

MINOR FIELDS STUDY REPORT

COUNTERSPACES
ON POWER IN SLUM UPGRADING
FROM A THIRDSPACE PERSPECTIVE
A CASE STUDY FROM KAMBI MOTO IN NAIROBI

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ABSTRACT

The study takes its point of departure in the urgent problem of slums that follow on the rapid urbanisation worldwide. Focusing on the small informal settlement of Kambi Moto in Nairobi, Kenya, the study tries to answer the question of how power can be worked out in slum upgrading – a way to change the physical environment of a slum without demolishing and rebuilding the whole settlement. The theoretical tool to answer this question is taken from Edward Soja's reading of Henry Lefebvre in the concept Thirdspace – an extended and politicised way to look at space, where space is not only seen as a stage for historical and social processes, but as something that is shaping our thoughts and actions; a social space that includes and goes beyond the material Firstspace and the mental Secondspace. From a spatialized reading of history today's situation – where 60 % of the population of Nairobi live in informal settlements – is traced back to the ideological structuring of space in the colonial cityplans. The informal settlements are established as a Thirdspace: both a negative outcome of the dominating Secondspace of the colonial administration and as a counterspace, where traditional ways of life could live on and where revolutionary movements could grow. The study then focus on how the two scales to view the city, the macro and the micro, are resolved in the Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI), a global network of local federations that organizes slum dwellers. The network empowers the individual slum dweller in making him/her an actor in a peer to peer exchange, and also creates a social space for political struggle. This is manifested in Muungano wa Wanavijiji, a citywide movement for a collective struggle for spatial rights, empowering the slum dwellers in taking charge of the social production of human spatiality. In a case study of a slum upgrading effort in Kambi Moto the shifting of power from the government, international organisations and professionals to the lived Thirdspace of the habitants, as well as the internal power relations within the community, are looked at in a concrete situation.

Keywords: Thirdspace, Edward Soja, Henri Lefebvre, Informal settlement, Slum, Slum upgrading, Nairobi, Kenya, Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI), Pamoja Trust, Muungano wa Wanavijiji.

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INTRODUCTION



FIGURE 1. Gigiri, the UN Habitat headquarters in Nairobi.



FIGURE 2. Kibera in Nairobi, one of the largest slums in Africa.



FIGURE 3. Spring Valley, the house of Ulrik and Ia Westman.

At work

Everything is new and yet so old. Sometimes I don't know if I'm in the early 21st century or if the 60s has been resurrected. Only ten months ago United Nations Human Settlement Program (UN-Habitat) has been upgraded to an independent program. This dignity gives the organisation a clearer status and therefore an improved economy. Habitat is like born again. At the same time the average age is very high. The facilities are, to say the least, worn down, furniture and office material as well. The administrative routines carry traces of tippex, blue copies and an ocean of secretaries. Almost one secretary per every international employee. And here are many employees. Habitat and UNEP have their main offices in Nairobi. Most of the other UN-organs are also represented in Nairobi. This makes the UN-complex into an own part of the city – Gigiri. There are banks, a post-office, shops, restaurants, travel agencies, sport-facilities, a hospital and a petrol station inside the walls. Outside the UN-walls the US are building even higher and thicker walls around their new gigantic embassy-fortress. Gigiri is a very unreal place in the middle of the reality of Nairobi.

In reality

Sometimes I get a feeling that I'm not in reality when I'm at work at Gigiri. Then it's a relief to work close to one of our co-workers. Last week I spent three days at the NGO Pamoja Trust. They work in 40 of the 100 slum areas in Nairobi. They are in the real world, the everyday, physical, brutal reality that 1,5 million people live in, only here in Nairobi. We were "out in reality" to set coordinates for the outer lines of three areas. Sooner or later all the 100 slum areas has to get coordinates so that the tough negotiations for landrights can start. When we were there to measure, one of the residents believed I had come there to steal his shack. He wanted to kill me, to cut my throat. It wasn't exactly what we had expected of that afternoon so we asked him to listen to why we were there, but his intoxication was too worked in and we had to leave instead. Me with my throat and life intact... This reception is unusual when Pamoja Trust work in the slums. Probably it was I as a Mzungo, whity, that created the confusion.¹

This quote by Ulrik Westman, taken from an e-mail short after his arrival at the UN Habitat headquarters in the Kenyan capital Nairobi, does two things that are important in my study: It introduces some of the main actors in *slum upgrading* (and the often problematic encounter between them – here exemplified by an extreme, almost bizarre, confrontation) and it does this by describing two different *spatializations*. The UN headquarters and the slums represent different spaces that are like separate worlds. What they have in common is that, while geographically being part of the city, they are (in different ways) separated from the rest of the city, creating a both physical and social space of their own – a city within the city.

During my two months field study in Nairobi in 2003² I stayed with Ulrik and his wife Ia in their bungalow style house in the green and spacious suburb of Spring Valley. Ulrik introduced me to the staff at Pamoja Trust and they helped me to navigate in the crowded and messy informal settlements of Nairobi.

My personal interest in the subject originates from an art project at *Konstfack, University College of Arts, Craft and Design* in Stockholm, where I had come across selfbuilt housing in the early Swedish welfare state.³ This, combined with an interest in the extended and politicized way to look at cityspace, what Edward

¹ Ulrik Westman, Associate Human Settlements Officer at UN Habitat Global Division, Shelter Branch,

² The field study was financed through a MFS (Minor Field Study) grant by *Sida (Swedish international development agency)*.

³ From 1927 until the ambitious welfare-housing program self-built housing in organised form was a way to help workers escape the slums of Stockholm in building a house of their own (today they have become popular housing of the middleclass).

Soja refers to as a spatial turn in cultural theory,⁴ brought my attention to the upgrading of the slums.

It all goes back to the 60s. As a young geographer Edward Soja went to the newly independent nation of Kenya, in a time when the spatial disciplines was going through a quantitative revolution. Following the prevailing view at the time, the *Modernization theory*, he wanted to prove that development (according to western standards) was the answer for the whole world.⁵

In Latin America John Turner, picking up the anarchist thread of Patrick Geddes,⁶ started to put down contrary conclusions that went against the modern project: Dwellers should be in control of the major decisions and free to make their own contributions in the design, construction and management of their housing.⁷

In the US Jane Jacobs hit against the two great orthodoxies in the history of planning: Howard's garden city⁸ and the modernistic *La Ville Radieuse* of Le Corbusier.⁹ Jacobs' *Urbanism* was a call for a return to the density and mixed landuses of the traditional unplanned city.¹⁰

The urban crisis of the 60s also led to a new understanding of space. Nowhere were these new ways to look at the spatiality of human life as clearly formulated as in the writings of the French sociologist and philosopher Henry Lefebvre.¹¹

The new insights together would shift the spatial disciplines in a new Marxist direction in the 70s¹² and Soja would be swept along in this process: "The very foundations of the development model I had pursued were pulled out from under me and for a long period of time, I could only look back regretfully at the ruins."¹³ Running along the *Modernization theory* was an undercurrent of *underdevelopment*, working together with development in the spread of global capitalism, and creating a division between dominant and dependent regions, between global core and periphery.¹⁴

In the 80s Soja would move beyond also Marxist models, to seek a "more productive synergy between critical cultural studies and geopolitical economy,"¹⁵ championing Lefebvre as the forerunner of a *spatial turn* in cultural studies. For the last 20 years Soja has left Kenya to focus on his hometown Los Angeles,

⁴ Edward W. Soja 1996, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and Imagined Places*, p. 68.

⁵ Edward W. Soja 1968, *The Geography of Modernization in Kenya*.

⁶ Geddes went to India in the beginning of the 20th century, and anticipated the planning philosophies of the 1960s with half a decade. Peter Hall 2003, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century*, p. 269.

⁷ Turner quoted in Hall 2003, p. 275. Soja and Turner can here be seen as representatives of two different perspectives to view the city – macro and micro – that I will return to in "The view from above and the view from below" on page 26-29.

⁸ "...its 'prescription for saving the city was to do the city in' by defining 'wholesome housing in terms only of suburban physical qualities and small-town social qualities'". Jane Jacobs in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* from 1962, quoted in Hall 2003, p. 254.

⁹ "No matter how vulgarized or clumsy the design, how dreary and useless the open space, how dull the close-up view, an imitation of Le Corbusier shouts 'Look what I made!' Like a great, visible ego it tells of someone's achievements". Jacobs 1962, quoted in Hall 2003, p. 254.

¹⁰ Hall, 2003, p. 255.

¹¹ Soja 1996, p. 11. In the 60s Lefebvre was drawing on his collaboration with the today newly fashionable Situationist International movement.

¹² Hall 2003, p. 367.

¹³ Edward W. Soja 1979, "The Geography of Modernization: A Radical Reappraisal", in R. A. Obdho and D. R. F. Taylor (ed.): *The Spatial Structure of Development: A Study of Kenya*, p. 31-32.

¹⁴ Soja 1979, p. 32.

¹⁵ Edward W. Soja 2000, *Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions*, xiii.

which he sees as “a symptomatic lived space, a window through which one can observe in all their uniquely expressed generality the new urbanisation processes that have been reshaping cities and urban life everywhere in the world over the past thirty years”¹⁶ and presenting an invitation to do the same in other places:

Every reference to Los Angeles contained in this book [*Postmetropolis*] thus serves a double purpose. It is at once both an illustration of the specific contextual effects of the postmetropolitan transition in one urban region and an *invitation to comparative analysis* in all other lived spaces wherever they may be located.¹⁷

In this study I accept this invitation by bringing Soja’s recent theories back to his earlier field of study, Kenya.

The Urban question is the big question of the future. In the rapid urbanization process the locus of global poverty is moving to the cities in a process recognized as the “urbanisation of poverty”. The gravity of the situation is often expressed in discouraging figures like: “Almost 1 billion people...live in slums /.../ And if no serious action is taken, the number of slum dwellers worldwide is projected to rise over the next 30 years to about 2 billion.”¹⁸

The challenge can be, and has been, dealt with in different ways. One response is to relocate the residents to another site on the outskirts of the city. A second approach is to temporarily move the residents, clear the land and build new housing for them on the same site. The alternative to moving people or replacing their homes is *upgrading*.¹⁹ The accepted best practice of today is *participatory slum upgrading*, a holistic in situ approach where the community is involved from the outset.²⁰

My main interest in this study concerns *empowerment* in slum upgrading. There are both an interpretative and a normative element where I use a strategically chosen example as a case study to understand how the power relations are worked out practically. From this example I try to answer the question: *How can power relations be worked out in the upgrading of slums?*

The study is built on a presupposition that power is produced in and acted out through space. Already this presupposition shows my depth to the theoretical perspective chosen. “There is a politics of space, because space is political,”²¹ says Henry Lefebvre, the main reference behind Soja’s concept *Thirdspace*.

Thirdspace is an extended and politicized way to look at space. Traditionally architecture and urban planning deals with spatial practices – what Soja refers to as *Firstspace*. Sometimes, but more seldom, conceptions about space – described as *Secondspace* by Soja – come to the fore. Building on Lefebvre Soja introduces *Thirdspace*, a social space that comprehends both the material and mental dimensions of spatiality, but at the same time moves beyond them. Space is not only to be seen as a stage for historical and social processes but is in itself shaping our thoughts and actions.²² Soja’s concept *Thirdspace* gives me a tool both to

¹⁶ Soja 2000, p. xvii.

¹⁷ Soja 2000, p. xvii-xviii.

¹⁸ UN Human Settlements Program 2003, *The Challenge of Slums: Global Report on Human Settlements 2003*, foreword by Kofi Annan.

¹⁹ <http://web.mit.edu/urbanupgrading/whatis/2003-09-23>.

²⁰ UN Human Settlements Program 2003, p. 132.

²¹ Stuart Elden, not dated, “There is a Politics of Space because Space is Political: Henry Lefebvre and the Production of Space”, in *An Architektur: Produktion und Gebrauch gebauter Umwelt*, <http://www.anarchitektur.com/AA01-Lefebvre/elden.html#ednef79>, 2003-09-21, p. 1.

²² Soja 2000, p. 10-11.

understand how power is inscribed and acted out in and through space, and a new perspective to look at the informal settlements in relation to the formally built city.

DISPOSITION AND SOURCES

I will now turn to look at the disposition of this paper and at the same time I will present the main sources of each chapter. The study is divided into four parts: Part one gives the conceptual framework, part two the background, and part three and four makes up the field study, which is divided between a more general part and a specific case study in the small informal settlement of Kambi Moto.

In the first part I will examine the theoretical perspective as well as the method behind the study. The theory opens up with what Soja calls a *Thirthing-as-Othering* and then focuses on two levels in the concept Thirdspace.

The chapter is based primarily on Soja's book *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* from 1996. The book should, as I see it, be read as an invitation to take part of Soja's own references and discoveries of new perspectives. In many ways the companion volume from 2000, *Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Region*, is the better and more inspiring source for this study since there Soja stays in his own field human geography and uses the theoretical insights from *Thirdspace* to understand contemporary urbanism.

I have chosen to disregard Soja's early work, *The Geography of Modernization in Kenya* (1968), even though it's based in Kenya, since he there works with another theoretical model focused on development from a macro perspective.²³

The second part gives a background of Nairobi and of the informal settlements. The background is aimed at laying the foundation, by giving a spatialized reading of Nairobi from a Thirdspace perspective and thus establishing a base from which to read the informal settlements as Thirdspace (lived space). The lengthy background is also motivated by the relative little knowledge of Nairobi in the context of this paper.

The background starts with the colonial history of the city, following Anja Kervanto Nevanlinna in her *Interpreting Nairobi: A cultural study of built form* (1996). I share her interest for architecture and city planning as something to be read and interpreted in a broader cultural context. In this chapter I give a spatialized reading of history where the structuring of space is read as the workings of power. To see how power is inscribed in space I have turned to the second main reference behind Soja's concept Thirdspace – Michel Foucault. Foucault has had a profound influence on my understanding of how power works in the structuring of space on a fundamental level. The tools²⁴ used to understand this process in the colonial planning of Nairobi is from *Discipline and Punish* (French original from 1975). This Secondspace reading of history opens up to a way of looking at the informal settlements as Thirdspace transcending the oppressive colonial order.

The background to my reading of the informal settlements is not only governed by the colonial space but must be seen also against the transformation of *cityspace* after independence. In his book *Postmetropolis* Soja gives six discourses of what he calls the *postmetropolis* and that I will use to make sense of the recent history

²³ Soja 1968. A decade later Soja himself made a total rejection of his early research in Kenya as well as the whole *Modernization theory* and development model that lay behind it, as outlined on p. 5. Soja 1979.

²⁴ Taking up Foucault's invitation to the reader to use his books as toolboxes, borrowing any idea or analysis that is useful in the given context. Originally from an interview in *Le Monde* 1975, quoted in Lars-Eric Jönsson 1998, *Det terapeutiska rummet: Rum och kropp i svensk sinnerjukvård 1850-1970*, p. 49, note 20.

of Nairobi. I will both try to understand the accentuated problem of today's *cityspace* focused in the concept *Fractal City* and to offer a possible way out, coming from the *spatial turn* that I want to stress in this study.

The last chapter of part two is the history of interventions dealing with the informal settlements since independence, as lined out by the *Nairobi Situation Analysis* (consultative report from 2001). This history is interpreted through Soja's chapter "On the view from above and below" in his book *Thirdspace*.²⁵

Part three form the first part of the field study. It answers to the problems raised in part two while at the same time giving a framework for reading the case study of part four. The more general questions and conclusions of the background are viewed through the practical working methods of *Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI)*, a global network of local federations of slum dwellers. It may be seen as the central part of the study as it offers a bridge between the theory and the praxis as well as between the macro and micro scales of this study.

It is mainly based on interviews with actors involved in the SDI network, both on a global level and on city level, and ends with an introduction to Kambi Moto, the place of the case study, moving the study from the global to the city to the local.

The case study of part four is based on a fieldwork I did in Kambi Moto in the end of 2003. It looks at the SDI "rituals" of upgrading as they are worked out and experienced in one concrete upgrading project of a small settlement.

The text is based on interviews with different actors in the process: the NGO (Non Governmental Organisation) *Pamoja Trust*, the CBO (Community Based Organisation) *Muungano wa Wajiji*, the architects and the people living in the informal settlement of Kambi Moto, in Huruma. The texts used in the field study have a very direct connection with the actual process in the field. Most of them are unpublished working papers. In this part I will also make references to the SDI homepage www.sdinet.org. I will return to explain the method of the field study in a separate chapter on page 15-16.

LITERATURE

Turning to the broader field of research behind this study there are two sources of different character that have functioned as an entry point for me: the first is *Utrota varenda djävul*, "Exterminate all the brutes",²⁶ (1992) by the Swedish writer Sven Lindquist and the second is the Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas' study on the Nigerian capital Lagos in *Mutations* (2001).

Utrota varenda djävul is a journey in the colonial history of Africa. Reading this unreasonable countdown with our western history of exploitation, while travelling through East Africa ten years ago, made a profound impact on the way I look at our western history of imperialism.

Rem Koolhaas' study on Lagos is part of his Harvard projects on the city where he looks at the unplanned "junk architecture"²⁷ in all its forms, going from the US and the "badly designed built" (*Delirious New York*, 1978), to Asia and the "quickly designed built" (*Great Leap Forward*, 2002) and finally to Africa and the "undesigned built."²⁸ What inspired me in Koolhaas' work is the new way to

²⁵ Soja 1996, p. 310-314.

²⁶ The title is a translation of a sentence in Joseph Conrad's novel *Heart of Darkness* (written in 1898). I have used the original quote instead of making an exact translation of the title that would read, "Exterminate all the devils".

