about place, space and territory. This implies a need for new ways of understanding space. Several paradigm shifts resulted in new pressures to increase the emphasis on space and the importance of place-making. However, such a renewed emphasis on spatial planning can only be successful if it is seen as a socio-spatial process, or in other words an understanding of how specific social relations play out spatially and how these distribute power, resources and identities. This implies that:

*Involvement in all areas, including community based planning, sustainability and social justice need to be spatialised, to arrive at spatial justice and regional democracy (Madanipour, Healey and Hull, 2001:4).*

The 1990s has been characterized by more gradual structural economic change towards flexible production that resulted in a new cycle of space production and a new attention to the marketable qualities of the built environment. The increasing competition between cities in the global marketplace, the new patterns of consumption of goods and services, including space, the increasing danger of the fragmentation of cities and societies and the mounting environmental problems all demand greater consideration to and more careful treatment of the built environment (Ibid). As such, planners and urban designers are faced with a great challenge to review current approaches to planning and revisit these where appropriate.

If one accepts this as a plausible way forward, then the question becomes one of what such a spatial approach means for Africa and in this case South Africa? Can one draw some lessons from international experiences suggesting a more dynamic approach to space? If so, how should it be interpreted in the African context? Furthermore, does a more dynamic spatial approach offer new ways to address rapid spatial transformation in South Africa and manage a wide range of role-players involved in this transformation process? If so, then what does this mean for the evaluation and regulation of gated communities as a specific spatial response to the challenge of crime in the country?

This paper aims to explore these questions in more detail and draw some lessons from international experiences and approaches to provide alternative ways of considering spatial transformation and more specifically the phenomenon of gated communities in the country. It argues that future planning practices should focus on a more dynamic approach to space and be clear about the meaning and implementation of the governance of place in South Africa and uses gated communities to illustrate the case. The paper starts by briefly reviewing the past and present approaches to planning in South Africa to highlight the major paradigm shifts and current challenges. It then proceeds to discuss the spread and nature of gated communities in the

country, as well as the challenges it poses to especially local governments. Finally, it argues for a more dynamic approach to gated communities in South Africa and explains the implications thereof for planning and local governance.

### **Planning in the African context: the case of South Africa**

Twentieth century planning in South Africa is characterized by radical extremes and often infamous actions. It tells the tale of the rise and fall of grand apartheid and its influence on planning, as well as the relatively recent emergence of post-apartheid planning and land use management.

Modern town planning ideas were used most effectively from the 1950s to 1980s to implement what is today generally referred to as apartheid planning. Many of these ideas originated in England and the USA. As a consequence of the massive changes that took place in England during the Industrial Revolution, the *Garden City concept*<sup>1</sup> developed. This, along with the *neighbourhood unit*<sup>2</sup> model from the United States, had a definite influence on planning and development in South Africa. Together these concepts provided the paradigm for South African cities, which aimed to achieve community convenience through the careful balancing of internally exclusive community facilities; the separation of uses, particularly by green space; and low densities, with each dwelling unit surrounded by open space, to ensure adequate light and air (Dewar et al. 1990).

Protagonists of apartheid saw in this modernistic paradigm an opportunity to implement their own ideology. With the aim of separation and segregation, different neighbourhoods were allocated to and planned for different race groups. These manifested in the form of separate (through buffer-strips in the form of open space or rapid transport routes) and internalised neighbourhoods for different groups, ranging from well-developed suburbs around the CBD to poorly developed dormitory townships along the city periphery. Later many informal settlements also grew around the townships. It is this city form that became known as the "apartheid city" - a product of separation policies and government control that dominated the country for almost forty years.

The 1990s, however, marked a turning point in the history of the country and 1994 introduced the beginnings of a new democracy. Approaches to planning and governance gradually responded to the new ideals of equality and integration. Government led the way by introducing a new law in 1995, the Development Facilitation Act (DFA), aimed as an interim measure to bridge the gap between the old apartheid planning laws and new planning systems. A major feature of this law was that it was based on a set of normative principles for land development that embodied a medium and long term vision for South African cities. This was followed by the development of a Green Paper for Planning and Development (1999), which took the idea of normative planning further. It finally culminated in the White Paper for Spatial Planning and Land Use Management in 2001. The White Paper is fundamentally based on a long term vision and a set of principles and norms to achieve this vision. It therefore, concretize an alternative paradigm for planning and development in South Africa. The vision calls for *integrated planning for sustainable management of land resources* (p.2). This new system of planning and land use management consists of five essential elements, as depicted in the table below.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Garden City concept was formulated by Ebenezer Howard in England and described in his book, "Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Social Reform" (1898).

<sup>2</sup> The neighbourhood unit concept initially emerged in the USA in response to rapid urbanisation. It was based on the following principles: 1) separation of residential land-use; 2) self-contained and "inwardly orientated" residential areas; 3) "buffer strips" around these areas; 4) limitations on the number of people living in each area; and 5) access to green space (Dewar et al. 1990).