²⁷ Lars Spuybroek 2002, "Africa Comes First: Lars Spuybroek meets Rem Koolhaas", in Joke Brouwer, Arjen Mulder and Laura Martz (ed.): *TransUrbanism*, p. 161.

²⁸ Spuybroek 2002, p. 176.

look at the seemingly dysfunctional informality of Lagos without preconceived views of backwardness. Instead Koolhaas propose the alternative urbanism of Lagos as the future of cities: the west may be catching up with Lagos instead of the opposite. The problem is that he seems to look at the city as "a living art installation", overlooking the poverty and lack of basic living conditions as well as the history of the city (that is also a part of what Lagos is).^{29 30} Regardless of this critique Koolhaas' work on Lagos brings together the two diverting parts of my study: a new way of reading contemporary urban space and the often overlooked informal settlements of Africa.

From an art historical point of view my study is both an extension of *the way* to look at architecture and of *what* is looked at. The theoretical field can be seen as a part of *Visual culture*, a culturally and politically upgraded art history with roots in critical philosophy and since a decade a growing field within the subject.³¹

The study takes off from a contemporary reading of Lefebvre in the spatial disciplines. Since his "rediscovery" – in an American context – in the late 80s Lefebvre has been used out of various reasons. Architects and architecture theoreticians³² have used him to emphasise the everyday with "a relatively modest aesthetic and political program: a rejection of avant-garde escapism, pretension, and heroism in favour of a more sensitive engagement with people's everyday environments and lives."³³ Geographers³⁴ have used him for a more ambiguous project, championing him as the pioneer of "critiques of the city and the 'spatial turn' in cultural theory."³⁵ And since the 90s made him into the main theoretical reference in what can be seen as a whole new field of thought – "the field of

²⁹ Matthew Gandy 2005, "Learning from Lagos", in *New Left Review* 33, May/June, p. 40. Also others, such as the 2002 curator of *Documenta* Okwui Enwezor, have turned their attention to the Nigerian capital Lagos. According to Gandy "Lagos has become both the venue and focus for a radical urban agenda." Gandy 2005, p. 38.

³⁰ Koolhaas' "everything goes" mentality in reading contemporary "architecture" goes back to Robert Venturi and Denise Scott-Brown (*Learning from Las Vegas*, 1968). Already in the 60s they came close to Lefebvre's vision of "the extraordinary in the ordinary" says Mary McLeod. But as with Koolhaas the critique rarely went beyond the aesthetic sphere. (Mary McLeod 1997, "Henry Lefebvre's Critique of Everyday Life: An Introduction", in Steven Harris and Deborah Berke (ed.): *Architecture of the Everyday*, p. 28). This tendency has continued making "everyday life" into a new architectural style. The problem is that "Such superficial celebration acts as a mask which deflects critical attention from underlying forces which have shaped the production of those objects," says Sarah Wigglesworth and Jeremy Till (Sarah Wigglesworth and Jeremy Till 1998, "The Everyday and Architecture", in Sarah Wigglesworth and Jeremy Till (guest-ed.): *Architectural Design*, Volume 68 7-8/1988, p. 9). I get the same feeling when reading about a new form of "slum-tourism" in *The Nordic art review*: "Touristy visits to these urban grey-zones, instead of focusing on representative and must-see monuments, are becoming one of the current sightseeing trends all over the world." Natasa Petresin 2001, "Relocating the reality of cities", in *NU: The Nordic Art Review*, volume 3, NO. 1/01, p.14.

³¹ <http://www.akad.se/progvis.htm> 2004-03-27.

³² Among architecture theoreticians are Steven Harris & Deborah Berke, eds. 1997, *Architecture of the Everyday*; Sarah Wigglesworth & Jeremy Till, eds. 1998, *The Everyday and Architecture*; John Chase, Margaret Crawford, & John Kaliski, eds. 1999, *Everyday Urbanism*; Alan Read 2000, *Architecturally Speaking: Practices of Art, Architecture and the Everyday*.

³³ McLeod 1996, s. 11.

³⁴ Among geographers are Derek Gregory 1994, *Geographical Imaginations*; David Harvey 1989, *The Condition of Postmodernity*; Andy Merryfield 1993, *Dialectical urbanism: social struggles in the capitalist city*; Rob Shields 1991, *Places on the margin: Alternative geographies of modernity*; Edward W. Soja 1989, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*, 1996, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*, 2000, *Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions*.

³⁵ Rob Shields 2002, "Henry Lefebvre: Philosopher of Everyday Life", <http://http-server.carleton.ca/~rshields/lefedl.html> 2003-09-03.

critical space”.³⁶ These two ways of using Lefebvre represent two different stages (but with a clear continuity) in the evolution of Lefebvre’s thinking: the first referring to his *Critique of Everyday Life* from 1947, and the second to his *The Production of Space* from 1974.

Moving the focus from the theory to the material I’m also here trying to stretch the field of art history. “Architects only participate in creating 1% of the world’s building culture. It is nonetheless surprising to realize that 99% of the built environment...are not a central part of the architect’s concern,”³⁷ says Anna Rubbo. (Another reason to foreground Koolhaas). In this study I want to turn my attention to a part of that missing 99%.

The discipline of Planning on the other hand has been dealing with the problem of slums all along. Planning and the slums can even be said to have “given rise to each other – with slums and informal sectors constantly outpacing the ability of formal planning.”³⁸ The interest in upgrading, as an alternative way of planning, also goes back to one of the pioneers of modern planning, Patrick Geddes, but this early seed did not grow until the 1960s as sketched out in the introductory historical odyssey.

My understanding of the history of planning and architecture is based on two standard works: *Cities of Tomorrow* (1988, revised and enlarged third edition 2002) by Peter Hall, complementing Soja’s *Postmetropolis* as a more traditional reading of the history of planning, and *Modern architecture: a critical history* (1980, revised and enlarged third edition 1992) by Kenneth Frampton with an outspoken interest in the relation between architecture and ideology.

The general picture of the situation of slums and slum upgrading today is based on *The Challenge of Slums: Global report on human settlements 2003*, that gives a good overall picture of the problems and prospects of slums, as well as the principal policy responses to slums of the last decades. Moving from the general to the specific the *Nairobi Situation Analysis* (2001) describes the present state of slums and slum upgrading initiatives of Nairobi in three parts: (1) the global and historical context, (2) elements of slum upgrading and (3) an interpretative analysis of the factors involved in slum upgrading. Beside these extensive studies the paper on “Participatory urban planning and design” from *UN Millennium Project, Task Force 8: Improving the Lives of Slum Dwellers* (2003) is worth mentioning as my study shares a lot of its views on participation in upgrading.

DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

The term *slum* is a problematic concept as it carries negative connotations, going back to a debate in the social sciences in the late 1980s.³⁹ Regardless of this the term is used frequently both in the official UN Habitat documents and by the organisations I met with, as well as by the slum dwellers themselves. I will use the term but make an important distinction from the concept *informal settlement*, which is often used synonymously:

INFORMAL SETTLEMENT: This concept is focused on how the settlement came to be, putting emphasis on the fact that it lacks formal planning and legal rights.⁴⁰

³⁶ Gunnar Sandin 2003, *Modalities of Place: On Polarisation and Exclusion in Concepts of Place and in Site-Specific Art*, p. 163.

³⁷ Anna Rubbo, Nicole Gurrán, Mateo Taussing, Murray Hall 2003-11-22, Paper 4: *Participatory Urban Planning and Design*, draft, UN millennium Project, Task Force 8: Improving the Lives of Slum Dwellers, p. 5.

³⁸ Rubbo 2003, p. 3.

³⁹ Agneta Gunnarsson 2005, *Hem ljuva hem*, p. 12.

⁴⁰ UN Human Settlements Program 2003, p. 11.

SLUM: This concept is instead focused on the condition of the housing and the living conditions. While often used as synonymous to “informal settlement” it can also be a degenerated public housing estate.⁴¹ There are several different definitions. Important to all of them is the lack of adequate housing and basic services.⁴²

⁴¹ Crispino Ocheng, Architect and Urban Planner, 2003-11. Interview.

⁴² UN Human Settlements Program 2003, p. 10.

PART I: THE FRAME OF INTERPRETATION

In the first chapter of this part I will show how the concept Thirdspace will be used as a theoretical instrument to understand the informal settlements and the process of upgrading in relation to questions of power. The second chapter will look at the method of the study, motivated from the theoretical perspective.

The conceptual framework

Out of several reasons I have chosen not to go back to the original Henry Lefebvre. Instead I will turn to secondary sources, basing the theory on Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* in the digested form of Edward Soja. There are two main reasons behind this choice:

The first reason is that Soja's simplification of Lefebvre's thinking makes it possible to use the theories as an analytical tool in this limited study. Soja himself says about *The Production of Space*: "Nearly all that seemed solid and convincing in the 'Plan' frustratingly melted into air in the dense and eclectic prose of the subsequent chapters"⁴³ (the "Plan" functions as an introduction). What the "ever-out-of-his-own-reasoning"⁴⁴ Lefebvre does is to constantly disrupt his own reasoning to circle the question raised.⁴⁵ Soja tries to extract a central argument from this "Plan". Obviously this doesn't give the full potential of the "meandering, idiosyncratic, and wholesomely anarchic style and structure,"⁴⁶ that is an important expression of Lefebvre's spatialization – not only of *what* is written but also *how* it is written. But it gives the central argumentation a form that is possible to use in my study without claiming to comprehend Lefebvre.

The second reason is partly connected to the first and is based on the fact that Soja updates Lefebvre's theories, placing them in a contemporary field of study, using them practically to understand contemporary urbanism from a *radical postmodernist* perspective.⁴⁷ Thereby he gets rid of the nostalgia clinging to the Situationist movement.⁴⁸ In updating Lefebvre Soja is also widening the discussion (for good and for bad). One of the main points Soja makes in *Thirdspace* is that there is a major shift taking place in cultural theory today – a *spatial turn* – and that Lefebvre is the original thinker behind this shift.

⁴³ Soja 1996, p. 8.

⁴⁴ Sandin 2003, p. 164.

⁴⁵ Sandin 2003, p. 163.

⁴⁶ Soja 1996, p. 8.

⁴⁷ In the introduction of both *Thirdspace* and *Postmetropolis* Soja takes great pains to position himself as a postmodernist without accepting the rigid dualism between postmodernists and modernists. Soja is obviously aware of the problem in calling himself a postmodernist and thereby immediately creating a dualism against modernism (see the critique against binaries in this chapter). He himself critiques what according to him is an unnecessary reductionistic dualism between modernist/postmodernist thus taking the pungency of Sandin's critique that Soja himself by calling himself a postmodernist immediately creates a dichotomy. (Sandin 2003, note 334, p. 164.) In the preface to *Postmetropolis* Soja talks about a commitment to produce knowledge that has a practical usefulness in changing the world for the better. This has been seen as a modern project incompatible with postmodern perspectives but Soja rejects this simplistic logic. Soja 2000, p. xiv.

⁴⁸ Lars-Mikael Raataama 2003, *Politiskt våld*, p. 19. Lefebvre cooperated with the Situationists (before the break with Guy Debord in the early 1960s) but here it's also important to note Lefebvre's critique of the Situationists for "the extent to which mysticism, escapism, transgression, and the shortterm event serve as substitutes for more rigorous analysis and sustained transformation." Harris & Berke 1997, p. 21.

THIRDING-AS-OTHERING

The presupposition behind Soja's concept Thirdspace is that all binary thinking is reductionistic, as it compacts meaning into a closed either/or opposition between two terms, concepts or elements. To "crack them open" Lefebvre introduced what Soja calls a *thirthing-as-Othering*,⁴⁹ a third position that partakes of the original paring but is not just a combination or an in-between position.⁵⁰ Instead it "introduces a critical 'other than' choice that speaks and critiques through its otherness."⁵¹ It is much more than the dialectical synthesis of Hegel and Marx. Soja says that: "This critical thirthing-as-Othering is the first and most important step in transforming the categorical and closed logic of either/or to the dialectically open logic of both/and also."⁵² This opens up for my reading of the slum as both a problem; "the worst of urban poverty and inequality"⁵³ and a possibility; "as proactive, bottom up solution to urban poverty and rural immigration."⁵⁴

THIRDSPACE

Lefebvre uses thirthing-as-Othering to rebalance history and sociality by introducing spatiality. This is Soja's first use of Thirdspace and fundamental to my reading of how power is inscribed and acted out in and through space. Space is not to be viewed as a stage for processes that are historical and social but is in itself a productive force:

On the one hand, our actions and thoughts shape the spaces around us, but at the same time the larger collectively or socially produced spaces and places within which we live also shape our actions and thoughts in ways that we are only beginning to understand.⁵⁵

This will lie at the core of my spatialized reading of the colonial history of Nairobi. I will try to see how the structuring of space is used as a power tool to the colonial government as well as how this structuring of space shapes the power relations in Nairobi up to this day.

It also opens up for reading the contemporary cityspace as relations of power. Lefebvre argued that space is the "ultimate locus and medium of struggle"⁵⁶ and he grounded this in a fundamentally urban problematic. Going against the apolitical scientific space of town planners he saw the city as "a tension-filled and often highly contested spatial dynamic and framework for political action."⁵⁷ On the one hand space is "shaped and moulded by historical and natural elements, through a political process."⁵⁸ On the other hand "power is contextualised and made concrete ... in the (social) production of (social) space."⁵⁹ Space is a social and political product and power is produced in and through space.

⁴⁹ From Lefebvre's "Il y a toujours l'Autre", translated by Soja as "there is always an-Other term". Soja 1996, p. 7.

⁵⁰ Soja 1996, p. 60.

⁵¹ Soja 1996, p. 60-61.

⁵² Soja 1996, p. 60.

⁵³ UN Human Settlements Program 2003, foreword by Kofi Annan.

⁵⁴ Rubbo 2003, p. 4.

⁵⁵ Soja 2000, p. 6.

⁵⁶ Elden, not dated, p. 5.

⁵⁷ Soja 2000, p. 9.

⁵⁸ Elden, not dated, p. 4.

⁵⁹ Soja 1996, p. 87.

THIRDSPACE AS LIVED SPACE

This social space or *lived space* is Soja's second Thirdspace. Through the critique of the *double illusion* Soja follows Lefebvre in the *trialectics of spatiality*, which opens up the second binarism of Firstspace (perceived space) and Secondspace (conceived space).

The *realistic illusion* overemphasizes the concrete, material and physical (Firstspace), reducing what is "real" to only "material or natural objects and their directly sensed relations."⁶⁰ This illusion lies behind materialism and empiricism.

The *illusion of transparency* on the other hand overemphasises the abstract, mental and geometric (Secondspace). It is at work in philosophical idealism, in the Cartesian *cogito* and in the Hegelian spirit/mind.⁶¹

The critique of the double illusion leads to the introduction of the third spatialization – Thirdspace – that are both distinct from the two others, and goes beyond them, embracing all three spaces at the same time: material, mental and social together.⁶² I will use Thirdspace as lived space as a more specific understanding of the informal settlements in relation to the formally built city as well as a tool to see how power is acted out through space in the upgrading of slums. I will now take a closer look at Lefebvre's three different spatial modes following Soja in his book *Thirdspace*:

FIRSTSPACE (Lefebvre's *Spatial practice*) is space as physical form. It is the material and empirical space that is directly sensible and open (within limits) to accurate measurement and description. This *perceived space* is the traditional focus of attention in all the spatial disciplines.⁶³

SECONDSPACE (Lefebvre's *Representations of space*) is mental space, the "conceptualized space, the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdivides...as of a certain type of artists with a scientific bent – all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is *conceived*."⁶⁴ For Lefebvre Secondspace is "the dominant space in any society" and "the representations of power and ideology, of control and surveillance."⁶⁵

Secondspace, as an instrument of "power and ideology," will be central to my understanding of the colonial history of Nairobi. I will see the master plans of Nairobi as an outcome of the colonial power inscribed in space and reproduced through space. In this analysis I will make use of Michel Foucault's chapter on the Panopticon in *Discipline and Punish*. Foucault describes two different schemas for the execution of power symbolized by *the leper*, giving rise to rituals of exclusion, and *the plague*, giving rise to disciplinary projects. According to Foucault these two schemas came together during the 19th century: The partitioning of the discipline started to be acted out in the field of exclusion. Foucault's well-known picture for this is Jeremy Bentham's *Panopticon*, the prison where one invisible supervisor can control a quantity of individuals who are separated in the room. The excluded are individualised and the power is made

⁶⁰ Soja 1996, p. 64.

⁶¹ Soja 1996, p. 63-64.

⁶² Sandin has criticised Soja of loosing the openness of Lefebvre's original thirding-as-Othering by collecting the "spaces-to-be-avoided neatly into Firstspace and Secondspace, so as to pave the way for Thirdspace" and thus creating a new dichotomy. I would give Sandin right looking at *Thirdspace* from 1996. In *Postmetropolis* from 2000 on the other hand I think that Soja is using all three different perspectives combined in a creative understanding of the postmetropolis.

⁶³ Soja 1996, p. 66.

⁶⁴ Lefebvre, quoted in Soja 1996, p. 66-67.

⁶⁵ Lefebvre, quoted in Soja 1996, p. 66-67. Italics are mine.

invisible.⁶⁶ I will see how this process is acted out in the structuring of the cityspace of Nairobi.