<i>Elements</i>	<i>Description</i>
Principles	The new system will be based on principles and norms aimed at achieving sustainability, equity, fairness and good governance in spatial planning and land use management and all future developments will have to be consistent with these principles and norms.
Land use regulators	The White Paper introduces the notion of a "land use regulator". This refers to a body, which can be an organ of any one of the three spheres of government and will have the power to act as land use regulators.
IDP-based local spatial planning	The Municipal Systems Act requires that each municipality must develop a spatial development framework (SDF) as part of their IDPs, consisting of a minimum number of elements that must be included. The aim of this framework will be to inform local spatial planning.
A uniform set of procedures for land development approvals	The White Paper identifies one set of planning procedures for the whole country and where proposed developments are not in line with this, permission will have to be obtained from the appropriate land regulator.
National spatial planning frameworks	In order to achieve more integrated and coordinated spending of public funds the White Paper lays the foundation for the development of a national spatial framework around particular programmes and regions. This is to be a policy framework for sustainable and equitable spatial planning around national priorities.

**Table 1: Five elements of White Paper on Spatial Planning and Land Use Management (2001: 2-3)**

These elements have specific implications for the interpretation of space and planning and governance over time. Firstly, it suggests a spatial planning approach focusing on place-making and the achievement of normative principles. This has specific implications for the governance of place, which brings one to the time-dimension, namely that of forward planning and development control. They are mechanisms to operationalise the principles through Integrated Development Planning (forward planning) and land use management and land development (development control). Integrated Development Planning is concerned with understanding local contexts and formulating guiding frameworks to inform land development and management. Integrative planning is to be achieved through the formulation of Spatial Development Frameworks (SDFs) that should be in line with the Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) (mandatory for all local governments according to the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000<sup>3</sup>) and the National Spatial Development Framework. The aim of the SDFs is to act as an indicative plan to show desired patterns of land use, directions of growth, urban edges, special development areas and conservation worthy areas within the municipal areas, or in other words to spatialise desired development patterns. Land Use Management on the other hand is concerned with the regulation of land development in municipal areas through the use of a scheme recording the land use and development rights and restrictions applicable to each erf in the municipal area. This scheme has a binding effect on land development and management and should be informed by the indicative plan (SDF).

The issue of urban planning and development cannot be considered in isolation; it is time- and place-specific. Whereas the apartheid planning effectively made use of modern planning ideas, post-apartheid planning similarly embraces a number of post-modern concepts, such as

<sup>3</sup> One of the significant aspects of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act (2000) is the focus on integrated planning, a process through which the municipality is expected to prepare a development plan for short, medium and long term, known as an Integrated Development Plan (IDP). In effect, IDPs are therefore planning and strategic frameworks to help municipalities fulfill their developmental mandate. This will not only ensure that Local Governments develop and implement integrated plans, but also that there is an increased move towards integrated development at local level.

collaborative planning, environmentalism and sustainability, contextualism, historic preservation and gentrification, critical regionalism, neotraditional urbanism, etc. (Ellin 1997; Healey 2002). It is therefore not just local forces of change that influence urban transformation and planning approaches or development processes, but also international paradigms, as was the case with both apartheid and post-apartheid planning. Spatial planning should therefore also be understood in this context

The results of this paradigm shift and consequent planning and development efforts have been mixed. With the aim of sustainability, equity, efficiency and integration (White Paper principles), marginalized neighbourhoods are being upgraded and measures are being implemented to link neighbourhoods, such as a focus on development along activity corridors and making use of integrated open space systems. Intergrated Development Plans and Spatial Development Frameworks have come a long way to prioritise the new vision for SA cities and facilitate processes and practices towards the achievement of the principles set out in the White Paper. However, despite these efforts towards a transformed urban environment, there still seems to be some forms of reaction to major urban problems (such as crime) or resistance to change. A typical example is the proliferation of gated communities in the country.

### **Challenging current approaches to gated communities in South Africa**

Gated communities are a global phenomenon. They are found in various forms in many countries over the world, including the USA, Canada, Brazil, Argentine, the U.K., Portugal, Spain, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Australia, India, Saudi Arabia, Israel, etc. While there are many similarities, there are also a number of differences that distinguish gated communities in developed countries (for example the USA and Canada) from those in developing countries (for example South Africa and Brazil). There is however no common agreement on a definition or meaning of the terminology among authors and leading international publications addressing this phenomenon. It is accepted that there are different types of gated communities in different countries, resulting in a multitude of interpretations regarding types and meta-types.

In South Africa, some authors make use of the term “gated communities” (Hook and Vrdoljak 2001; Landman 2000). In addition, a number of other terms are also used, such as “suburban enclaves” (Lipman and Harris 1999), “urban fortresses” and “security-park” (Hook and Vrdoljak 2000; 2001), “security villages” (Bremner 1999; Landman 2000) and “enclosed neighbourhoods” (Landman 2000). A number of local council policies in South Africa also refer to “road closures”, indicating actions towards enclosed neighbourhoods. There is not always a consensus on the hierarchical structure or interpretation of these terms. Despite the lack of general consensus, one can broadly distinguish between security villages and enclosed neighbourhoods (Landman 2000).