But while Foucault is very clear when it comes to unmask the controlling powers he doesn't give any way to escape these powers by individual resistance, as individuality and subjectivity to him is something that in itself is produced. Soja has been criticized for overlooking this fundamental difference between Foucault and Lefebvre when bringing them together under the same Thirdspace umbrella. Sven-Olof Wallenstein claims that to Foucault "Lefebvre is caught up in an illusory belief in the given, and is unable to see that this subjectivity and individuality is itself something produced, and thus is unable to function as a level for resistance."⁶⁷ To Lefebvre on the other hand Foucault "is unable to bridge the gap between the theoretical sphere and the world of practical action, and thus fails to see the potential of the everyday as well as the decisive role played by totality and centrality. /.../ Foucault does not grasp the contradictory and open qualities of everyday spatiality, but derives it immediately from a kind of panoptic diagrammatise."⁶⁸ This difference is central in my foregrounding of Lefebvre in this study, as I, through Thirdspace, will see the informal settlements as offering such a way out.⁶⁹

THIRDSPACE (Lefebvre's *Spaces of representation*) is the directly *lived spaces* that are linked to the "clandestine or underground side of social life"⁷⁰ and "also to [certain forms of] art."⁷¹ It is "the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users'"⁷² that is produced and modified over time through its use; it is space "invested with symbolism and meaning"⁷³ and "of margin, resistance or alternative."⁷⁴

According to Soja Thirdspace (as lived space) sums up in two key points:

⁶⁶ Michel Foucault 1979, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, p. 198-200.

⁶⁷ Sven-Olof Wallenstein has reconstructed this argument, that newer came to be, between Lefebvre and Foucault. (Sven-Olof Wallenstein 2002, "CERFI, Desire, And The Genealogy Of Public Facilities", in *SITE* number 2, p. 12) Soja himself discusses the same critique by Lefebvre against Foucault in *Thirdspace*, but seems to move beyond these differences very much due to the influence Foucault (being the "primarily catalyst") have played on later followers (cultural critics, spatial feminists, post-colonialists) who "take space seriously". Soja 1996, p. 146-149.

⁶⁸ Wallenstein 2002, p. 12.

⁶⁹ To be more specific on this a distinction can be made between Lefebvre's *lived space* (representational space) and Foucault's *heterotopia*, the concepts brought together in Thirdspace by Soja. Gunnar Sandin says that while *lived space* is the "directly lived" space of "inhabitants" and "users" heterotopia is rather a spatial reflexion and consequence of the ordinary space that it opposes. Sandin claims: "Lefebvre has a clearer (perhaps more conventional) ideological belief in the restructuring of space, while Foucault is descriptive, albeit in the end no less radical." (Sandin 2003, p. 166) And while I see the informal settlements as representing the lived space of Lefebvre I would rather turn to the opposite spatialization, the colony itself to find heterotopia. This is supported by Foucault himself in *Of Other Spaces* where he says about heterotopias: "...their role is to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled. /.../ I wonder if certain colonies have not functioned somewhat in this manner." Foucault 1986, "Of Other Spaces", in *Diacritics: a review of contemporary criticism*, spring 1986, p. 27.

⁷⁰ Soja 1996, p. 67.

⁷¹ Sandin 2003, p. 165. I take the quote from Sandin as he has made an, as I think, important distinction by limiting the quote to "certain forms of art" drawing from other passages in *The Production of Space*. In this context Soja discusses Lefebvre's will to foreground the insightfulness of art versus science, which Soja claims to be "a key pillar of Lefebvre's metaphilosophy." Soja 1996, p. 67.

⁷² It is also inhabited and used by artists, writers, philosophers, ethnologists, anthropologists and psychoanalysts who seek to describe the worlds we live in. Soja 1996, p. 67.

⁷³ Elden 2003, p. 7.

⁷⁴ Sandin 2003, p. 164, note 336.

- 1) It "is the dominated – and hence passively experienced or subjected – space which the imagination... seeks to change and appropriate" and that "overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects."⁷⁵
- 2) Combining the real and the imagined these lived spaces become "the terrain for the generation of 'counterspaces', spaces of resistance to the dominant order arising precisely from their subordinate, peripheral or marginalizing positioning."⁷⁶ Soja writes:

They are the "dominated spaces", the spaces of the peripheries, the margins and the marginalized, the "Third Worlds" that can be found at all scales, in corpo-reality of the body and mind, in sexuality and subjectivity, in individual and collective identities from the most local to the most global. They are the chosen spaces for struggle, liberation, and emancipation.⁷⁷

I will use Thirdspace as lived space as both a way to understand the informal settlements in relation to the formally built city as well as the upgrading of the slums. In doing this it's important not to reduce Thirdspace to the physical environment of Firstspace or a social process taking place in space. Instead I will try to look at "the (social) production of (social) space" as material, mental and social together. While the different layers of Thirdspace can make my use of the concept less exact I think it's important to keep these two levels: the rebalancing of history, sociality with spatiality as well as the rebalancing of material space (Firstspace) and mental space (Secondspace) with social space (Thirdspace).

DELIMITATION

Before moving on to methodological questions I will make some delimitations regarding my use of Thirdspace in this study. To Soja Thirdspace incorporates a whole new theoretical field, a *spatial turn*, in cultural studies. This *spatial turn* can be described as a way to think about the spatiality of human life in the same "intrinsic and richly" way as we think of its historicity and sociality.⁷⁸ What Soja seems to do is to lump together key notions of different thinkers who are "proposing a radically different (way of thinking about) space"⁷⁹ in the concept Thirdspace. This makes Thirdspace into a very inclusive and open concept and calls for a delimitation and explanation of how I will use Thirdspace in this study.

The new thinking about space is most clearly seen in *critical postmodern feminism* and *postcolonialism*, both perspectives that Soja brings into Thirdspace. As I hope to show these perspectives have an obvious connection to and are highly relevant for my study, informing my understanding of Thirdspace in relation to my material. But instead of going into this massive bulk of literature I have tried to peel off the layers to keep Thirdspace as close to its "origin" as possible, that is Soja's reading of Lefebvre. So although I navigate in a postcolonial context where the women are taking a leading role (see note 297 on page 45), I am, rather ironically, left with three white western males (as so often is the case): Soja, Lefebvre and Foucault.

⁷⁵ Lefebvre, quoted in Soja 1996, p. 67-68.

⁷⁶ Soja 1996, p. 68.

⁷⁷ Soja 1996, p. 68.

⁷⁸ Soja 1996, p. 2.

⁷⁹ Sandin 2003, p. 165.

The methodological framework

The method I have chosen could best be described as a theoretically based case study. I will first make some remarks on my use of the theory and then look at the structure of the text, going into the methodological questions and problems as I go along.

The theoretical perspective works towards two ends in this study. The first is to give a tool to see how power works in the upgrading of slums and the second underlying aim is to give new ways to look at the informal settlements and in doing this widening the scope for Thirdspace interpretations.

There is a difficulty in the second aim as I try to establish a bridge between a theoretical framework, Thirdspace, and a material, the problem of slums, that I haven't seen brought together earlier.⁸⁰ This means that the theories haven't been worked out to understand the informal settlements or the postcolonial cities of the developing world, but are instead focused on the postmodernity of Los Angeles. The focus on Los Angeles has been an aim for criticism against Soja.⁸¹ But referring to the last paragraph of the delimitation above I would question this critique and fall back on Soja's outspoken "invitation to comparative analysis in all other lived spaces wherever they may be located."⁸² Soja's academic specialization in African studies in his early career and foregrounding of bell hooks, an African-American cultural critic – to open up Thirdspace to questions of race, gender, class as well as empire and colony⁸³ – as well as the already discussed postcolonial thinking⁸⁴ brought into Soja's Thirdspace, helps to bridge the gap between Los Angeles and Nairobi.

The field study falls into two parts. The first part moves from macro to micro. The combination and interaction of macro (global) and micro (local) scales are inscribed in both the theory and in the material. In Postmetropolis Soja argues that Lefebvre resolves the "tension and contradictions" that arise from micro and macro scales in his "alternative and intensely politicized way of looking at cityspace, combining both macro and micro perspectives..."⁸⁵ And the upgrading is done within a network of *local federations* that organizes the urban poor on a *global scale* (Slum Dwellers International).

The second part of the field study is a case study where I focus on just one small area, Kambi Moto in Huruma. This part can be described as a curve that rises towards the chapter "Negotiations for Land", where the two main power relations of this study will come to the fore most clearly, and then evens out again. Having said this, it's important to note that the question of power (and empowerment) will be the driving force behind every chapter of this study.

The field study was conducted during two months in the end of 2003. The first half of my stay I had the opportunity to visit numerous settlements of different character together with the staff of Pamoja Trust, while I choose to focus on

⁸⁰ Rob Shields makes the only direct connection when he writes about lived space, or "third space", as he labels it: "Also included in this aspect are clandestine and underground spatial practices which suggest and prompt alternative (revolutionary) restructurings of institutionalised discourses of space and new modes of spatial praxis, such as that of squatters, illegal aliens, and *Third World slum dwellers*, who fashion a spatial presence and practice outside of the norms of the prevailing (enforced) social spatialisations." Shields 2002. Italics are mine.

⁸¹ Elden 2003, s. 9.

⁸² Soja 2000, p. xvii-xviii.

⁸³ Soja 1996, p. 12-13.

⁸⁴ Soja 1996, p. 14.

⁸⁵ Soja 2000, p. 10.

Kambi Moto in the second half of my stay, making interviews with the habitants and capturing the everyday life in the settlement on video.

I have collected the material in the field study mainly by unstructured in-depth interviews with a few individuals, recorded on video, but also by attaining group discussions and using participant observation. My choice to base the text in the field study on quotes from the interviewees are inspired by Soja's book *Postmetropolis* where he bases two chapters solely on quotes.⁸⁶ The quotes are also motivated by my will to capture the heterogeneous reality of the chosen Thirdspace perspective.

The choice of Kambi Moto is a deliberate choice to foreground "the good example". In Nairobi Kambi Moto has become a test case to other communities and due to the accessibility of the UN Habitat headquarters, which are placed in Nairobi; it has even become a test case on the global agenda of slum upgrading. To motivate the use of one single case study, I once again turn to the introduction, making Soja's earlier quoted urge to see "Los Angeles as a symptomatic lived space" of "uniquely expressed generality"⁸⁷ to mine in the case of Kambi Moto. At the base of this lies also my understanding of science as partial without final answers. I haven't either talked to representatives of all sides involved to find an objective presentation of the process. Instead I have focused on finding the information that best can help to answer the question of this study.

This is of course far from a *quantitative* sustainable scientific method, but I think that it's possible to draw normative conclusions of a more general character also from a limited *qualitative* interpretative study like this. I will once again motivate my choice of method by quoting Soja when he in *Postmetropolis* disregards the reductionistic quantitative interpretations of First- and Secondspace, comparing the understanding of lived space to writing a biography:

In this sense, studying cityspace presents a potentially endless variety of exemplifications and interpretations. Faced with such complexity, we explore and explain as much as we can, choosing those specific examples and instances which most closely reflect our particular objectives and projects for obtaining useful, practical knowledge, knowledge that we can use not just to understand the world but to change it for the better.⁸⁸

The Thirdspace interpretation chosen here is just one possible way of trying to understand the informal settlements and get a more creative understanding of the problem of slums as well as practical solutions that can work towards the empowerment of the slum dwellers in upgrading.

⁸⁶ Soja 2000, chapter 12 and 13.

⁸⁷ Soja 2000, p. xvii.

⁸⁸ Soja 2000, s. 11-12.

PART II: THE CITY



FIGURE 4. The building of the Ugandan railway.

In the first chapter of this part I give a general background to the problem by a spatialized reading of the colonial history of Nairobi, that focus on power as inscribed and acted out in and through space. This opens up to my reading of the informal settlements as a dominated counterspace for resistance. In the second chapter I look at the contemporary cityspace as it has been reshaped since independence and I also give a brief history of the dealings with the informal settlements since independence.

The Colonial Geohistory of Nairobi

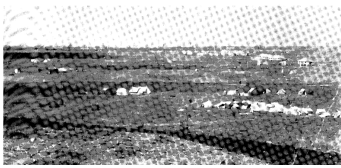


FIGURE 5. Nairobi 1899.

I will start by looking at the dominating Secondspace of colonial ideology as it is expressed through the colonial master plans of Nairobi. This history goes right back to the conception of Nairobi as a stop on the building of the Ugandan railway and is thus a consequence of "notions of the civilizing effect of the spread of the British imperialism into the heart of Africa"⁸⁹

In describing the history of the city I will follow Anja Kervanto Nevanlinna in *Interpreting Nairobi: A cultural study of built form* from 1996. Behind my interpretations of how the colonial power has been manifested and reproduced in the planning of Nairobi lies a use of Foucault's notion of the Panopticon, as already lined out in "the conceptual framework"⁹⁰

Parallel to the history of the city runs another "underground" history that I have chosen to call the history of the *non-city*. This is what I postulate to be the Thirdspace history of the informal settlements. Although these two histories are in fact one and the same, the other a distorted reflection of the first, I have chosen to separate them and divide the colonial history into two parts.

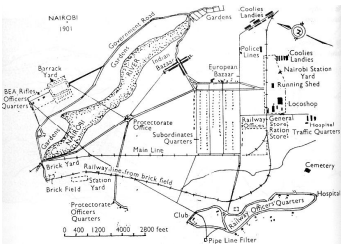


FIGURE 6. Uganda Railway General plan of Nairobi, 1901.

THE CITY OF SECONDSPACE

Two different concepts of land met when Nairobi was settled in the 1890s: the colonialist view that land was something to be *owned* by someone and the native view that it was to be *inhabited*. The provincial Sub-Commissioner stated that: "A native's claim to any land is recognized, *even according to native custom*, only so long as he occupies beneficially."⁹¹

Already the first plans for the city excluded the non-Europeans in general and the Africans in particular by introducing a system of *racial segregation*. The motivation for a strict segregation between the racial groups was to protect the European community from the "low level of hygiene and sanitation"⁹² in the Asian and African areas.⁹³ Its effect was a *social control* executed by the Europeans over the others.

The segregation was taken one step further in 1913: The plan of W.J. Simpson was based on *complete segregation*, a separation of both different races and different functions. The functional segregation was seen as the universal and self-evident purpose of city planning, without recognizing integration as typical to non-European (and some European) traditions. By allocating the Europeans the

⁸⁹ Anja Kervanto Nevanlinna, 1996. *Interpreting Nairobi: The Cultural Study of Built Form*, p. 104.

⁹⁰ See p. 15.

⁹¹ John Ainsworth, quote taken from M. F. Hill 1949, *Permanent Way. Vol. 1, The Story of the Kenyan and Uganda Railway*, in Nevanlinna 1996, p. 92. Italics are mine.

⁹² Nevanlinna 1996, p. 116.

⁹³ Originating as a response to an outburst of plague in the Indian bazaar.



FIGURE 9. Master Plan 1948, Central area.

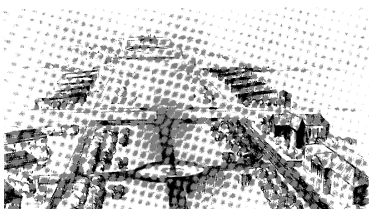


FIGURE 10. Master Plan 1948, Centre.



FIGURE 11. Nairobi street view during the Emergency, 1950s.

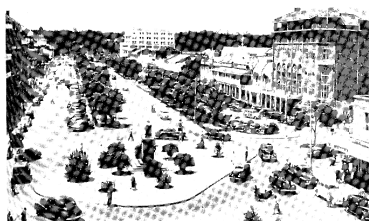


FIGURE 12. Nairobi in the 1950s.

cultural and ideological level.¹⁰³ *The Nairobi Area Town Planning Memorandum* came to "determine some of the culture boundaries of town planning in Nairobi for a long time, maybe permanently."¹⁰⁴

This can be seen in *The Master Plan for a Colonial Capital* of 1948. The planners saw their work as unbiased "by being confined to the principles of planning which take their measure on the human and technical needs..."¹⁰⁵ But these human and technical needs were in fact European. The racial segregation was set in terms of class, which made the already colonially subordinated groups into culturally subordinated groups in an European class society, defined as universal by the planners. The European cultural frame permeated all levels of the plan from the initial survey and interviews to the planning principles and proposed plans. The Africans were seen as *objects of development*, to be transformed to adopt western models and practices.¹⁰⁶

It was not only a question of assimilating the non-European groups politically into the European community, but of the *conversation of their symbols* into those of the dominant colonial society.¹⁰⁷

The implicit panoptical order of the plan became explicit in the 1954 Emergency following on the Mau Mau uprising.¹⁰⁸ The change into the modern society of *The Master Plan* was imposed while fencing African housing with barbed wire, adopting an elaborate pass system and imposing nightly curfews.¹⁰⁹

The alienation of the African population as an instrument of the colonial power was even furthered in the process of industrialization. If Kenya was to develop into an industrial country a stabilized African population was seen as essential. "In the process, urban forms had an instrumental role: they were both conceived and used as instruments in the social transformation."¹¹⁰ "We cannot *hope* to produce an effective African labour force until we have first removed the African from the elevating and retarding influences of his economic and cultural background"¹¹¹ the carpenter Committee stated in 1954. This can be seen as the final step in a history of *alienation*¹¹², starting with the segregation of different races and different functions and culminating in the expressed wish to remove "the African from...his economic and cultural background." *Alienation* here became a deliberate tool used by the colonial government to transform the African population.

After independence in 1963 the plan of Nairobi was left as a blueprint of the colonial order and would continue to reproduce that order. *The Metropolitan*

¹⁰³ Foucault says about the Panopticon (continuing the Foucault quote from note 100): "...in short, that the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers." Foucault 1979, p. 201.

¹⁰⁴ Nevanlinna 1996, p. 146.

¹⁰⁵ Nevanlinna 1996, p. 181.

¹⁰⁶ Nevanlinna 1996, p. 184.

¹⁰⁷ Nevanlinna 1996, p. 184. Italics are mine.

¹⁰⁸ Nevanlinna 1996, p. 203.