Security villages in South Africa comprise of a number of different types of developments with different uses, ranging from smaller townhouse complexes to larger office parks and luxury estates. The emphasis is on the fact that these areas are purpose-built by private developers, with security being the uppermost requirement, although lifestyle requirements are also important. Secure townhouse complexes, which are mainly for residential purposes, and office parks, are located throughout the cities, from central neighbourhoods to the higher income neighbourhoods on the urban periphery. Larger security estates are mostly located on the urban periphery where bigger portions of land are available, as well as many natural elements such as rivers, dams, patches of trees, etc. that are important features of these types of development. These estates offer an entire lifestyle package, where the features to be enjoyed in a secure environment include a range of services (garden services, refuse removal etc.), as well as a variety of facilities and amenities (golf courses, squash courts, cycle routes, hiking routes, equestrian routes, water activities, etc.). Most of the luxury security estates occupy only between 10 and 50 hectares, while two more ambitious estates occupy larger areas, namely Heritage Park in the City of Cape Town (200 ha) and Dainfern in the City of Johannesburg (350 ha).



**Figure 1:** Entrance to large security estate in east Johannesburg



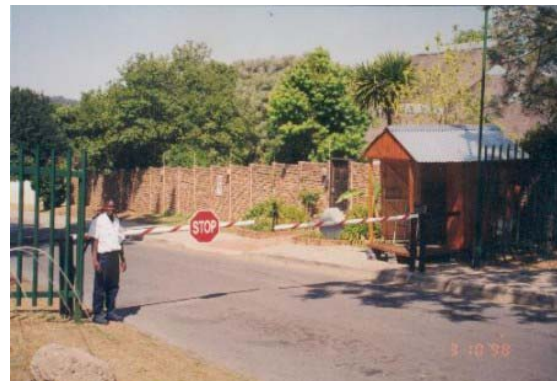
**Figure 2:** Clubhouse and golf course in security estate in Pretoria.

A recent survey conducted by CSIR Building and Construction Technology (2002) indicated that security villages in South Africa tend to be located in either metropolitan areas (around large cities such as Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town, etc.) or in coastal towns (such as Plettenberg Bay, Knysna, Mossel Bay, Port Elizabeth, Margate, Richards Bay, etc.). Other areas with a larger conglomeration included recreational sites or alternative living places close to natural amenities such as Hartebeespoort Dam north west of Pretoria (see Map 1)<sup>4</sup>.

An increasing number of existing neighbourhoods in South Africa are closed off through gates or booms extending across the road, as well as fences or walls around entire neighbourhoods in some cases. Access into these neighbourhoods is restricted and controlled by a few access control points, either in the form of remote controlled gates or security manned gates or booms. The size of enclosed neighbourhoods varies from small cul-de sacs with fewer than 10 houses to large neighbourhoods with up to 1000 houses. Residents must apply for the right to restrict access to their local municipality and can only do so for security reasons.