¹⁰⁹ Nevanlinna 1996, p. 195.

¹¹⁰ Nevanlinna 1996, p. 189.

¹¹¹ Nevanlinna 1996, p. 190.

¹¹² To Lefebvre *alienation* became a key concept in "broadening Marxist ideological critique beyond issues of production, class struggle, and economic determinants," into dealing with all sides of life. He saw *everyday life* in modern society as being threatened by *alienation* due to the increased rationalisation: increased fragmentation, functional separation, social separation and cultural passivity. McLeod 1997, p. 14.

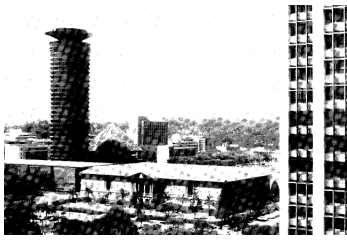


FIGURE 13. Nairobi city centre, 1987.



FIGURE 14. Karuna Forest uncontrolled settlement.

Growth Strategy of 1973 – just like the *Master plan* – adopted functional segregation and zoning as self-evident. Nevanlinna again:

The *Master Plan* had been criticized as technical and unpolitical, but these criteria fit the *Metropolitan Growth Strategy* even better...abstractions of the planned city – dominated, while the three-dimensional, physical aspects of the planned city were largely excluded.¹¹³

Founded by the World Bank and the United Nations *The Metropolitan Growth Strategy* was an instrument to present Nairobi to potential investors and to protect the interests of the upper class. For example the value of Land in the European sector was constantly undervalued in relation to its location and density while the opposite was true for the African sector.¹¹⁴

According to Nevanlinna the large international community and expanding tourist sector continued to support, what she calls, European urban forms. A new African elite "moved into the houses vacated by the colonials"¹¹⁵ As one remarked: "You forget the smell of dust only after a few days"¹¹⁶

While the history of the city can be read as an expression of the panoptical powers of the colonial government executed against the subordinated African population there is another history that has not yet been told. I have chosen to call it the history of the non-city. This is the history of the "left over" spaces in the official plan, spaces that escape the dominating powers of the plan and evolves from the directly lived experience of the African population. This history will lay the foundation for my reading of the informal settlements as Thirdspace.

THE NON-CITY OF THIRDSPACE

While the planned changes of Nairobi were attached to the values, models, and practices of mostly the European community... the informal, unofficial and – according to the administrators – illegal sector developed on the initiative and resources of the Africans.¹¹⁷

The colonial administration saw African villages¹¹⁸ as a "blot on the urban landscape."¹¹⁹ Not only were they conceived as having problems of sanitation, but they also more generally represented disorder to the administration, falling outside the order of the planned city. Within the first two decades of the founding of Nairobi, several unplanned villages had already grown.¹²⁰ Demolition was the colonialist way to deal with the problem as improvement was out of question since that would legitimize an illegal act and encourage rural-to-urban migration.¹²¹ Instead the Colonial authorities tried to replace the informal African villages by creating an African model village, Pumvani, "where the ways of life acceptable to the European colonizers could be pursued."¹²² It was to be a native location that could be *controlled*, and thus *tolerated* by the authorities.

¹¹³ Nevanlinna 1996, p. 233. Also compare to Secondspace on p. 13.

¹¹⁴ Soja 1979, p. 43.

¹¹⁵ Hall 2003, p. 205.

¹¹⁶ Hall 2003, p. 205.

¹¹⁷ Nevanlinna 1996, p. 203.

¹¹⁸ I have chosen to keep Nevanlinna's term "African villages" instead of using "informal settlements" to describe the early informal settling.

¹¹⁹ Government of Kenya, 2001-06. *Kenya Slum Upgrading Program*, p. 2.

¹²⁰ Nevanlinna 1996, p. 136.

¹²¹ Government of Kenya 2001, p. 3.

¹²² Nevanlinna 1996, p. 137. Pumvani is also an early example of organised self-built in Nairobi.

Regardless constant demolitions some African villages existed for longer periods of time. While being rudimentary when it came to material standards they provided the African inhabitants something socially that they couldn't get elsewhere: "a community with both continuity and budding urban traditions"¹²³ Nevanlinna means that:

The role of the African villages in Nairobi must therefore be conceived as not only to house Africans, but, more importantly, to establish a basis from which African ways of life and interests could be discussed and promoted, eventually generating political movements. In this sense, to demolish the villages was also to disturb a social entity, to attempt to destroy a form of urban life, a cultural community.¹²⁴

The African villages also created a counterspace for resistance against the colonial administration.¹²⁵ In the politically tense climate of the 1940s and 50s the subversive role of the villages became a major concern to the administration. They were seen as "centres of aggression, managed by subversive elements for disruptive purposes" and as "one of the major reasons (if not the prime cause)" of the outbreak of the Mau Mau violence that led to the declaration of the State of Emergency in 1954.¹²⁶ By the Europeans, at the time, Mau Mau was a tribal cult, whose leaders wanted to turn Kenya into "a land of 'darkness and death.'" According to Nevanlinna later research has instead described it as "a nationalist movement" where "several simultaneous revolutions" formed "a united front."¹²⁷

The informal settlements in colonial times had a double function. They were the marginalized, leftover spaces, "a blot on the urban landscape", in relation to the dominating ideologically structured space (Secondspace) of the colonial government. They also functioned as a social space where African ways of life could live on and thus as a counterspace for resistance against the colonial power. This double function grounds my reading of the informal settlements as Thirdspace.¹²⁸

Just like the colonial planning of Nairobi reproduced the colonial order after independence the responses to informal settlements did. Faced with a wave of uncontrolled rural to urban migration – when the restrictions on travel were lifted – the independent government reacted in the same way as their predecessors. In trying to protect the formally built city against informal developments demolitions were soon reinstalled. But the "clean- up" campaigns from the independent administration evoked strong opposition from the affected people:

For the affected groups, the demolition of temporary settlements had no more than a decade earlier represented one of the unjust and biased practices of the colonial European administration; now, the same policies were pursued by the Kenyanized administration.¹²⁹

And these clean-up campaigns were not even for the benefit of the inhabitants of Nairobi in the long run, but instead they aimed at presenting "a more attractive image to 'our foreign visitors'"¹³⁰ according to Hilary Ng'wengo, journalist in Nairobi at the time. These demolitions represent the first way of dealing with the

¹²³ Nevanlinna 1996, p. 138.

¹²⁴ Nevanlinna 1996, p. 138.

¹²⁵ Nevanlinna 1996, p. 138.

¹²⁶ Nevanlinna 1996, p. 194.

¹²⁷ Nevanlinna 1996, p. 194.

¹²⁸ See p.14.

¹²⁹ Nevanlinna 1996, p. 219.

¹³⁰ Nevanlinna 1996, p. 219.

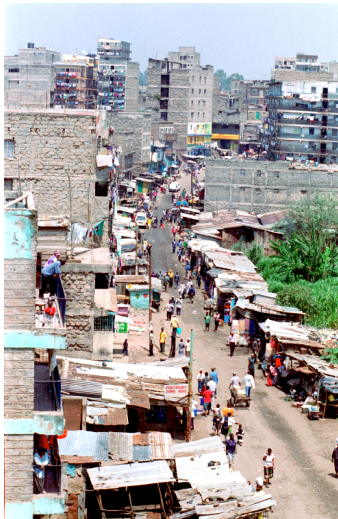


FIGURE 15. Huruma, eastern part of Nairobi.

informal settlements, when “the dust had settled”¹³¹ after independence in the early sixties. Before I continue the history of interventions dealing with informal settlements I will again turn to the formal city to see how the cityspace of Nairobi has been transformed since independence.

The Cityspace of Nairobi

The background to my reading of the informal settlements as Thirdspace is not explained solely from the colonial history. Forty years have gone by since independence and Nairobi today represents a new situation that has both expanded and accentuated the problem of the informal settlements while at the same time offering new possibilities of spatial awareness on a local scale and the formation of networks on a global scale. It is also true that most of the informal settlements of Nairobi were formed after independence in the 60s, partly transforming the colonial cityspace.

I will start by giving a short historical résumé of Nairobi since independence. The independence coincide with a more general urban crisis of the sixties that according to Soja has transformed – and is transforming – the metropolis to the postmetropolis in what he says might be the forth urban revolution.¹³² I will use Soja’s six discourses of the postmetropolis to sketch the contemporary cityspace of Nairobi, focusing on the forth discourse – *Fractal City*. After this I will take a look at the inventions dealing with informal settlements since independence.

FROM METROPOLIS TO POSTMETROPOLIS

In the interwar years Nairobi had grown from a small railway town into a European styled metropolis. The centre was an expression of the values and power of the colonial masters. With independence the metropolis started to disintegrate into the postmetropolis of Soja.

The colonial order had created its own panoptical harmony with a certain balance achieved under a repressive colonial regime due to the separation and control of the different racial groups. After independence this ”harmony” broke down. When the restrictions on travel were lifted this resulted in an accelerated rate of rural to urban migration.¹³³ The floodgates were opened and the city could not cope. The informal settlements grew beyond control.

The process of rural to urban migration continued in the 70s and the economic regression accelerated in the 80s, creating increasing poverty and lack of housing. The unplanned development broke through the segregation barriers and informal settlements and kiosks mushroomed in all parts of the city. Not even the high-income areas – the former European areas – that previously had been protected from unplanned development were spared. In the lower cost sections the already existing slums expanded and new ones came up.¹³⁴

While the formal planning after independence followed the colonial structuring of space the informal, Thirdspace, developments broke with this order, creating a new cityspace – what I will, following Soja, describe as *Fractal City*.

¹³¹ Paul Syagga, Winnie Mitullah and Sarah Gitau 2001, *Nairobi Situation Analysis*, Consultative Report, p. 17.

¹³² The former being: 1) The first urban settling in Jericho and Catal Hüyük ten millennia ago. 2) The agricultural revolution with the settling in fertile river valleys, beginning in Mesopotamia, in the sixth millennium B.C. 3) The modern industrial capitalist metropolis. Soja 2000.

¹³³ Two parallel developments pushed on this development: industrialisation and the change from food crops to exportable cash crops. The first attracting people to the city and the second making them leave the country. Jane Weru, not dated, *From race to economic class segregation and beyond*, p. 2-3.

¹³⁴ Weru, not dated, p. 2-3.

FRACTAL CITY



FIGURE 16. Nairobi west.



FIGURE 17. Kibera informal settlement.



FIGURE 18. Gigiri, residential.



FIGURE 19. City Centre.

Soja characterises the postmetropolis by using six different discourses that represents different ways of analyzing and interpreting the restructuring of the modern metropolis.

The first pair – *Postfordist Industrial Metropolis* and *Cosmopolis* – concerns the *causes* of the new urbanization process: The restructuring of the geopolitical economy and the globalisation process.¹³⁵ Africa south of Sahara is the global periphery. The continent has been ‘left out’ of most facets of globalization. Especially the new international division of labour have bypassed major parts of the continent, making Africa’s share of the world trade continue to decline.¹³⁶ In Kenya the economy has gone backwards for the last 20 years.¹³⁷ Neo-liberal doctrines of the 80’s and 90’s, that “explicitly ‘demanded’ an increase in inequality”¹³⁸ and the retreat of the state, have further increased poverty. Commenting on the SAP’s,¹³⁹ the *UN Habitat global report on human settlements 2003* sums up the role of sub-Sahara in the new world economy:

In a form of neo-colonialism that is probably more stringent than the original (since the developed countries no longer have to make local investments for development) many developing countries have become steady state suppliers of raw commodities to the world and continue to fall further and further behind. As agricultural productivity improves, the surplus rural population moves to the cities to find work. Instead of being a focus for growth and prosperity, the cities have become a dumping ground for a surplus population working unskilled, unprotected and low-wage informal service industries and trade. The slums of the developing world swell.¹⁴⁰

This quote also introduces the next pair of discourses – *Expolis* and *Fractal City* – that are concerned with the *urban form* and *social structure*, looking at the *outcome* or urban consequence of the restructuring.¹⁴¹ Nairobi of today is in many ways a dysfunctional city where the colonial order has broken down but still continues to shape the urban patterns. Comparing the situation today with that at independence both the urban conglomeration as a whole and its centre has changed. This is what Soja calls the *Expolis*: the modern metropolis turning itself inside out with the ruling elite, foreign workers and tourists abandoning the streets of Nairobi’s once proud International-style city centre for shopping malls in the sub-centres. “The inner city is under siege by hawkers and other informal traders and is slowly dying,”¹⁴² writes Jane Weru, the director of Pamoja Trust.

Soja describes the new exaggerated polarization and “*intensification of socio-economic inequalities*”¹⁴³ of the postmetropolis, as *Fractal City*. The earlier colonial power has been fragmented into *metropolarities* - “the multiple axes of differential power and status that produce and maintain socio-economic

¹³⁵ Soja 2000, p. 154.

¹³⁶ UN Human Settlements Program 2003, p. 43.

¹³⁷ Reuterswärd, Lars, Director of UN Habitat Shelter Branch, 2003-12. Interview.

¹³⁸ UN Human Settlements Program 2003, p. 43.

¹³⁹ A form of loans, with conditions that comprise the main points of the neo-liberal agenda. UN Human Settlements Program, 2003, p. 46.

¹⁴⁰ UN Human Settlements Program 2003, p. 46.

¹⁴¹ Soja 2000, p. 154.

¹⁴² Weru, not dated, p. 4. Lars Reuterswärd draws a parallel to the typical low-density sprawling American city Huston with a central downtown and suburbs: “A high-rise downtown, automobile dependence and then suburbs, where the international colony and the well off live very comfortably.” Reuterswärd 2003-12. Quote translated from Swedish by me.

¹⁴³ Soja 2000, p. 265.



FIGURE 20. Ghetto informal settlement.



FIGURE 21. Huruma.

inequality.”¹⁴⁴ Nairobi “boasts one of the highest disparities of wealth in the world.”¹⁴⁵ 60% of the population are crowded in slums occupying only 1 % of the residential land.¹⁴⁶ Trapped in unemployment they are producing “a permanent urban underclass.”¹⁴⁷ Close by, but in what seems to be a different world, the rich segment of the population live comfortably in spacious bungalows. 80% of the land in the city is owned by 20% of the population.¹⁴⁸ Different modes of transport also stratify the city. While the well off part of the population move around in cars (with the doors locked to avoid being robbed while stopping at red light) another segment of the population, the slum dwellers, move around by foot.¹⁴⁹ The intensified polarisation has made the city suffer from growing crime rates with house breaking-ins and burglary, muggings and carjackings,¹⁵⁰ giving Nairobi a reputation of being – besides Johannesburg – one of the most dangerous cities of Eastern and Southern Africa.

The last pair of discourses – *Carceral Cities* and *Simsities*¹⁵¹ – concerns the responses to this turbulent and socially fractious urbanism.¹⁵² The middle and higher income sectors in Nairobi have retreated into the “archipelago” of *Carceral Arpelago*,¹⁵³ gated communities¹⁵⁴ with guards at the entrance – as well as private guards at the house – that respond to an *ecology of fear*.¹⁵⁵ Jane Weru claims that “walls around every house and burglar-proof grills on every window have become a standard feature of Kenyan home architecture.”¹⁵⁶ Retreating to this *Carceral Arpelago* the well off have joined in neighbourhood associations that address issues of neighbourhood security and provision of services threatening the entire governance structure of the city.¹⁵⁷

¹⁴⁴ Soja 2000, p. 265.

¹⁴⁵ www.homeless-international.org/standard.asp?category=3&id=2350&id=276&id=262. 2003-02-27.

¹⁴⁶ Syagga, Mitullah and Gitau 2001, p. 28.

¹⁴⁷ Soja 2000, p. 271. I’m aware that this concept doesn’t totally apply to the situation in Nairobi, as it refers to a welfare-dependent urban underclass, and the welfare system is strikingly lacking in Kenya. By using the term I want to stress the exclusion from the formal market of employment of a large segment of the population, creating a *class of unemployed* urban poor (as opposed to the Marxist worker).

¹⁴⁸ Syagga, Mitullah and Gitau 2001, p. 28.

¹⁴⁹ Margaret Crawford points to the fact that “The city of the bus rider or pedestrian does not resemble that of the automobile owner”, as an example of physical differences in everyday life that “map the social geography of the city.” Margaret Crawford 1999, “Introduction” in John Chase, Margaret Crawford and John Kalinski (ed.): *Everyday Urbanism*, p. 11.

¹⁵⁰ Weru, not dated, p. 4.

¹⁵¹ I will not deal with this discourse that aims at capturing the “hyperreality of everyday life” where “urban life is increasingly being played out as if it were a computer game”. Soja has actually taken the term from a famous computer game. Soja 2000, p. 155.

¹⁵² Soja 2000, p. 155.

¹⁵³ Soja 2000, p. 299.

¹⁵⁴ The Slovenian artist Marjetica Potrc claims that slums and gated communities are the most successful (fastest growing) living environments of the contemporary city. She describes this as a process of privatisation of the public space where the public parks are transformed into golf courses (“for members only”). Marjetica Potrc 2003, “Public Space in Contemporary City” and “Contemporary City”, <http://www.potrc.org>, 2003-09-03.

¹⁵⁵ Just like *Carceral Archipelago* Soja has taken the concept *ecology of fear* from Mike Davies’ book *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* from 1990, according to Soja “possibly the best and unquestionably most widely read critical geohistory of contemporary American urbanism.” (Soja 2000, p. 300). In 2006 Davies came out with a book on the subject of slums called *Planet of Slums*. Since it was published after I had written this text I have not had the chance to include it in my study.

¹⁵⁶ Weru, not dated, p. 4.