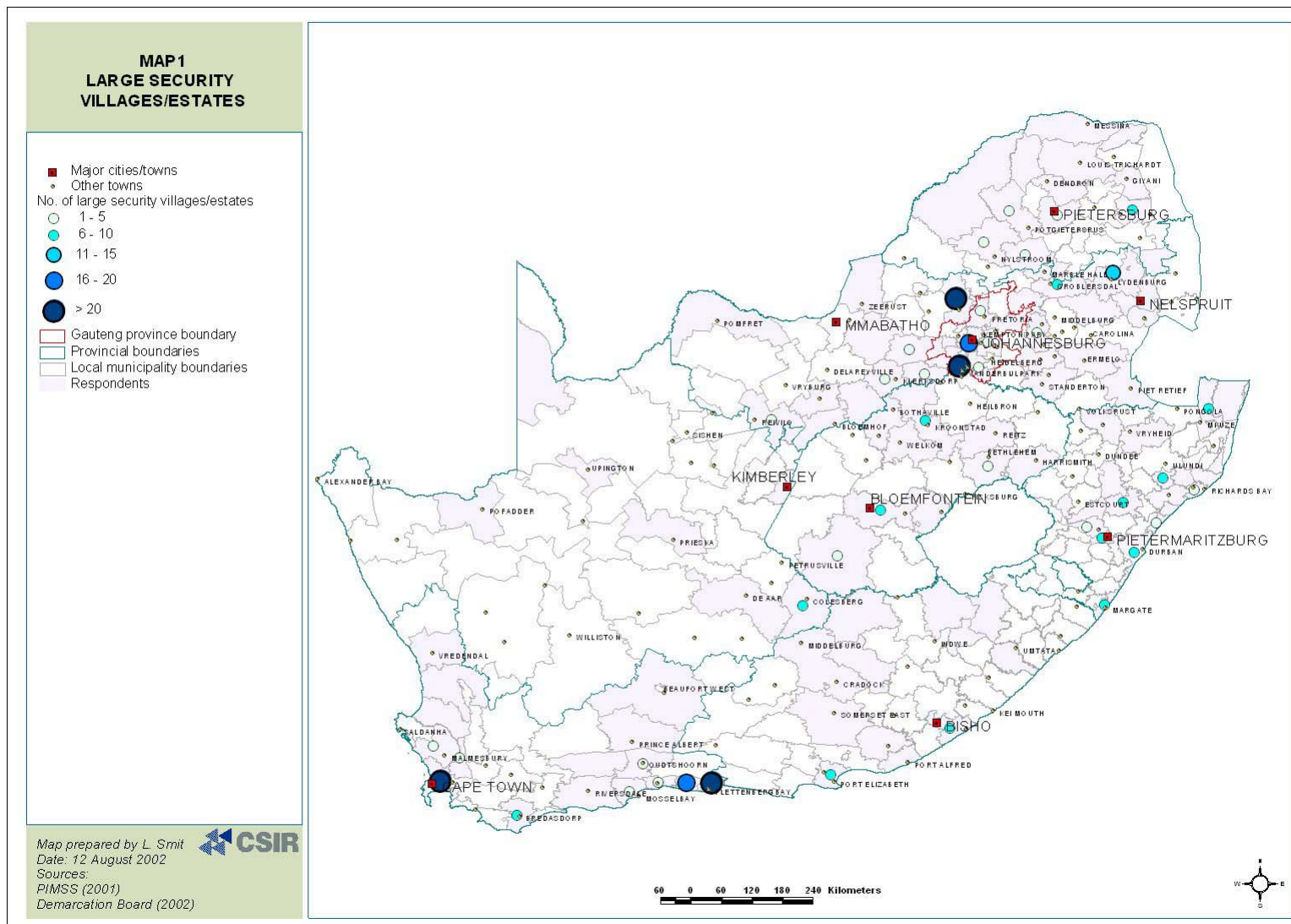


**Figure 3:** Enclosed neighbourhood in north Johannesburg: road closed through gate.



**Figure 4:** Enclosed neighbourhood in north Johannesburg: road closed through a boom.

<sup>4</sup> The location of large luxury security villages on the map is based on those municipalities who responded to the survey and thus restricted to these areas.



The CSIR survey indicated that the highest number of road closures seems to be occurring in the metropolitan areas, including large cities such as Johannesburg, Pretoria and Cape Town (Map 2)<sup>5</sup>. It is estimated that there are presently approximately 300 road closures in the City of Johannesburg. Only 79 neighbourhoods have formally applied and to date only 23 have been officially approved<sup>6</sup>. Many neighbourhoods are closed off illegally. The areas that are closed off are also increasing in size, for example Gallo Manor in Johannesburg, a large neighbourhood with 24 street closures. Proposals for the closure of an area in Lombardy East is also underway and should this be accepted, the enclosed area will include around 1000 houses.

Not all local municipalities in South Africa allow this kind of neighbourhood enclosure. When comparing the number of municipalities who have approved road closures (Map 2) to the number who have received applications (Map 3)<sup>7</sup>, the number of applications exceeds the number approved, indicating that despite the demand, not all applications are necessarily approved (see figure 5). Some Local Authorities refused permission due to problems related to traffic control, urban management, accessibility, discrimination, etc. Despite this, and given the growing demand, it is likely that enclosed neighbourhoods will continue to grow, both in numbers and in size.

Gated communities, however, pose a number of challenges to local governments, both in terms of (and possibly also because of tensions between) spatial planning and land use management. These challenges are also directly related to the roles and responsibilities of local governments as outlined in The White Paper on Spatial Planning and Land Use Management. The challenges will be discussed both in terms of land use management and spatial planning, to highlight both the short term and long term implications of gated communities.

#### *a) Gated communities and land use management*

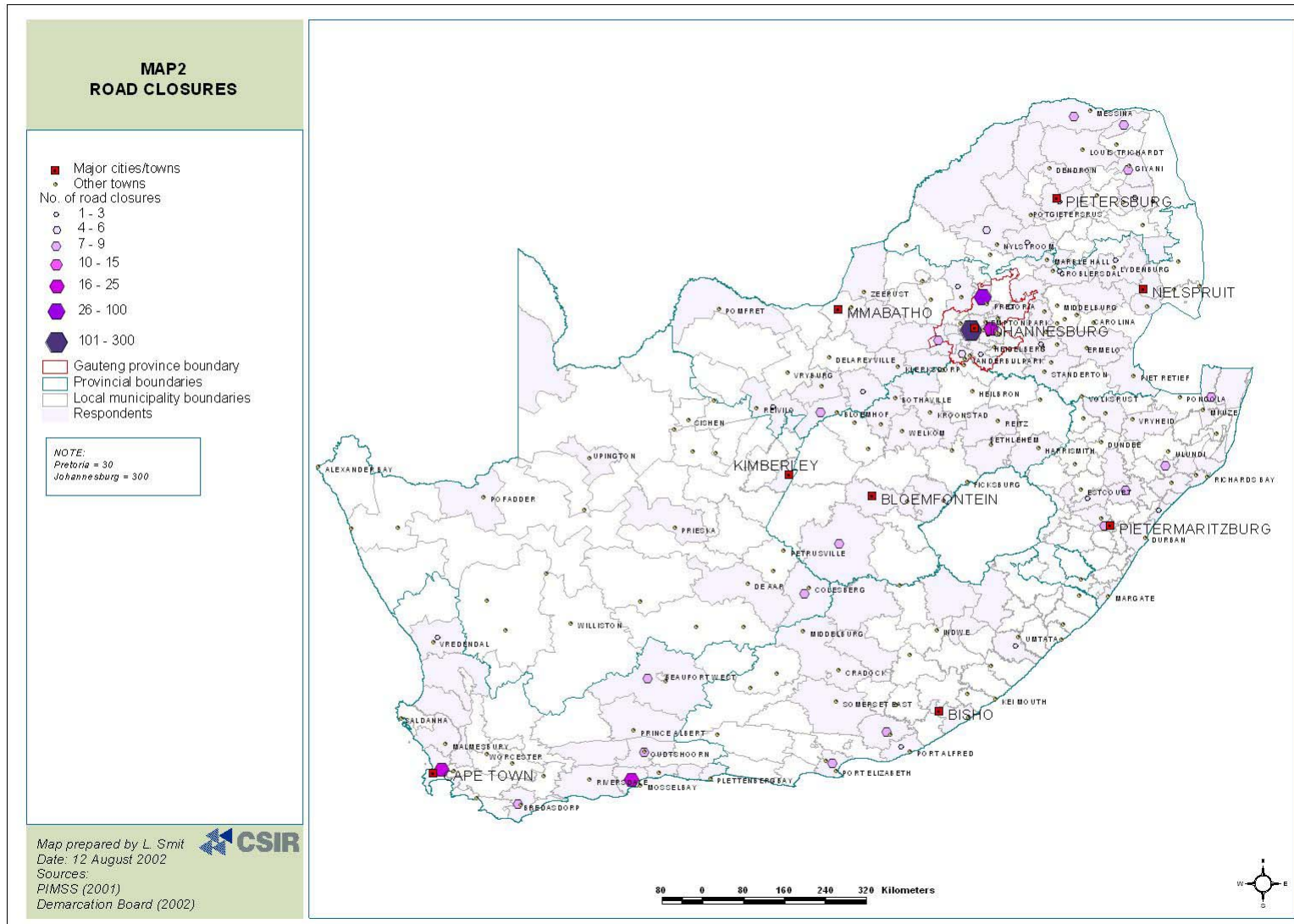
A number of challenges manifest regarding short term land use management or development control and often reflects a tendency by local governments towards crisis management and a focus on the legal implications of gated communities. The challenges include the growing demand of gated communities in the country, the lack of or limited number of policies, effective urban management and illegal closures. There is a growing demand for gated communities in the country. A year ago Pretoria City Council had only about 10 applications for neighbourhood enclosures, while according to the most recent survey (May 2002), the City of Pretoria have already received 56 applications for neighbourhood enclosures. Large luxury estates are also growing at a rapid rate. The most important reason given for this escalation of gated communities is crime and the fear of crime. Additional reasons include financial security (property values, securing standards of living), lifestyle choices, and a lack of trust in governments to protect citizens from both crime and environmental decline. However, while the number of applications for neighbourhood enclosures and for rights to development security estates continue to stream in, local authorities are often caught off guard. The CSIR survey indicated for example, that while 37 of the 117 responding had received applications for road closures, only 12 had any form of policy in place to address the issue. In addition, only one province makes provision for road closures for security purposes at a provincial level (Chapter 7 of the Rationalisation Act, 1998 in Gauteng), while there is still no national policy to guide decision-making on gated communities in the country.