¹⁵⁷ An example is an association that “has contested the legal obligation to remit rates to the City Council and instead provide their own services.” Weru, not dated, p. 5.



FIGURE 22. Lavington, residential.

The poorer sections of society have come together in a similar way as the neighbourhood association, trying to fill the gap left by poor governance, but with a different operation. Supported by NGOs they are trying to lift their living conditions.¹⁵⁸ Joseph Kimani, at Pamoja Trust, claims that there are more NGO's registered than churches in Nairobi (and that means a lot). There is a NGO working on every issue that affects the poor: "But nothing is happening. They are not delivering." Instead Kimani describes it as a "competition about donors."¹⁵⁹

In this study I will look at an attempt to move beyond these fragmented responses to the Fractal City to focus on the building of "a citywide poor peoples movement that can be a powerful tool to lobby for change within the city"¹⁶⁰ In *Postmetropolis* Soja moves from the *cultural turn* to the *spatial turn*: "a new source of mobilized consciousness rooted in the more immediate collective struggle to *take greater control over the "making of geography – the social production of human spatiality"*."¹⁶¹

This involvement in producing and in already produced spaces and places is what all those who are oppressed, subordinated, and exploited share, and it is this shared consciousness and practice of an explicitly spatial politics that can provide an additional bonding force for combining those separate channels of resistance and struggle that for so long have fragmented modernist equality politics.¹⁶²

These "new cultural politics of space and place"¹⁶³ is the other (hopeful) side of the Fractal City. Soja continues, talking about *Postmetropolis*: "All that has preceded this chapter and all that will follow is in large part an attempt to reassert what has been missing, or only weakly developed, in the fourth discourse [Fractal City] itself."¹⁶⁴ This is also true for my study as I try to look at empowerment in slum upgrading through "*the social production of human spatiality*."¹⁶⁵

THE VIEW FROM ABOVE AND THE VIEW FROM BELOW

I will now turn to look at the interventions dealing with the informal settlements since independence, focusing on the two main models of spatial practice in this history: "welfare housing" and "aided self-help". While the first is dependent on skilled workers the second is based on self-built housing. And while these models have great differences they both are suffering from the same limitations of the Firstspace perspective, being too narrowly focused on the physical environment instead of the overall wellbeing of the target population.

The failure of these models leads to the introduction of a third, alternative model of involvement – the "enabling approach". This third alternative also brings the history up to my field study both conceptually and historically.

I will end this chapter with a reading of these interventions from Soja's notion on *the view from above and below*. *The view from above* sees "the city as a whole, conceptualizing the urban condition on a... comprehensive... macrospatial scale"¹⁶⁶ and *the view from below* is engaged "in the

¹⁵⁸ Weru, not dated, p. 5-6.

¹⁵⁹ Kimani, Joseph, Advocacy at Pamoja trust, 2003-11-12. Interview.

¹⁶⁰ Weru, not dated, p. 6.

¹⁶¹ Soja 2000, p. 281.

¹⁶² Soja 2000, p. 281.

¹⁶³ Soja 2000, p. 282.

¹⁶⁴ Soja 2000, p. 282.

¹⁶⁵ Soja 2000, p. 281.

¹⁶⁶ Soja 1996, p. 310.



FIGURE 23. Welfare housing in Huruma.



FIGURE 24. Highrise, in the background, a part of Kibera that was upgraded but ended up with "the wealthy and the well-connected at the expense of the poor."



FIGURE 25. Chrispino Ocheng.

microgeographies of everyday life and pursuing the local view from the city streets."¹⁶⁷

The first model after independence to address the problem of the slums was the construction of heavily subsidized low-cost housing following minimum standards (that were taken over from the industrialised countries). This model was an inheritance from the colonial days. The demolition of informal settlements and the construction of large-scale urban housing estates had been instrumental to the colonial government in producing a stable urban workforce of the African population in the 50s. (On p. 20 I have described this as the final step in a process of alienation of the African population by the colonialists). The *Nairobi Situation Analysis* claims that: "Once the dust had settled after independence in the early sixties, these policies were pursued with even more vigour"¹⁶⁸

But the modernist model of large-scale public housing projects failed to provide housing for the poor (like in all development countries). It only covered 10 % of the required housing and was "favouring mainly the wealthy and well-connected at the expense of the poor."¹⁶⁹ The lack of participation and governance has since then made these welfare houses degenerate and become slums, says the local architect Crispino Ocheng: "There is no organization. There is no community. They have broken down completely."¹⁷⁰

The failure of the modernist model made way for the self-built housing of Turner.¹⁷¹ In the 70s *site and service* schemes started in Nairobi, "providing the low-income beneficiaries with serviced plots and financial support to build their own houses."¹⁷² And in the 80s *settlement upgrading* programmes started, helping "house owners in existing slum areas obtain tenure to their land and to improve their dwellings."¹⁷³

But also this model would fail the poor. While placing too much belief in the individual low-income households' ability and willingness to pay for housing, making gentrification the exception rather than the rule, the implementation of the projects on the other hand was non-participatory and top-down on a planning stage. Inputs from those likely to benefit was ignored resulting in over-designed and unaffordable infrastructure. "The architect went and did his or her brief with a *preconceived idea* about what should be the requirement of the housing. That housing has since ended up with the middle income",¹⁷⁴ says Ocheng.

The failure of the projects can also be read as an overemphasising of the Firstspace perspective: the improvement of the physical environment rather than the overall wellbeing of the target population:¹⁷⁵

Like other aid projects that focus purely on construction, the projects...existed in isolation from both government and the communities. Governments did not follow through with services, communities did not maintain the facilities, and governance structures disappeared once the international experts were gone /.../ In such circumstances, citizen apathy rather than energy was the rule.¹⁷⁶

As the informal settlements continued to grow in the 80s to the extent that 60 % of the population in Nairobi were living in informal settlements the aided self-

¹⁶⁷ Soja 1996, p. 310.

¹⁶⁸ Syagga, Mitullah and Gitau 2001, p. 17.

¹⁶⁹ Syagga, Mitullah and Gitau 2001, p. 17.

¹⁷⁰ Ocheng 2003-11.

¹⁷¹ See p. 3.

¹⁷² Syagga, Mitullah and Gitau 2001, p. 18.

¹⁷³ Syagga, Mitullah and Gitau 2001, p. 18.

¹⁷⁴ Ocheng 2003-11.

¹⁷⁵ Syagga, Mitullah and Gitau 2001, p. 19.

¹⁷⁶ UN Human Settlements Program 2003, p. 130-131.

help approach came into question. Instead the enabling approach was developed from the mid 80s and had its culmination in the Habitat agenda of 1996. It was a way to coordinate community mobilization and to argue for the withdrawal of the state from direct housing provision in favour of providing support for local determination and action.¹⁷⁷ Behind this lay an awareness of the need to involve slum dwellers not only in the construction but also in the decision-making and design.¹⁷⁸

The development of the enabling approach brings me up to my field study not only conceptually but also historically as the prelude to the UN Habitat meeting in 1996 was one of the triggering factors behind the birth of the Muungano movement, which will be at the focus of the field study.¹⁷⁹ Farouk Tebbal at UN Habitat describes the meeting as “a watershed” that changed the role of Habitat drastically from being an agency “that would provide technical assistance to countries” to instead “have an advocacy role”, and submits: “which is a little bit, if I may say so, political.”¹⁸⁰

The history of dealing with informal settlements can be read in two opposing ways when it comes to empowerment.¹⁸¹ The first way is to see the increasing involvement of the people affected as a gradual process towards increased empowerment. The other way to see it is as a history of the withdrawal of the state from its obligation towards the citizens, abandoning the poor.

The later view was lined out by Graciela Landaeta at a conference on housing at the architecture museum in Stockholm.¹⁸² Her basic assumption was that the ambitions when it comes to meeting the housing needs of the poor are less and less. Starting with the same ambitions as for everybody else, the welfare housing represents the first reduction, followed by the site and service schemes and to finally culminate in only sites. (The last alternative was proposed by Anna Tibaijuka, the executive director of UN Habitat, at the same conference.)¹⁸³

The question of how to solve the problem of on one hand the responsibility of the state (and other actors on a global scale) and on the other hand the involvement and responsibility of the individual is a central question in regard to my perspective of power in upgrading.

Drawing on Soja’s notion on the view from above and the view from below I would like to propose a reformulation of the two ways of interpreting the history

¹⁷⁷ Laid out in 1988 by the UN General Assembly, arising out of the Global Shelter Strategy to the year 2000, and reiterated in Agenda 21 in 1992 and the Habitat 11 in 1996.

¹⁷⁸ UN Human Settlements Program 2003, p. 131.

¹⁷⁹ See p. 32.

¹⁸⁰ Farouk Tebbal, Chief of UN Habitat Global Division, 2003-12-18. Interview.

¹⁸¹ To complicate this interpretation further community involvement in planning can represent opposing political visions. In discussing the new planning philosophies of the late 1960s Peter Hall points to the fact that the right wing and the left wing – “as so often seems to happen” – came to the same conclusion in their attack on the *systems planning*. (Hall 2003, p. 364) And further more, in discussing the victories of the community architecture movement in Britain in the late 80s, Hall points to the teaming up of the right-wing politics of Margaret Thatcher with the anarchist legacy: “It seemed that Howard, Geddes, Turner, and the anarchist tradition in planning had achieved ultimate respectability at last. Few, seemingly, noticed the irony: that the accolade had come under a radical right-wing government, which now ...made common cause with the anarchists against the spirit of bureaucratic socialism.” Hall 2003, p. 293.

¹⁸² Graciela Landaeta, researcher at Lund University, 2005-10-18. Speech at *Hem ljuva hem* (“Home sweet home”), a conference on global housing questions arranged by *Kooperation utan gränser* (“Cooperation without borders”) at the architecture museum in Stockholm.

¹⁸³ Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director of UN Habitat, 2005-10-18. Speech at *Hem ljuva hem* (“Home sweet home”), a conference on global housing questions arranged by *Kooperation utan gränser* (“Cooperation without borders”) at the architecture museum in Stockholm.

of planning as a question of different scales: The modernistic model was overemphasising the view from above and the self-help model was overemphasizing the view from below. While increased self-help by the residents represents the empowerment of the individual slum dweller from a micro-perspective it might, from a macro-perspective, stand for the failure of the state to fulfil its obligations to the poor. Marxist interpreters have even argued that the self-builder is one of the “attempts of capitalism to palliate the housing shortage in ways that do not interfere with the effective operation of these interests.”¹⁸⁴

I will argue, again drawing from Soja, that these contrasting perspectives have to be resolved in Lefebvre’s “alternative and intensely politicized way of looking at cityspace, combining both macro and micro perspectives...” Lefebvre describes this as “the (social) production of (social) space”¹⁸⁵ and Soja has reformulated this “third process”¹⁸⁶ as Thirdspace. On the practical level of slum upgrading it opens up my field study with the SDI (*Slum Dwellers International*) network of *local* federations that organizes the urban poor on a *global* scale.

¹⁸⁴ Hall 2003, p. 277.

¹⁸⁵ Soja 2000, p. 10.

¹⁸⁶ Soja 2000, p. 10.

PART III: THE GLOBAL AND THE LOCAL



FIGURE 26. Sheela Patel.

This first part of the field study will move from the global to the local. As stated earlier this interconnection and interdependence of the local and the global is crucial to my reading of the process.

First I will see how the global and local scales are resolved in the *Shack/Slum Dwellers International* (SDI) network,¹⁸⁷ then turn to the creation of a citywide struggle for spatial rights in the *Muungano* movement and finally look at the microgeography of the informal settlement Kambi Moto in Huruma. This establishes the framework for the next part of my field study, where I will follow the “rituals” of upgrading as they are worked out in a specific case study in Kambi Moto.

In both parts of the field study I will make extensive use of quotes from different people involved in the process.¹⁸⁸ The quotes are edited by me, to adjust the typically spoken language to fit in a written text, but at the same time I have tried to keep the individual ways of expression.

SDI: Global network of local federations

Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI) was formed in 1996 as a network of people’s organizations from different countries committed to a shared process of grassroots organization, problem solving and solution sharing in the struggle for land and housing of the urban poor.¹⁸⁹

This chapter is mainly based on an interview with Sheela Patel, Director of SPARC – one of the largest Indian NGOs working on housing and infrastructure issues for the urban poor – and a driving force behind the SDI network.¹⁹⁰

COMBINING MACRO- AND MICROGEOGRAPHIES

I will open up the discussion on the SDI where I left of in the final paragraph of the last chapter, with Lefebvre’s “alternative and intensely politicized way of looking at cityspace, combining both macro and micro perspectives...”¹⁹¹ This micro-macro relationship is recomposed around a thirding-as-Othering, that Lefebvre described as *social space* and that Soja has re-described as Thirdspace.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁷ Without developing the subjects further I would like to point to the fact that the global network both parallels and make use of the *internet* and that *globalisation* works in two ways in relation to the slums, on the one hand being part of the forming of and problem of slums (see p. 23 and UN Human Settlements Program 2003, p. 52) and on the other hand also being an important factor behind the formation of global grassroots-networks like the SDI.

¹⁸⁸ As stated earlier this choice is inspired by Soja in *Postmetropolis*.

¹⁸⁹ “Sixteen years ago, in 1988, about 800.000 people were forcefully evicted from their homes in Seoul to ‘beautify’ the city for the Olympic games.” (<http://www.sdinet.org/rituals/ritual4.htm>, 2006-02-18) The responses to these massive evictions led to the creation of a network in Asia, called the *Asian Coalition of Housing Rights*. An important role in the creation of the Asian network was played by the *Indian Alliance*, formed in 1984 by *Society for the Protection of Area Resource Centres* (SPARC), one of the largest Indian NGOs working on housing and infrastructure issues for the urban poor, and two community-based organisations, the *National Slum Dwellers Federation* and *Mahila Milan*. In 1991 exchanges started between Asia and Africa out of an initial dialog with South Africa. As more federations and communities from different countries became interested the process was formalised in 1996 in the SDI network. www.sparcindia.org 2006-08-22 and Sheela Patel, Director of Society for the Protection of Area Resource Centres (SPARC) in India, 2003-10-30. Interview.

¹⁹⁰ See previous note for the role of SPARC in the creation of the SDI.

¹⁹¹ Soja 2000, p. 10.

¹⁹² Soja 1996, p. 311. See “The conceptual framework”, p. 11-15.

I will base my interpretation of the SDI network on the resolving of this micro-macro relationship.

The SDI legacy is grounded in, to borrow an expression from Soja, “a consciousness and practice of an explicitly spatial politics.”¹⁹³ “The issue of land is a political issue”,¹⁹⁴ says Patel:

The choice of who gets access to what land is a political issue and yet most cities locate all these things in a seemingly technical planning unit. Some of us who took that road found it was a useless thing. You understand about urban planning and you look at project development plans. When there was land allocated for slums and everything else was there and the slum dwellers said they wanted the land they couldn't get it.¹⁹⁵

“So it was only through a political process that they got it”, Patel concludes. But the process is not a party political process, “because none of the political parties actually do things for the poor except ask for their votes.”¹⁹⁶ Instead it's about a more fundamental power relation: an exclusion and marginalization that I have traced back to the colonial days.¹⁹⁷

The route taken by the SDI is distinct both from that taken by rights-based social movements (like the women's movement and the animal-right's movement) and that of micro finance organizations. The rights-based social movements are too focused on one *separate question*. Soja describes them as “separate channels of resistance and struggle” that “have fragmented modernist equality politics.”¹⁹⁸ The micro finance organizations on the other hand are too focused on *separate individuals* and miss out on the (political) macro perspective.¹⁹⁹

SDI describes itself as an attempt to move away from these sporadic impulses to a sustained, long-term investment in local federations of the urban poor.²⁰⁰ This “alternative route” of the SDI can be understood through Soja's already quoted notion of a *spatial turn* in cultural politics: a “collective struggle to *take greater control over the 'making of geography – the social production of human spatiality'*”, where a “shared consciousness and practice of an explicitly spatial politics”²⁰¹ provide the bounding force. Soja continues: “This involvement in producing and in already produced spaces and places is what all those who are oppressed, subordinated, and exploited share.”²⁰²

The struggle for space is grounded in the urban situation of the slum dwellers. “Because when there is a large number of people who want something, the city feels that pressure”,²⁰³ says Patel. With Lefebvre the city becomes the “tension-filled...spatial dynamic and framework for political action.”²⁰⁴ Seen from the *macro* perspective the global network gives the urban poor a defining role in the way “Governments and multi-laterals discharge their

¹⁹³ Soja 2000, p. 281.

¹⁹⁴ Patel 2003-10-30.

¹⁹⁵ Patel 2003-10-30.

¹⁹⁶ Patel 2003-10-30.

¹⁹⁷ See “The Colonial Geohistory of Nairobi”, p. 18-23.

¹⁹⁸ Soja 2000, p. 281.

¹⁹⁹ In borrowing a quote from Lefebvre's critique of Foucault micro finance can be described as “a lot of pin-prick operations which are separated from each other in time and space. It neglects the centre and centrality; it neglects the global.” Lefebvre quoted in Elden, not dated. See also discussion on the view from below on p. 26 and 28.

²⁰⁰ www.sdinet.org/pages/amain.html 2003-09-10.

²⁰¹ Soja 2000, p. 281.

²⁰² Soja 2000, p. 281. See p. 26.

²⁰³ Patel 2003-10-30.

²⁰⁴ Soja 2000, p. 9.

obligations to the poor.”²⁰⁵ The organizing in ever-expanding networks helps the slum dwellers to put pressure on the state and to constantly remind it of its “obligations with respect to equity.”²⁰⁶

From the *micro* perspective of the individual slum dweller or community, the network offers “a means to expand the repertoire of learning”, says Patel, “where they are not always consumers and beneficiaries but where they are peers that are helping each other.”²⁰⁷ This new way of sharing knowledge between communities also brings the questions “down” from the conceptual realm (Secondspace) of the professionals to the lived experience (Thirdspace) of the “inhabitants” and “users”. “Now what professionals like me found is that we’re talking in conceptual terms”, says Patel: “That is our language as professionals. But when we went to that [community] meeting it was all in terms of practical things.”²⁰⁸

The conflict between the macro and micro perspectives are resolved in the process of one community federation training another community federation:

On one end they *give people actual things to do* that poor people can do and the second, which is very important, is that they *transmit the politics of land* as they do this. So it is an *empowered education*.²⁰⁹

The individual gets empowered in becoming an actor in the process (taking control over his/her own destiny) and at the same time a political awareness is transmitted. It is the *global network of local federations in itself* (and not the content) that resolves the conflict between the micro and the macro scales by producing a social space for political struggle on both an individual and a global level.

MICROCOMMUNITIES AND GLOBAL ENTITIES

This politicized way of looking at cityspace starts with the question of who has got the right to formulate the problem:

Over time we began to realize that a lot of the mainstream paradigm related to slums and informal settlements are decided somewhere in the north in all these agencies. And then we found that their institutions were incapable of taking feedback from individual organizations.²¹⁰

The first challenge is to find a common language that can bridge these different scales: “micro communities and global entity are not suddenly going to start talking to each other because they don’t have the language to talk to each other”, says Patel. In this process intermediaries have to play a new role:²¹¹ “Earlier information only went down. Now we see that information has to go up and down.”²¹²

The second challenge comes from scaling up: “The stakes are getting higher”²¹³ as the slums are growing, especially in Africa south of Sahara and in Asia. In the last 50 years the global population living in slums has gone from 35 million to almost 924 million.²¹⁴ “How do you mainstream?” asks Patel: “Only out of articulating on

²⁰⁵ www.sdinet.org/pages/amain.html 2003-09-10.

²⁰⁶ www.sdinet.org/pages/amain.html 2003-09-10.

²⁰⁷ Patel 2003-10-30.

²⁰⁸ Patel 2003-10-30.

²⁰⁹ Patel 2003-10-30.

²¹⁰ Patel 2003-10-30.

²¹¹ This new role will be exemplified by Pamoja Trust in the case study in Kambi Moto.

²¹² Patel 2003-10-30.

²¹³ Cities Alliance 2003, *Cities Without Slums*, p. 21.

²¹⁴ Cities Alliance 2003, p. 21.



FIGURE 27. Lawrence Apiyo.

challenges.” She takes the example of the UN: “The UN system in many ways is producing challenges for us that are important.../But we struggle because nobody actually likes to deal with the UN system. Communities feel very disempowered. They don’t feel happy about it.”²¹⁵

The question of scaling up without losing power at local level sums up the whole discussion of this chapter. And the answer gives a good summary on how the micro-macro conflict is resolved in the SDI network: While being rooted in the local, as “a voluntary association of like-minded people’s organizations” focusing on “a shared process of grassroots organization”²¹⁶, at the same time exciting the local and self becoming a global actor:

We began to realize that we had to deal with municipalities, national governments, donor agencies, transnational organizations and that this process was best done if we ourselves were a transnational organization, so nobody could say that this only happens in Bombay or your thing is very good, that’s another argument, you are very good but it depends on you, if you are not there it will not happen. So we said: Now it’s happening in 25 cities, do you still say that it’s not transnational or that it’s not scalable?²¹⁷

The resolving of the macro and micro perspective in the SDI, when it comes to empowerment, can now be stated bluntly in a simple equation: (1) As more individual slum dwellers join the global network the network will gain power (2) and as the global network grows, the individual, as part of the network, will gain power.

Muongano: The struggle for space

Muongano wa Wanavijiji is a slum dwellers federation made up of community-based saving schemes in the informal settlements. It was originally formed as a lobby group against slum evictions and demolitions.²¹⁸

As already anticipated in “The Cityspace of Nairobi”²¹⁹, I see the emergence of the Muongano as an answer to the Fractal City: a “collective struggle to take greater control over the ‘making of geography – the social production of human spatiality’”²²⁰

This chapter is based on an interview with Lawrence Apiyo, at Pamoja Trust, who has been working with members from the informal settlements since 1996, “since the whole thing started.”²²¹

THE EMERGENCE OF MUONGANO

There are two external triggering factors behind the emergence of the Muongano movement in 1996. The first factor was evictions provoked by the upcoming elections. Lawrence Apiyo says that: “The president used a lot of land to dish out to opponents to either silence them or bring them on his side so that he would win the elections again”, and because of that, “a lot of people faced eviction threats.”²²² The communities responded to the eviction threats and they would fight

²¹⁵ Patel 2003-10-30.

²¹⁶ www.sdinet.org/pages/amain.html 2003-09-10.

²¹⁷ Patel 2003-10-30.

²¹⁸ *Muongano wa Wanavijiji 2003/2004* 2003, p. 1.

²¹⁹ See p. 25.

²²⁰ Soja 2000, p. 281.

²²¹ Lawrence Apiyo, Savings at Pamoja Trust, 2003-12-20. Interview.

²²² Apiyo 2003-12-20.



FIGURE 28. Jane Weru.

back, “but the magnitude of the evictions became so big that many times they were overwhelmed. They didn’t know what to do.”²²³

The second factor was the UN Habitat meeting in Istanbul in 1996,²²⁴ which made the Kenyan NGO’s working on shelter and human rights to form “a small network called Habitat task force”, doing “research on issues of evictions and the provision of housing.”²²⁵ Some of the community organizers said: “Now when we’ve got the information are we just leaving the communities like that? What help are we giving them apart from getting information from them?”²²⁶

These responses, to two individual but coexisting situations, together created a social space for struggle. While the ground lies in the threatened communities,²²⁷ the communities needed to move the struggle from the microgeographies of everyday life to the macrospatial scale of the whole city, to meet the threats. “They needed someone to put these efforts together; like-shaping and giving some direction; building the vision and coordinate the community effort”²²⁸ Between the community organisers there was a consensus to help to link the communities “so that they share their struggles. So that they with still having treats would also team up together, show solidarity and protest.”²²⁹

The will to change, to take power over their own destiny, has to come from the community: “The whole rationale for the Muungano movement is that change ought to be driven bottom-up...and that change can only be effective if its owned and driven by the beneficiaries themselves.”²³⁰ But the local is not enough; these efforts have to be coordinated and brought to scale.

THE STRUGGLE

The first try to reach spatial justice was through the legal institutions. But this way was closed to the slum dwellers: “Every time the communities went to court they were told: you don’t have any legal claim to this land,” says Apiyo: “You are not recognised by law to come up with such a case in the first place. You are nobody in that place.”²³¹ The Thirdspace of the slum dwellers is “a spatial presence and practice outside of the norms of prevailing (enforced) social spatialisations.”²³² Regardless the support of Kituo Cha Sheria, a legal advice centre that helped the communities to take cases to court, the communities could never win. Jane Weru, the director of Kituo Cha Sheria²³³ at that time says:

You may provide legal advice, you may go to court, you may even win a case but it doesn’t resolve the issue, the fundamental issue that is affecting the urban poor especially in regard to land and housing.²³⁴

²²³ Apiyo 2003-12-20.

²²⁴ See p. 28.

²²⁵ This was done “to challenge the government report at the conference”. Apiyo 2003-12-20.

²²⁶ Apiyo 2003-12-20. The role of information as a power tool for change will be dealt with in “Enumerations” on p. 46-51.

²²⁷ “‘A revolution’ Lefebvre claimed, ‘takes place when and only when...people can no longer lead their everyday lives.’” McLeod 1997, p. 14.

²²⁸ Apiyo 2003-12-20 “People feared working on the issue of land. The moment you talked about land you were also inviting your own death because you were going to struggle with very strong people in the government.” Apiyo 2003-12-20.

²²⁹ Apiyo 2003-12-20.

²³⁰ *Muungano wa Wanavijiji 2003/2004* 2003, p. 2.

²³¹ Apiyo 2003-12-20.

²³² Shields 2003.

²³³ Today Executive Director of Pamoja Trust.

²³⁴ Jane Weru, Executive Director of Pamoja Trust, 2003-12-19. Interview.

The struggle had to move from the courtroom, where space is viewed in terms of property rights and ownership. This is both an abstraction (Secondspace), and at the same time a reduction of space to the physical environment (Firstspace). It neglects the lived space of the “inhabitants” and “users”.²³⁵

The struggle had to move into the lived space of the slum dwellers:

So once you are told that you can't even start arguing out your case we said: Now community organising is the final resort. 'Lets organise the communities, let's empower them, let's give them the legal awareness, let's give them the rights awareness' so that they are able to stand and say: 'This is our home, we need to be recognized.'²³⁶

Soja describes this “awareness” as a “mobilized consciousness rooted in the more immediate collective struggle to take greater control over the ‘making of geography’ – *the social production of human spatiality*.”²³⁷

This spatial struggle is rooted in the directly lived spaces, and these spaces begin with the body. Apiyo tells of a protest action where a dead body was used in the struggle:

It was the first time that we dumped a body in front of the provincial commissioners office. And we left the body there. We wanted the killers to be arrested. The killing took place like this: The land was given by the president and the provincial administrator was instructed to oversee the subdivisions. But they brought in other people so the outside people got the better part of the land. The community people were taken down the river. These [community] people were protesting on the day that the local administrator came to force them to move to the new land. They were saying: ‘No we must be told whom these people are who have been brought in.’ In the struggle this old ‘mama’ hit the administrator with the walking stick. Then the police fired. She was killed instantly and another woman was badly injured. So we really protested and went to the commissioner and left the body there. The following day we were joined by five members of parliament, who helped us to recover the body. We held a prayer and went for the burial at Langata.²³⁸

This protest action can be understood from a spatialized reading of the body. Soja says that the “process of producing spatiality or ‘making geographies’ begins with the body.”²³⁹ The struggle to *take control over* the “making of geography” also begins with the body. Lefebvre sees the body as “the site of resistance within the discourse of Power in space” and claims: “The whole of (social) space proceeds from the body.”²⁴⁰ The very concrete act of dumping this dead body becomes a real and imagined Thirdspace. A real place as the physical corpse of one individual crying out for justice: to get the murderers arrested. An imagined place as it transcends the individual destiny to become a “paradigmatic example” of the whole struggle for spatial justice.²⁴¹

²³⁵ To Lefebvre “A true Communist revolution...must...create new spatialisation – shifting the balance away from ‘conceived space’ of which private property, city lots and the surveyor’s grid are artefacts.” Shields 2003.

²³⁶ Apiyo 2003-12-20.

²³⁷ Soja 2000, p. 281.

²³⁸ Apiyo 2003-12-20.

²³⁹ Soja 2000, p. 6.

²⁴⁰ Soja 2000, p. 359.

²⁴¹ Soja 1996, p. 234-235. Soja quotes from *Spatialization of Power: A Discussion of the Work of Michel Foucault* by Gwendolyn Wright and Paul Pabinow where Foucault’s use of the Panopticon is described as “the paradigmatic example...a combination of abstract schematization and very concrete applications” that has inspired my reading of “the body” in this paragraph. See also “Bodies, Cities, Texts: The Case of Citizen Rodney King” by Barbara Hooper in Soja 2000, p. 359-371.

Meeting at Pamoja trust:



FIGURE 29. Scola.



FIGURE 30. Jack Makau.



FIGURE 31. Joseph Kimani.



FIGURE 32. Salma Sheba.

Finally the struggle gave result and the protests started to gain the support of political leaders. Apiyo gives an example: “There was one time when we did a very big protest and a number of political leaders joined us in the Westland’s.”²⁴² With the reduction of (almost stop to) slum evictions in 2000 Muungano could change from prevention into dealing with a more constructive focus on issues of development within slums.²⁴³ Apiyo again:

So we found from shouting, from protest and so forth Muungano had to concentrate on proactive activities. They must *enumerate* themselves in their settlements. They must *arm themselves with information*. They must *mobilize their money*, so that they move from that point of being given, being told to a point where they are also able to *sit with the policymakers* to say ‘This is who we are, this is what we have, this is our plan for the settlement. What do you have so we can do this together?’²⁴⁴

PAMOJA TRUST

In this change the creation of Pamoja trust as a support organization and principal partner of Muungano was important: “We felt this work needs a specific organisation to do the specific coordination and a daily support to the community organisers...and Jane [Weru] moved with us to Pamoja as the director”,²⁴⁵ Apiyo explains.

Pamoja trust is a NGO made up a team of community organizers that work closely together with the slum dwellers. The organization plays a double role. The first is to provide technical support and transfer skills to communities, skills that are picked up in other communities in the global network. Executive director Jane Weru says that:

What we are trying to do ourselves is to learn new skills, which we then teach to other people and then we give up that space. The skills we learn we try to transfer them and get people to pick them up and use them without having to rely on us too much.²⁴⁶

The other role is to mobilize resources for the communities and to “open up doors in the government, in the council, so that the communities are able to get access and negotiate with them.”²⁴⁷ This also involves helping communities to create their own “infrastructure for participatory governance”,²⁴⁸ so that they can take an active role in democratic change.

IN SEARCH OF A NEW MANDATE

The change of Muungano from a lobby group against slum evictions to a proactive slum dwellers’ federation of community-based saving schemes has brought tension into the organization. When the urge to fight an outside enemy was gone the democratic deficit came to the fore. The people who had led the struggle against evictions were a “small group of leaders, who were very strong and had been very brave”²⁴⁹, says Jane Weru:

²⁴² Apiyo 2003-12-20.

²⁴³ *Muungano wa Wanavijiji 2003/2004* 2003, p. 1.

²⁴⁴ Apiyo 2003-12-20. This process will be followed in the chapters “Savings” (p. 43), “Enumeration” (p. 47) and “Negotiation for land” (p. 52).

²⁴⁵ Apiyo 2003-12-20.

²⁴⁶ Weru 2003-12-19.

²⁴⁷ Apiyo 2003-12-20.

²⁴⁸ <http://www.homeless-international.org/standard.asp?category=3&id=2350&id=276&id=262> 2003-02-27.

²⁴⁹ Weru 2003-12-19.



FIGURE 33. Mary Kemande.

When we moved from that stage of fighting against evictions and we needed to go to the next stage of actually negotiations then there was a need to get a broad base and that was when the problem arose.²⁵⁰

I will try to capture this conflict through two voices coming from different perspectives and then look at the conflict through Lefebvre's challenging thirding-as-Othering. Mary Kemande from the informal settlement Redeemed was one of the early leaders of Muungano and Jane Weru is, as already said, the director of Pamoja Trust.²⁵¹

Mary Kemande: When we started Muungano Muungano was so strong. We would fight with the government, but today we don't have that courage, as we fought in the Westlands. Our government had fear with the Muungano then. But when Pamoja Trust started that NGO the power went out. It divided the Muungano. If there is a miracle, if God grants us a miracle, we come together and Muungano would wake up and have that strength like before. That's my prayer.²⁵²

Jane Weru: They have a case definitely, because they came up when evictions were taking place. They provided leadership. They risked their freedom and they risked their life and definitely they had an expectation that when the goods came in or whatever benefits would come in they would be the leaders then and the first to benefit. So on our side we felt that if we let this small group of leaders – who are very strong and had been very brave – consolidate without building a base on the ground, then Muungano would never grow. So our challenge to them at that point was: 'You go and build Muungano from the ground, because we cannot chose you as leaders. Go and be chosen by your people.'²⁵³

The conflict can easily be understood as a conflict between two different phases in the Muungano movement, the "revolutionary" phase (where the leaders form an *avant-garde*²⁵⁴) and the "democratic" phase, opposing each other and where the "democratic" phase has to replace the initial "revolutionary" phase. According to Meike Schalk Lefebvre is critical towards "the great modern myth of the Revolution as a total act" and "instead addresses the empowerment of everyone individually."²⁵⁵ I see this as a miss-interpretation of Lefebvre, privileging the view from below,²⁵⁶ and missing out on Lefebvre's insistence on both and also. I would argue that Lefebvre sees revolution both as "everyone individually" and as a "total act" – at the same time. Mary McLeod describes Lefebvre's "*simultaneous* insistence on contradiction *and* totality:"²⁵⁷

His critique of everyday life reveals a world of conflicts, tensions, cracks, and fissures – a shifting ground that continually opens to new potentials – and *at the same time* it presents a historical picture that posits distinctions, hierarchies, and causality in a commitment to political agency and action.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁰ Weru 2003-12-19.

²⁵¹ Jane Weru has also been supporting the Muungano from the initial struggle as the director of Kitucha Charia.

²⁵² Mary Kemande, Secretary of Muungano in Redeemed, 2003-12-11. Interview.

²⁵³ Weru 2003-12-19.

²⁵⁴ This term that originally applied to the troops that went first in military field battle is here taken from Lenin who saw the party as an *avant-garde* in the Russian revolution.

²⁵⁵ Meike Schalk, 2003. *The Organic and the City: Nature and Capitalism in Urban Thought*, p. 36.

²⁵⁶ Margaret Crawford claims the opposite about Lefebvre: "They [Lefebvre and Deboard] saw both the society they attacked and the future society they desired as totalities." (Crawford 1999, p. 13) This shows the challenge in Lefebvre's thirding-as-Othering. For a discussion of this see "a view from above and a view from below" on p. 25-26.

²⁵⁷ McLeod 1997, p. 28. Italics are mine.

²⁵⁸ McLeod 1997, p. 28. Italics are mine.



FIGURE 33. "Muungano in Kambi Moto village".