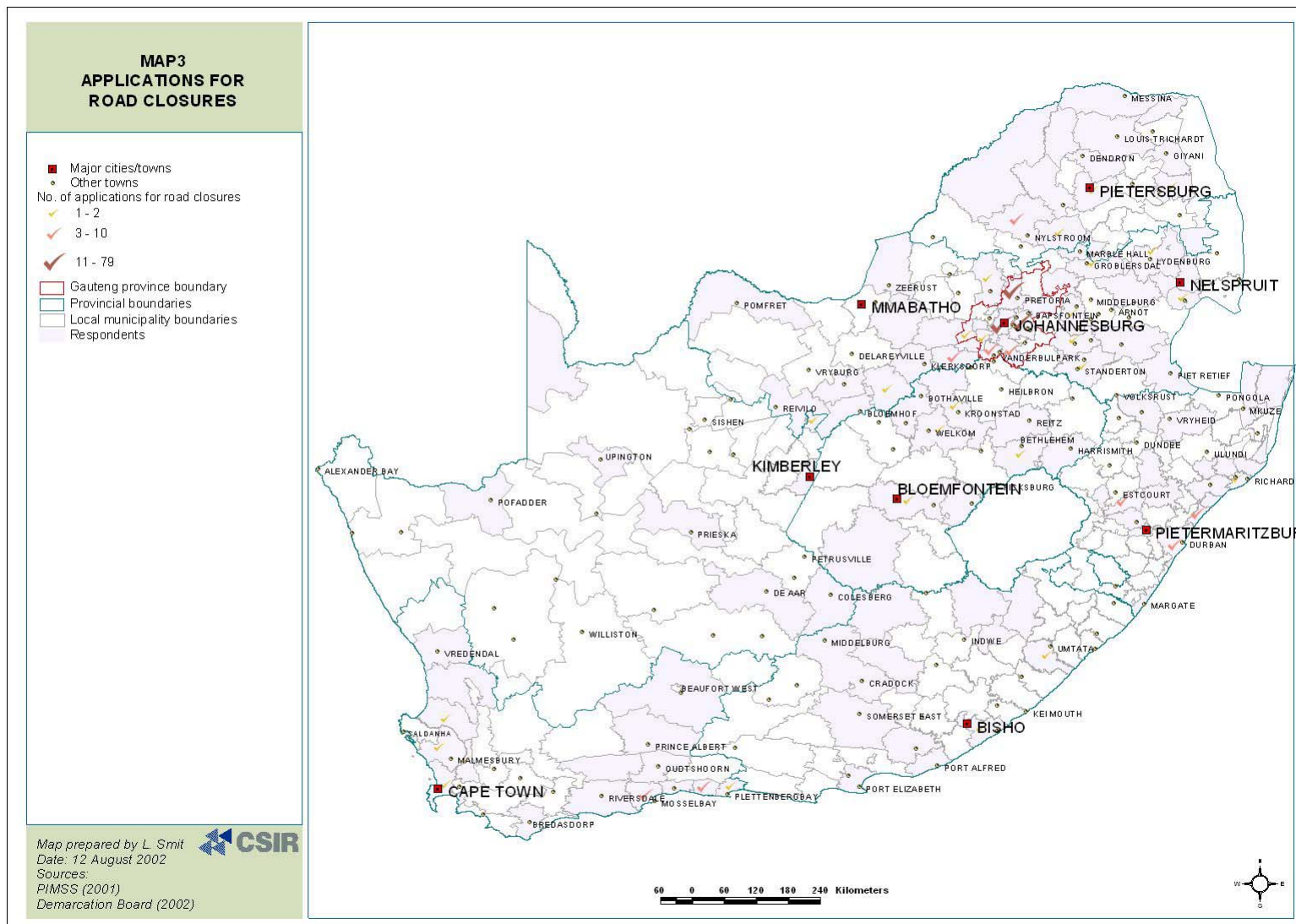
---

<sup>5</sup> The same applies as in footnote four.

<sup>6</sup> A number of neighbourhood enclosures have been approved under the previous local authority for a period of two years and will have to be reconsidered after that period of time.

<sup>7</sup> The same applies as in footnote four and five.





In addition, many residents are reverting to illegal closures (often due to extended application periods, a lack of local policies or refusal of applications), which in turn escalates the problems regarding urban functioning. All these challenges have an impact on the role of municipalities to regulate development and manage land use, especially when taking into account the longer term vision and goals that municipalities are meant to aspire to in terms of the White Paper (see Table 2).

*b) Gated communities and spatial planning*

Gated communities also pose a number of challenges to local governments in terms of spatial planning or Integrated Development Planning (also see Table 2). These challenges relate to a short-term view of gated communities, lack of integrated development, spatial fragmentation, social exclusion, threat to urban sustainability and private micro-governance. There is a general tendency to take a short term view (only focusing on crisis management of current problems and legal implications) on gated communities in the country, disregarding the potential long term impact and implications that gated communities can have for cities in the future. This could have serious repercussions for the other longer term challenges, such as socio-spatial and institutional integration and urban sustainability. Gated communities have the potential to increase spatial fragmentation through the division of neighbourhoods into distinctive cells, limiting accessibility and social cohesion on a metropolitan and sub-metropolitan scale (Landman 2000a; Landman 2002a). These challenges, combined with the potential of the privatisation of public space, the privatisation of public services, such as road maintenance and its implications for tax rebates, the privatisation of local governments (micro/territorial governance), the increasing marginalisation of the poor, increasing conflict and aggression between local residents due to differing opinions regarding gated communities and a reduction of urban democracy (including spatial democracy), can seriously threaten the achievement of urban sustainability in South Africa (Landman 2000b; Landman 2002b; Landman 2002c).

<i>Roles of Local Authorities</i>	<i>Aim and tools</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>	<i>Challenges posed by gated communities</i>
<b>Integrated Development Planning/Spatial Planning</b> (forward planning)	Aim: To guide and inform land use management and development to ensure the achievement of the vision and principles (sustainability, equity, integration and efficiency).  Tool: Spatial Development Frameworks (Indicative Plans)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy for land use and development</li> <li>• Guidelines for land use management</li> <li>• A capital expenditure framework</li> <li>• Strategic environmental assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of long term consideration</li> <li>• Lack of integrated planning (IDPs &amp; SDFs)</li> <li>• Spatial fragmentation</li> <li>• Social exclusion</li> <li>• Threat to urban sustainability</li> <li>• Private micro-governance</li> </ul>
<b>Land use management</b> (development control)	Aim: to promote desirable land development and stop undesirable ones  Tool: Land Use Management system (Regulation schemes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulation of land-use changes</li> <li>• Regulation of 'greenfield' development</li> <li>• Regulation of subdivision and consolidation of land parcels</li> <li>• Regulation of upgrading processes</li> <li>• Facilitation of land development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing demand</li> <li>• Lack of / limited policies</li> <li>• Lack of effective urban management</li> <li>• Illegal closures</li> </ul>

**Table 2: Gated communities: challenges for local government**

Source: Roles, aims, tools and responsibilities of Local Authorities adapted from *The White Paper on Spatial Planning and Land Use Management, 2001*

Taking into account these challenges and the general response of local government at present, one cannot help but question the effectiveness of the way in which local governments to address this issue and the relevance of current approaches to achieve success in this regard. Gated communities are not likely to disappear overnight and if they continue in the current fashion or models, may in fact pose a danger to return to separated neighbourhoods with well-developed enclosed areas juxtaposed with marginalized under-developed neighbourhoods (excluded from private enclosed areas). This could introduce a return to the very types of neighbourhoods developed in the apartheid era and which the White paper is attempting to rectify. On the other hand, the growing demand for gated communities is also likely to place increasing pressures on local governments to respond to the short term needs of residents (safety and security). It therefore calls for a reconsideration of the current planning and development approaches to gated communities in South Africa.