In my Thirdspace reading it's important to acknowledge both these sides working together rather than opposing each other in the Muungano. Lefebvre's thirding-as-Othering opens up a way to see this double nature of Muungano. Seen in this way it's not a question of coming before and after in the linearity of the historical imagination, but rather the spatialized both and also.

Weru explains how Pamoja Trust has tried to integrate the original leaders by letting them visit federations in other countries: "To expose them so that they see something bigger and come down and translate it", thus making the two sides in the conflict work together instead of opposing each other.²⁵⁹ But still this conflict is not solved.

The question of leadership also highlights the internal power relations of the communities. Power is not only acted out externally but there are also different power relations within each community. "Because", says Weru, "communities are not homogeneous." Pamoja Trust's role is to act "as a conscience of communities",²⁶⁰ Weru continues:

If you go to a community like Kambi Moto you find it has different classes, it has different interests, it's not a homogeneous community. You cannot assume that once they start doing things they will do it and take everybody's interests into account.²⁶¹

Before I move on to the microgeography of Kambi Moto where these power relations are acted out both internally and externally I will use a quote by Lawrence Apiyo to summarize the different scales (the local, the city, the region, and the global), of the last two chapters, in relation to power:

We find the power to change at different levels. The base for the power to change is the community; it's the Muungano and the Muungano as a federation, which has membership, saving schemes. The power must be at every saving scheme and every saving scheme must come together to put that power together. They must be able to coordinate that power. They must be able to target well who they are, whom they want to engage with. Then with the support of Pamoja providing recourses and opening up the doors, Pamoja as a facilitator, and with the linkage to other federations around the world, the community gets a lot of strength. With different other support organizations around the world Muungano now finds itself with enough resources to move on with its programs, its activities, to change – to bring about change.²⁶²

The Place: Kambi Moto in Huruma

Before moving on to the process of upgrading I will finish this part of the study with the microgeography of Kambi Moto. I will start by looking at the *appropriation* of the place – how the place became settled. After establishing the settlement as an *appropriated place* (in contrast to a *dominated place*) I will describe the physical environment, informed by a Firstspace reading, and then I will look at the transitory aspect of the settlement through Margaret Crawford's reading of Lefebvre in the concept *everyday space*.

²⁵⁹ I will return to this in the discussion on the building of a "culture of trust" that can form "a shared identity as members of the urban poor class," (www.sdinet.org/rituals/ritual1.html) in the chapter "Savings" on p. 44-45.

²⁶⁰ Weru 2003-12-19.

²⁶¹ Pointing to the role of Pamoja Trust Weru continues: "Even the positions we take are objective within a certain context. We take an objective position from our middleclass position. We come up with a rational for taking a position." Weru 2003-12-19.

²⁶² Apiyo 2003-12-20.



FIGURE 35. Lucy Wangiko.

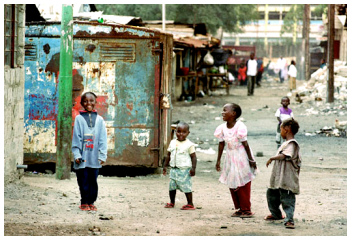


FIGURE 36. The container that was the first structure in Kambi Moto.

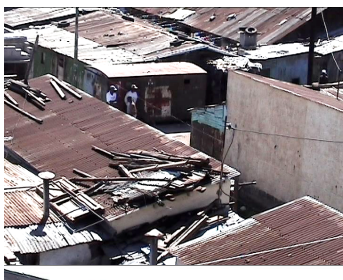


FIGURE 37. Kambi Moto from above.

THE APPROPRIATION OF PLACE

Kambi Moto was originally planned to be a parking lot for the neighbouring site-and-service housing estate.²⁶³ As there were no cars parked in the area people began to settle. Lucy Wangiko, one of the first settlers, tells the story of how Kambi Moto was settled:

Kambi Moto started back in 1974. My mum started with a container, then she built a small house. This land was big enough and people had not come – poor people had not come – from wherever they came. Then people started saying: ‘oh, we can go and build there. Let’s go there.’ Everybody started building, but not people from these houses [the neighbouring estate]. They came from outside. People came from different places. People came from Mathare²⁶⁴. People came from different places and we met here, poor people. That is how Kambi Moto started, with a small container that I have showed you.²⁶⁵

The taking over of the officially projected parking lot for private initiatives can be understood as an act of *appropriation*. Gunnar Sandin explains Lefebvre’s concept *appropriation* as the process of making something into one’s own or taking possession of something. And defines it as “assimilation of space by way of acknowledged corporeality”.²⁶⁶ Appropriated space stands against *dominated space*.²⁶⁷ *Domination* is described as the “abruptly imposed” architectural reshaping of a place: “the exercised ignorance of corporal spatial needs.”²⁶⁸ In relation to appropriation Lefebvre describes the public place as “a merely conceptual understanding of usage that lays no real space under any obligation whatsoever.” Lived space, in contrast, is where “the ‘private’ realm asserts itself...always in a conflictual way, against the public one.”²⁶⁹

I see the appropriation of the place as a first step in a process of negotiation for spatial rights, where the marginalized and excluded individual (and the individual as part of a group) takes the lead when the state fails to deliver. I will trace this spatial negotiation in the following chapters; the “building of the community” in *savings*; “arming themselves with information” in *enumeration*; to finally “sit at the same table with the policy makers” in *negotiation for land*.

²⁶³ As earlier described the Site-and-service housing ended up with the middleclass. See p. 29.

²⁶⁴ The close by informal settlement is the second largest in Nairobi after Kibera.

²⁶⁵ Lucy Wanjiku, Muungano member in Kambi Moto, 2003-12-09. Interview.

²⁶⁶ Sandin 2003, p. 84.

²⁶⁷ The dichotomy of appropriated and dominated is not rendered as static “but keeps recurring in The Production of Space” as a transitory opposition, thus carrying out Lefebvre’s own method of reasoning (as presented in “The conceptual framework” p. 11). Sandin 2003, p. 67.

²⁶⁸ Sandin 2003, p. 72. Two other concepts discussed by Sandin in relation to appropriation are *deavertion* and *co-option*. *Deavertion* is the “rule-changing re-use of an obsolete or vacant space.” (Sandin 2003, p. 84) As a strategy of the Situationists *deavertion* (or *detournement*) involves an intentional act of changing the environment, while the settling of Kambi Moto was motivated by necessity (To quote Lefebvre: “for many people it’s a question of staying alive, purely and simply staying alive”) Michel Trebitsch 2000, “Preface”, in Henri Lefebvre: *Critique of Everyday Life, Volume I: Introduction*, p. xix). *Co-option* is the incorporation of one space into another where the “minor part may influence and perhaps eventually change the major framing of spatial circumstances.” (Sandin 2003, p. 84)

Through the building of a community in the upgrading process the culture of the whole neighbouring estate can be altered as well. Sandin writes: “reality shows a mixture of these modes .../They do not appear as four perfectly isolated categories of how space is taken over.” Sandin 2003, p. 84.

²⁶⁹ Sandin 2003, p. 72.



FIGURE 38. Street in Kambi Moto.

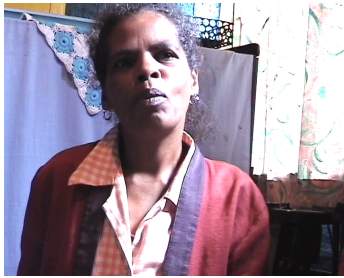


FIGURE 39. Jaimi Mbula.



FIGURE 40. Huruma.

THE FIRSTSPACE OF KAMBI MOTO

Kambi Moto is one of six informal settlements in Huruma on the Eastern block of Nairobi, ten kilometres from the citycenter²⁷⁰ (a distance that the vast majority of the community members don't hesitate to walk to save the cost of transport).

The number of households in Kambi Moto differs notably between different sources.²⁷¹ My latest figures say that there are about 270 households²⁷² on a total ground area of 5120 square meters. This makes a density of 550 households per hectare.²⁷³ With an average of four people per household the total population is 1100.

The site as a whole is L-shaped (see settlement plan on p. 61). The individual structures have one to two bedrooms arranged around tiny courtyards that at some points translate into corridor-like spaces. The structures serve a multiple of functions ranging from residential to social and commercial uses.²⁷⁴ Made up of timber poles and iron sheets (or whatever is available) they lack basic facilities. "We don't have toilet, we don't have water", says Jaimi Mbula, one of the residents. The Nairobi City council toilet, with six units, charges Ksh 2 per visit. There are 9 commercial water points charging Ksh 2 for 20 litres. Everything has to be paid for. It proves expensive to be poor. Mbula again:

What we pay here is a lot of money. We pay the house 1000 a month, water I pay 500, electricity I pay 300. It's almost 2000 and toilet 2 shillings per day. I've got six children: These six children go to school and my husband is not working. I stand for everything: The food, the school, the clothes, I have to pay the house and the toilet and the electricity and water.²⁷⁵

Many of the slum dwellers can't afford this and have to use contaminated water and so called "flying toilets" (plastic bags with human excrements).²⁷⁶

EVERYDAY SPACE

The informal settlements are *transit zones*, in between the conceived space of the planner²⁷⁷ and the perceived space of the physical environment: A temporal space where the form is never fixed as architecture to be what we should call a house but rather stays temporary in its nature as shacks.

The temporal aspect of the informal settlements can be read through Margaret Crawford's concept *everyday spaces*, developed from Lefebvre's *everyday life*.²⁷⁸ "Temporally, everyday spaces exist in between past and future uses, often with a no-longer-but-not-yet-their-own status, in a holding pattern of real-estate values

²⁷⁰ Tecta Consultants 2003-09, *Informal Settlements Upgrading: A community driven initiative*.

²⁷¹ I will discuss this under "Enumeration" on p. 47.

²⁷² Aaron Wegman 2004, Report Up-Date on Planning work with SDI in Kenya, p. 4, and Jack Makau, Communications Officer at Pamoja Trust, 2003-10-30. Interview.

²⁷³ This is a high density even for Jane Jacobs, who championed "high dwelling densities and high net ground coverage" for cities, turning the tide of planning in the 1960's. The density of Kambi Moto is achieved by "cutting out open space," just like Jacobs prescribed. Hall 2002, p. 255. See p. 5 on Jane Jacobs.

²⁷⁴ Tecta Consultants 2003.

²⁷⁵ Jaimi Mbula, Muungano member in Kambi Moto, 2003-12-09. Interview.

²⁷⁶ One of the ironies is that softdrinks are often both more easily assessable and cheaper than drinking water.

²⁷⁷ The informal settlements were not on the city-map until six years ago, and then it was only in theory. In practice they have been included only in the last six months and still there are no complete map. Westman 2006-02-22. sms.

²⁷⁸ *Everyday life* is a key concept in Lefebvre's *Critique of Everyday Life* from 1947. Lefebvre sees *everyday life* in modern society as being threatened by *alienation*, but the critique of the everyday can also lead to the revolution of everyday life. "A revolution," Lefebvre claimed, "takes place when and only when ... people can no longer lead their everyday lives." McLeod 1997, p. 14.



FIGURE 41. "Urban nomads".

that might one day rise."²⁷⁹ Conceptually Crawford identifies these places with the Thirdspace of Soja, as "a space activated through social action and the social imagination" that represents "a bottom-up rather than top-down restructuring of urban space."²⁸⁰

In establishing Kambi Moto as a *transit place* I will start by giving an alternative version of how the place was settled (probably referring to a second face in the settling). In the early 80s people who had been evicted from other settlements were settled there by the provincial administrator. What was meant to be a *transit-solution*, going from eviction to resettling in a place that the state would provide, became permanent "as the state failed to follow up."²⁸¹

An important factor behind the formation of informal settlements is the rapid rural to urban migration. Many people still have their belonging in a rural home²⁸² and "tend to take Nairobi like another place where you go to work," says the local architect Joseph Muketu: "After some time you move out of Nairobi."^{283 284} The slum dwellers become *urban nomads*²⁸⁵ occupying a transitory space in between the city and the country,^{286 287} between earning a living and belonging. In this respect the slum dwellers parallel the large international community of Nairobi.

"But where we are standing we've seen the situation change", says Muketu, "because right now we have the first generation of people who are born in Nairobi and they don't have any other place to claim as their home place." In Kambi Moto and the other villages of Huruma less than 5% inclined rural-urban migration as the reason for settling there and instead gave reasons like eviction from other settlements, loss of "breadwinner", joblessness or destruction of previous home.²⁸⁸ Kambi Moto is settled on land owned by the City Council and over the years different interests have tried to claim the land. The temporal and uncertain aspect is kept over the years, since the inhabitants have no legal rights to the land. Eviction²⁸⁹ is a constant treat but also fires threaten the life of the community. "On

²⁷⁹ Crawford 1999, p. 29. This is putting the highest pressure on inner city slums dwellers that occupy prime locations for development. UN Human Settlements Program, 2003, p. 130.

²⁸⁰ Crawford 1999, p. 28-29. Can be compared to appropriated place above, see p. 39.

²⁸¹ Makau 2003-10-30.

²⁸² Reuterswärd 2003-12-18.

²⁸³ Joseph Muketu, Architect, 2003-11-13. Interview.

²⁸⁴ This unstable role of the population goes back to the early history of Nairobi when the colonialists saw the African population as "a drifting population of all breeds of natives." Quote from Elisabeth Huxley, from sometime between 1908 and 1911, in Nevanlinna 1996, p. 113.

²⁸⁵ Andreas Ruby describes the *urban nomads*; The *jetset nomads* spend most of their nights in hotels; the *commuter nomads*, due to long journey to and from work spend several hours everyday in traffic, while the home becomes an expanded bedroom; the *tourist nomads* "exist in such large numbers that they easily acquire the status of a transitory population..." The other type of urban nomads (in developed countries) are the *homeless nomads*: the local homeless and "the floods of political and economic immigrants" Andreas Ruby 2002, "Transgressing Urbanism", in Joke Brouwer, Arjen Mulder and Laura Martz (ed.): *TransUrbanism*, p. 26.

²⁸⁶ Reuterswärd points to the fact that the division between city and countryside is outdated, going back to the notion of the medieval city surrounded by a town wall. "At the same time as the world is urbanised the cities are ruralised." Reuterswärd 2003-12.

²⁸⁷ To be sure many, if not the majority, have got a small "chamba" – either on the outskirts of town or back in their rural home. Reuterswärd. A study in Kibera indicated that urban agriculture is common and beneficial to the households. But there is the same problem of insecurity of tenure as when it comes to the housing: "In the case of very low-income households, their very livelihood is threatened by eviction from their plots." Syagga, Mitallah and Gitau 2001.

²⁸⁸ *Huruma Informal Settlements* 2001, Planning Survey Report, compiled by representatives of the Huruma informal settlements, the Nairobi City Council, the Nairobi Informal Settlements Coordination Committee and Pamoja Trust.

²⁸⁹ Treats of eviction are said to come from the area chief, rich individuals and the Area Councillor. *Huruma Informal Settlements* 2001, p. 11.



FIGURE 42. Evanson Mwangi is the owner of a small shop in Kambi Moto.



FIGURE 43. The shop of Evanson Mwangi.

December 20th 1995 a fierce fire swept almost all the houses”, and two additional serious fires in 1997 and 1999 earned the settlement its name Kambi Moto – Swahili for “camp of fire”.²⁹⁰ Wanjiko:

In fact we have been living a very bad life because we expect anything could happen. Fire burns at night, sometimes thieves come at night and there is nothing they are coming to take but just break doors. Sometimes we could get heavy rains because the houses were not that good.²⁹¹

But Kambi Moto is not only transition. It is also “a city within the city”, with a multiply of small-scale economic activity that are targeted mainly on the needs of the residents and creates a living neighbourhood offering the habitants a sense of belonging. Wanjiku again:

My sisters have taken me to the “Civil Servants” – a very good estate – to live there. I just stayed there for two weeks. I felt I’m not supposed to be here. I don’t belong here. I’m supposed to go back to the slums. I like this place [Kambi Moto].²⁹²

Both these perspectives inform my reading of the informal settlements.²⁹³ Once again I want to return to Lefebvre’s (and Soja’s) urge to go beyond the binary either/or and instead see both and also.

²⁹⁰ *Huruma Informal Settlements* 2001, p. 6. The history of Kambi Moto is narrated by Peter Chegge. He also told me how rich individuals – claiming the land for their own purposes – could get the fire to spread through the whole settlement by using a cat with a burning cloth tied around its tail running on the roofs of the densely packed shacks. Peter Chegge, Secretary of Muungano in Kambi Moto, 2003-12-12. Interview.

²⁹¹ Wanjiku 2003-12-09.

²⁹² Wanjiku 2003-12-09.

²⁹³ See “the Non-City of Thirdspace” on p. 21-23.

PART IV: THE RITUALS



FIGURE 44. Margaret Mogure (in the centre) at the city-market, a meeting place for the women in the spread of the Muungano movement.

I will now turn to look at the “SDI rituals”²⁹⁴ – the process of upgrading – as it is acted out in the lived space of Kambi Moto. The order in which I have chosen to present the steps in the process applies to a certain logic where I’ve tried to see what lies at the foundation of the process and then to build on that. But just like in building a house (to continue the construction metaphor) a lot of things happen simultaneously, and are dependent on each other, making the process circular.

There are two levels of power that I will trace through this process: The *external* power relation between the community and the authorities and the *internal* between different interests within the community. Both these relations build up to the chapter “Negotiations on land”, where they come to the fore most clearly. In the following chapter, “Design and Construction”, this relation will shift to that between the community and the professionals.

Two different scales inform my reading of the process: The specific microscale of Kambi Moto, through interviews with individual community members, and the general view given at the SDI homepage.²⁹⁵ The last chapter in this part, on design and construction, will be told mainly from the perspective of the architect/planner.