### **Towards a more dynamic spatial planning approach to gated communities in SA**

Space has multiple meanings and one's reading of the urban form or approach to space will therefore be different depending on what element is of interest. It is possible to distinguish between at least three perspectives in the study and interpretation of space. The first perspective sees the city as a collection of artifacts: buildings, roads, trees, and other material objects, which gives rise to an approach to spatial analysis and interpretation whereby material objects are categorised into meaningful groups and people's relationships with them are explored. The second perspective is concerned with a temporal classification of the city where space is analysed and interpreted according to distinctive historical periods. The third approach focuses on the relationship between urban space and human activities and therefore emphasizes an approach whereby space is analysed and interpreted according to land use and density. Taking into account the strengths and weaknesses of each approach, none of these are convincing enough to stand as the only plausible approach. The understanding of space therefore needs to be complemented with a comprehension of society, to arrive at a more complete socio-spatial understanding (Madanipour 1996; 2001), as was advocated earlier in the paper. This calls for a combined approach where political and economic considerations of city processes need to be coupled with cultural and aesthetic needs (Madanipour 2001).

Understanding space is also context-specific, as was illustrated earlier in terms of the link between modernist and apartheid planning, as well as post-modern and post-apartheid planning. A number of observers have pointed to the tension between reason and emotions that shaped the modern sense of identity. These tensions were historically played out in the relationship between romanticism and the Enlightenment and more recently between modernists and postmodernists in the twentieth century. "As nationalism, associated with modernism, came to prevail, the celebration of subjectivity became a critical weapon and banner of resistance in the hands of the postmodernists" (Madanipour 2001:164). This has also been the case in South Africa: not so much in terms of modern-postmodern discourse, but more related to apartheid/post apartheid planning.

Madanipour (2001), however, argues for a more dynamic approach to spatial planning. On one level there is a need for a demise of order (a more rational or modernistic viewpoint) in the city for practical reasons such as the need for human societies to establish institutions, define roles and responsibilities, establish regulations to organize themselves and run their affairs. Dealing with urban spaces is one such affair in need of collective action, rather than allowing a *laissez-faire* approach where all (including the private sector) is left alone to do what they please. Many social problems will not be solved on their own and a disordered place can only play into the hands of the powerful. This should however not dismiss the need for a critical approach to order, nor the idea that an oversimplified rational approach will address societies complex needs. At the same time, criticising the oversimplification of modernism and appreciating complexity and diversity should not lead to some inevitable inactivity, or the denial of purposeful and appropriate collective action where necessary (Madanipour 2001). This has often been the case in South Africa where

a strong criticism of apartheid and related oversimplified modernistic planning and a strong argument for complexity and diversity (including Dewar and Uytendogaardt 1995), led to the tendency for local governments to stand back and deny their role with regards to purposeful and collective action for the public good, as illustrated in the case of gated communities. This is however not to deny the invaluable role that many protagonists have played in terms of pointing out the negative aspects of both apartheid and modernists planning and the need for a greater spatial approach to place-making in South Africa, that ultimately gave rise to the development of pro-active planning policies such as the White Paper on Spatial Planning and Land Use Management.

*What emerges in theory and practice, however, is the need to go beyond these single view perspectives and elaborate a dynamic, multi-view perspective into what is a multidimensional part of social reality (Madanipour 2001:165).*

The challenge is therefore to engage in a multi-dimensional approach to spatial planning in South Africa that goes beyond single perspectives to both space and time. It calls for a socio-spatial approach to planning, taking into account both the need for a place-making approach, while simultaneously considering the bigger whole and the public good (both in the short term and over the long run). This implies flexible, yet strong enough governance to ensure a balance between short term needs and long term visions and costs.

But what does such an approach mean for gated communities in South Africa, as well as the roles and responsibilities of local authorities? It suggests that gated communities should be considered both from a short-term and long term perspective, requiring a range of actions from local authorities to address the complexities thereof. This implies flexible, yet strong enough action from local government where they are prepared to face the problems rather than hoping that it would somehow disappear. In the short term local governments should be concerned with the regulation, monitoring and control of gated communities, while still taking into account the desperate need for safety and security. This could entail the development of appropriate policies where necessary<sup>8</sup>, establishing task teams to monitor the impact of these on the daily use patterns of residents and refusing applications where they are likely to prohibit the achievement of the vision, principles and development ideals set out in their IDPs and SDFs. A pro-active approach would also be to consider the impact of gated communities at an early stage when developing the IDPs/SDFs.

Longer term actions could include the evaluation of different types and models of gated communities, determining the impact and implications thereof and identifying the possible benefits and detriments. Such an evaluation could lead to the re-consideration of specific types/models of gated communities as a whole if for example the long term costs appear to outweigh the short term benefits, or it could lead to the establishment of alternative models to reduce long term impacts that are not reconcilable to the vision of the White Paper.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has shown that space and the concept of place-making is finding rising significance in the current planning and management of cities in South Africa. This is partly due to an increasing emphasis on a spatial approach to planning through a normative planning system based on principles and norms, as concretized in the White Paper on Spatial Planning and Land Use Management (2001). This paradigm shift (from apartheid to post apartheid planning and from a modernist to postmodernist approach) has resulted in a greater emphasis on place-making. Although this has introduced a range of measures to achieve greater equity, efficiency,

---

<sup>8</sup> Policies could make provision for aspects such as a high percentage for the minimum number of people required to support the application for closure, a limitation in the number of years that the application would be valid (e.g. one or two) and a specification of the level of streets that would be considered for closure.

integration and sustainability, it also often led to confusion about the role of local authorities to initiate collective action. This often resulted in a tendency from local governments to withdraw from stronger action or turn a blind eye to many current types of development.

It has been argued that a spatial approach to planning in South Africa can only be successful if it is seen as a socio-spatial process, or in other words through an understanding of how social dynamics are played out in space and how these spatial responses (such as gated communities) influence the distribution of power, resources and identities in cities. The African context is facing a number of challenges (some of them very severe), such as poverty, unemployment, HIV/AIDS, crime, etc., often acting as major forces of change leading to rapid urban transformation. Although one can learn from international experience, it is important to stay focused on the specific context. These challenges call for a reconsideration of the meaning of space in African cities and the consequent intervention in the built environment in relation to their specific social dynamics and problems. It therefore begs a review of current approaches to space, as well as planning and development processes to determine their likely impact to address the challenges.

For example, crime and the fear of crime has given rise to a number of spatial responses in many African countries, such as gated communities in especially South Africa. Despite the growth of this phenomenon, there has been a limited investigation of its potential impact and implications for urban areas in the future, as well as the potential to increase the severity of some of the challenges the country is facing at the moment, such as social-spatial integration, urban sustainability, etc. Those that deal with planning need to go beyond a short term view on gated communities and apply a dynamic approach to spatial planning and development to incorporate a multi-dimensional approach to space and time. This implies a need for new ways of understanding space that goes beyond a single perspective and focuses on democratic place-making (the creation of a series of meaningful places for all urban residents). It is also necessary to consider gated communities both in terms of short term needs, as well as the longer term impact and costs, and consequently address potential tensions between land use management and spatial planning resulting from the growth of gated communities. The main challenge related to gated communities is therefore to establish a balance between flexibility (in terms of land use management and development) and stronger collective action (ensuring the achievement of a longer term vision for South African cities) to guarantee democratic and fair governance of place in South Africa.

## **References**

- Bremner, L. (1999) "Crime and the emerging landscape of post-apartheid Johannesburg" in H. Judin and I. Vladislavic, *blanc\_architecture, apartheid and after*, Rotterdam: Nai Publishers.
- du Plessis, C. & Landman, K. (2002) *Sustainability analysis of Human Settlements in South Africa*. Prepared for the Department of Housing. CSIR Report BOU/C368.
- Dewar, D., Watson, V., Bassios, A., and Dewar, N. (1990) *The structure and form of metropolitan Cape Town: its origins, influences and performance*. Urban Problems Research Unit and Urban Foundation (Western Cape).
- Dewar, D. and Uytenbogaardt, R.S. (1995) *Creating vibrant urban places to live: a primer*. Cape Town: Headstart Developments.
- Ellin, N. (1997) *Post Modern Urbanism*. Princeton University Press: New York.
- Healey, P. (2001) "Towards a more Place-focused Planning System in Britain" in Madanipour, A., P. Healey & A. Hull (ed.) *The Governance of Place: Space and planning processes*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Hook, D and M. Vrdoljak, (2001) "Gated communities, heterotopia and a "rights" of privilege: A 'heterotopology' of the South African security-park." Paper presented at *WITS Housing Seminar*, 17 May 2001.

Landman, K. (2000a) *An overview of enclosed neighbourhoods in South Africa*. Pretoria: CSIR Publication BOU/I 187.

Landman, K (2000b) Gated communities and urban sustainability: taking a closure look at the urban future" Paper presented at the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Southern African Conference on Sustainable Development in the Built Environment*. August 23 – 25, 2000, Pretoria, South Africa.

Landman, K (2002a) *Gated communities in Brazil and South Africa: comparative perspectives*. Pretoria: CSIR Publication BOU/I 210.

Landman, K (2002b) "Gated communities in South Africa: building bridges or barriers". Paper presented at *International Conference on the Privatisation of Urban Governance*. June, 6-9, Mainz, Germany.

Landman, K. (2002c) "Crime, political transition and spatial transformation in Brazil and South Africa". *SALIA Paper* (19), Johannesburg.

Lipman, A and H. Harris (1999) "Fortress Johannesburg" in *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*, Vol. 26, pp. 727 – 240.

Madanipour (1996) *Design of Urban Space: and inquiry into a Socio-Spatial Process*. London: Wigley.

Madanipour, A. (2001) "Multiple meanings of Space and the Need for a Dynamic perspective" in Madanipour, A., P. Healey & A. Hull (ed.) *The Governance of Place: Space and planning processes*. Aldershot:Ashgate.

Madanipour, A., P. Healey & A. Hull (2001) "Introduction" in Madanipour, A., P. Healey & A. Hull (ed.) *The Governance of Place: Space and planning processes*. Aldershot:Ashgate.

Pycroft, C. (2000) *From the Global to the local: The Impact of Globalisation on Developmental Local Government*. Unpublished report prepared for the Development Bank of Southern Africa, Johannesburg.

Schönteich, M (2002) "Crime levels in South Africa, its provinces and cities", <http://www.gatedcomsa.co.za/crime.htm>