Savings

The saving schemes are the foundation in the process. The SDI homepage states that: “Whenever a Federation enters a community...the first thing it does is form saving and credit groups”, and continues: “When a...savings collective in an area is strong, then [the] entire federation is strong.”²⁹⁶ Savings serve a multiple of purposes and could be said to work towards both a Firstspace end, creating a loan ability for financing the building of a house and a Thirdspace end, to build the community.

I will start by giving a general introduction to the savings process and then look more closely at the building of the community – a social space – and finally discuss the registration fee as an instrument for exclusion, putting focus on the question of internal power relations in the community.

THE SAVING SCHEME

In the forming of a saving group the women take the lead. “We were five women when we started”, says Lucy Wanjiku, and continues: “We started by talking to other people telling them how we can upgrade with a little bit of savings: maybe ten shillings per day, five, even two shillings we could take at that time.”²⁹⁷

²⁹⁴ This term is taken from the SDI homepage: www.sdinet.org/rituals/ritual1.htm 2006-02-18.

²⁹⁵ www.sdinet.org/rituals/ritual1.htm 2006-02-18.

²⁹⁶ www.sdinet.org/rituals/ritual1.htm 2006-02-18.

²⁹⁷ Wanjiku 2003-12-09. Asking another of the “founding mothers”, Margaret Mogure, why she thinks that the women are taking the lead her explanation is that “it’s because women are quick to unite and develop.” She continues: “Sometimes we gave out money and we came in your house and if we saw that you don’t have cups we buy you cups. And then when men see the development of women they also get interested to unite with the women. So women are faster uniting than men.” (Margaret Mogure, Muungano member in Kambi Moto, 2003-12-11. Interview.) On the SDI homepage women are foregrounded as the base of the savings and thus of the whole SDI process. (www.sdinet.org/rituals/ritual1.htm 2006-02-18). My study also involves women at the leading positions in the organisations working with the slum dwellers, like Jane Weru at Pamoja Trust and Sheela Patel at the SDI (and SPARC).



FIGURE 45. Susan Wanjiru.



FIGURE 46. Peter Chegge speaking at a Muungano meeting in Kambi Moto.



FIGURE 47. Muungano meeting, Kambi Moto.



FIGURE 48. Muungano meeting, Kambi Moto.

Saving are not just about collecting money but it's about "collecting people"²⁹⁸ as well. To maximize the contact between people and make them into a community, the saving is done on a daily basis.

While the savings are aimed at raising deposits for affordable housing financing,²⁹⁹ they are circulated as micro finance for business and welfare purposes in the shorter term.³⁰⁰ The highly decentralized credit program maximises participation from the community members and makes the community look at the money as their own. Every member has to fill in an agreement-form where he or she specifies what should happen if he or she fails to pay back. "There is no one harassing them to pay. They pay after their income"³⁰¹, says Susan Wanjiru, the chairlady of Kambi Moto.

THE SOCIAL SPACE

At a purely economic level SDI effectiveness to mobilize savings can be measured in numerical terms.../But from a developmental value the basic equity inherent in savings is the cohesion, understanding, trust and confidence generated through Federation type community savings and loans.³⁰²

This extract from the SDI homepage brings me from the measurable Firstspace to the building of a social space – Thirdspace. "I wouldn't say that the community was there in the first place but it has formed", says Joseph Kimani: "Of course geographically, the community was there, but if you compare Kambi Moto four years ago from Kambi Moto now you'll be surprised." He goes on to describe a violent community with drunkards in the street, with houses getting burnt all the time and the open sewer running through the neighbourhood: "You compare that to now you see a different Kambi Moto where there is unity and there is support even from the neighbourhood."³⁰³ Joseph Omondi, a community member, says:

I felt that I need my neighbours help. There are times when I run out of finance, there are times when I am sick. There are times when I need any sort of help. So that is whereby I came to realize that I should be in the Muungano. The Muungano means when you are together you can assist one another.³⁰⁴

The creation of cooperation and trust is also emphasised on the SDI homepage. But it doesn't "come over night" and it doesn't "emerge out of thin air."³⁰⁵ Instead, and this is important to my Thirdspace reading, "it grows out of practice."³⁰⁶ The practice is spatial, both in the producing of a social space and in the producing of physical structures in space. "Before we were worried, because we were told that

²⁹⁸ www.sdinet.org/rituals/ritual1.htm 2006-02-18.

²⁹⁹ The individual saving is financing 10% of the house: 10 % comes from the group; 80% comes from Akiba Mashinani Trust (A trust set up by Muungano and Pamoja trust to provide credit directly to slum communities) The starter house of Kambi Moto costs 60.000 Ksh. It is paid back by a daily payment of 57 Ksh, including an interest of 15 Ksh (The interest of 9% was decided jointly by members from different informal settlements in Nairobi). Figures taken from the wall of the "community house" in Kambi Moto, December 2003.

³⁰⁰ As the urban poor are excluded from the formal financial market they need access to cheap credit, not to end up in the hands of moneylenders and being "caught in vicious cycles of depth."
www.sdinet.org/rituals/ritual1.htm 2006-02-18.

³⁰¹ Susan Wanjiru, Chairlady of Kambi Moto, 2003-12-09. Interview.

³⁰² www.sdinet.org/rituals/ritual1.htm 2006-02-18.

³⁰³ Kimani 2003-12-08.

³⁰⁴ Joseph Omondi, Muungano member in Kambi Moto, 2003-12-11. Interview.

³⁰⁵ www.sdinet.org/rituals/ritual1.htm 2006-02-18.

³⁰⁶ www.sdinet.org/rituals/ritual1.htm 2006-02-18.



FIGURE 49. Joseph Kimani in Kambi Moto.

they are going to eat our money”³⁰⁷, says Jaimi Mbula, “but now in the beginning of this year I saw that they are not cheating. They have started the houses. We see that it is true. They are not telling lies.”³⁰⁸ “Savings can’t be done in a vacuum”, says Joseph Kimani. Savings is thus one part in a bigger transformation of both perceived space and lived space: “You tell people to save but you must give them something practical, so they build and start doing. The good thing is that they are together.”³⁰⁹

The first challenge in this creation of trust is *within* the community. The next level of creating trust is *between* communities. Margaret Moguire recalls the difficulty in convincing other communities about Muungano: “They couldn’t agree because they say that we want to eat their money...so they don’t want to hear even about Muungano.”³¹⁰ Through the development of the process in Kambi Moto (see the following chapters) the “circle of trust” started to grow: “They have seen that what Muungano was saying is true so now they are coming slowly by slowly.”³¹¹

Finally the “circle of trust” is widened to include the whole city, the nation, and the global network. This brings the discussion back to the different scales: “One of the most important indicators for SDI is just how deeply and broadly a culture of trust has grown in a given city or country as a result of the emergence of networks of savings collectives.”³¹² On the local level the sense of being a community is built through participation in savings and on a wider scale economic and social networks form a “shared identity as members of the urban poor class.”³¹³

Returning to Soja’s resolving of the micro and macro scale this opens up a new “alternative and intensely politicized...cityspace, combining both macro and micro perspectives...” that Lefebvre describes as “the (social) production of (social) space.”³¹⁴ This “circle of trust” is created through a “shared consciousness and practice of an explicitly spatial politics”; the bounding force of “all those who are oppressed, subordinated, and exploited.”³¹⁵

The solidarity, capacity and trust built through savings and loans at settlement level are clearly the great replicator. It also creates the basis for an attendant willingness to share and spread risk. These may be regarded as the two critical ingredients necessary for the innovations and “thinking and acting” outside the box that is often needed to take pro-poor development to scale.”³¹⁶

THE REGISTRATION FEE

The creation of “a culture of trust” is the cornerstone in the building of the social space at all scales in the SDI network, but this building of a trust can be questioned in the notion of the registration fee as an act of exclusion.

In my field study a number of people that had not joined the Muungano saving schemes gave as the main reason incapability to pay the registration fee. The

³⁰⁷ Mbula 2003-12-09.

³⁰⁸ Mbula 2003-12-09.

³⁰⁹ Kimani 2003-12-08.

³¹⁰ Mogure 2003-12-11.

³¹¹ Mogure 2003-12-11.

³¹² www.sdinet.org/rituals/ritual1.htm 2006-02-18.

³¹³ www.sdinet.org/rituals/ritual1.htm 2006-02-18. This class-consciousness can be read through Lefebvre’s broadening of Marxist ideological critique beyond the working sphere. (McLeod 1997, p. 14). The notion of a working class doesn’t apply to the situation in Nairobi since the people in the informal settlements generally lack employment being outside the formal market of work.

³¹⁴ Soja 2000, p. 10.

³¹⁵ Soja 2000, p. 281.

³¹⁶ www.sdinet.org/rituals/ritual1.htm 2006-02-18.



FIGURE 50. Peter Chegge with Susann Wanjiru in the background.

registration fee in Kambi Moto was at that time 310 Ksh. The neighbouring community of Redeemed had started by putting up a registration fee of not less than 1000 Ksh. In contrast to this, “to prove that they were welcoming everybody”, Kambi Moto chose not to ask for any registration fee at all. “I am very surprised to hear...that it is 310”³¹⁷, says Salma Sheba, at Pamoja trust.

The questions raised by the registration fee open up to a discussion about different interests within the community. This discussion was introduced in the chapter on the Muungano and will continue in the following chapters. Because, as Weru said, “communities are not homogeneous” and “you cannot assume that once they start doing things they will do it and take everybody’s interests into account.”³¹⁸ This also brings to the fore the role of Pamoja trusts as a “conscience”. Sheba again: “There is yet something we can also challenge them with again: ‘How are you marketing yourselves to those people that are not in Muungano? Have you now started putting restrictions? Yet this is the time when you need everybody to be involved.’”³¹⁹

There are two questions that interest me here. The first is if the registration fee is excluding people and the other, following on this is: What is happening to those who are not able to take an active part because of illness (HIV/AIDS for example) or other reasons?

To Peter Chegge, the secretary of the Muungano in Kambi Moto, the registration fee is not the real problem but rather an excuse: “We just take the registration fee in slowly by slowly. We don’t look for the registration fee of a Muungano member. We look at the activity. We want people to be together.” Instead of being a financial problem the real problem according to Chegge is that “they never come to our community to tell us what problems they are having. We are not helping only those who are in our savings group but we are looking for any member of the community.”³²⁰

This view also earns some support from Pamoja trust. Weru points to the fact that: “In an urban situation you must handle money. You will always have money as an urban person...”³²¹ The nomadic life of some slum dwellers (as discussed on p. 41).³²², stops people from investing, says Sheba: “Deep inside their hearts they feel: ‘Why should I construct a house somewhere in urban when I have my rural home somewhere.’”³²³ Obviously the foregrounding of financial problems is also a question of who is asking: “Of course they tell you that!”³²⁴ says Sheba, and Kimani fills in: “You are from Sweden!”³²⁵ If this is true, that it’s not a financial problem the answer has to be sought elsewhere. Chegge again:

But you see some of the people in the village are depending on themselves only and some look as if somebody is coming to help them. The real thing is to understand that if we come together, me and you, we can do something and the only thing we are looking for is to develop ourselves, how to develop our area when we join together. Let me say that many of our people use to fear those peoples from the government and administration, but they forget that they are the only people, the only ones who are having power, because they are the ones that are on ground level. So some of them

³¹⁷ Salma Sheba, Programme Coordinator at Pamoja Trust, 2003-12-15. Meeting at Pamoja trust.

³¹⁸ Weru 2003-12-19.

³¹⁹ Sheba 2003-12-15.

³²⁰ Chegge 2003-12-12. Interview.

³²¹ Weru 2003-12-19.

³²² People get out early in the morning and come back late in the evening without even really knowing what’s going on in the neighbourhood. Sheba 2003-12-19. Interview.

³²³ Sheba 2003-12-19.

³²⁴ Sheba 2003-12-19.

³²⁵ Kimani 2003-12-19. This is also supported by the fact that I at one occasion offered to pay the registration fee myself, but the person did not turn up to register anyway. (Instead I got the money back from the comity member that had taken care of it).

don't understand. They don't understand that they are the first people, having the big role to play to achieve the goal.³²⁶

This brings the micro and macro scales together: the internal empowerment is depending on the external and vice versa. And this goes all the way back to the colonial history. "The colonial ideologies and processes of doing things are still very strong in the people", says Lawrence Apiyo. "From the government-side they want to do it too the people. And people are also waiting for things to be done for them and then at the end it's not helpful":³²⁷

So I think it's now we have to put things upside down. The days when things are done for the people should be long gone. If we want them to take charge of the poverty elevation processes then people must be organised, people must be able to take charge of their own destiny to make decisions and be involved in national decision-making processes on issues that would later on affect them wherever they are.³²⁸

The sorting out of both the external and internal power relations moves the discussion into the "Negotiations for land". Because, as Weru puts it: "It's a power struggle...the more you go with the process the deeper down you get on the power ladder."³²⁹ But first I need to address the other "leg" in the building of the community.

Enumeration

The other community-building base is *enumeration*: the collecting of information by the community about themselves and their environment. But it's not about collecting information for information's own sake but about collecting information that can be used to negotiate with the officials for the right to the land.³³⁰ While the enumeration is building towards this external power relation, it also brings forward the contradictions around internal power relations in the community.

I will start by looking at the background of the enumeration and then go through the process step by step. After that I will look at the enumeration from the perspective of power and knowledge, once again returning to Michel Foucault (and the conflicting views of Foucault and Lefebvre). Finally I will put the question on power in the enumeration process to the test in the specific case of one individual.

The chapter is based on the paper *Community Asset Management: The Management of information as a community asset* (not dated)³³¹ by Jack Makau, at Pamoja Trust. It is also informed by (besides my field study) the SDI homepage and the *Planning Survey Report* from the Huruma enumeration in December 2001.

³²⁶ Chegge 2003-12-12.

³²⁷ Apiyo 2003-12-20.

³²⁸ Apiyo 2003-12-20.

³²⁹ Weru 2003-12-19.

³³⁰ See block-quote on knowledge to change from Soja on p. 17.

³³¹ Makau argues for a way of looking at information as a community asset, giving three reasons for this: The first is a broad definition of asset that includes "tangible recourses like social capital and information." The second is that "The impact of these communities acquiring information about themselves has been so significant in their development that we are convinced that the information is in itself a primary asset." And, finally, the third reason is that the "communities managing their information are powerful indicators of how communities could manage their physical assets." Jack Makau, not dated, *Community Asset Management: The Management of information as a community asset*, p. 1.

ON THE NEED FOR ENUMERATION

“Enumerations do not happen in a vacuum.../The collection of data within a community is invariably prompted by events that affect that community...”³³² The triggering factor could be negative, as a threat of eviction, or positive, as a promise to allocate land to residents, but it always has to be there: “Attempts to carry out enumerations where the need for information is not immediately apparent to the community have not been successful”³³³, writes Makau.

The other triggering factor is the transferring of the necessary skills to undertake the process – the “know how”. In this Pamoja Trust plays an important role as a mediator in the transnational SDI network: “Initially the people who started the enumerations were other groups from other countries”, says Jane Weru: “We ‘bought’ in and we also went and ‘sold’ to the community members.”³³⁴ Jack Makau remembers:

The first time we did enumerations the whole office had forms. We all were there in the field trying to work out this enumeration. Right now the enumeration can go on without anyone of us, which means the community has ‘bought’ the need for enumerations.³³⁵

“And now communities come to ask for enumeration,” Weru continues, taking an example of a community that came to ask for enumeration because they wanted to build drains and toilets: “It’s no longer something we ‘sell’ or manage. What we did is that we created a demand for it and they take it on.”³³⁶

Makau describes the building of a “sufficient community awareness and reasonable consensus on the need for an enumeration”³³⁷ as the most time consuming and the most crucial aspect of the whole upgrading process. Much of the community organizing has to be done by the community members themselves since the enumeration threatens a lot of different interests within the community. The SDI homepage states that:

This is usually when the worms come out of the woodwork. The enumeration process forces the contradictions around internal power relations and resource allocation to the fore. These internal dynamics are normally dependent on power relations in the broader society and are a reflection of the contradictions created and sustained by the state and the market.³³⁸

Put in general terms this once again addresses the need to combine both micro and macro scales in Lefebvre’s “alternative and intensely politicized way of looking at cityspace...”³³⁹ From the *macro scale*, to continue the quote above: “...people from formal institutions, especially government and private real estate and construction companies (but also NGOs) feel uncomfortable about this

³³² Makau, not dated, p. 2.

³³³ Makau, not dated, p. 2.

³³⁴ Weru 2003-12-06. Meeting at Pamoja Trust.

³³⁵ Makau 2003-12-06. Meeting at Pamoja Trust.

³³⁶ Weru 2003-12-06.

³³⁷ Makau, not dated, p. 2.

³³⁸ www.sdinet.org/rituals/ritual2.htm 2006-02-13. Lefebvre’s notion of the unsolved contradiction between the rationalization of bureaucratic urban planning on one hand and the fragmentation of private ownership on the other may not only be helpful in explaining the different interests that operates in this “grayzone” of the housing market but also to point a way out: “For Lefebvre, the impotence of the capitalist system to cancel out this contradiction held the possibility of revitalising urban life.” Steven Jacobs 2002, “Introduction” in Gent Urban Studies Team [GUST] (ed.): *Post Ex Sub Dis: Urban Fragmentations and Constructions*, p. 24.

³³⁹ Soja 2000, p. 10. See “views from above and views from below”, p. 25-28 and “SDI: Global network of local federations”, p. 29-32.



FIGURE 51. Numbering the houses.

process.”³⁴⁰ From the *micro scale* of the community some structure owners can have more than 50 rental shacks and “for them anything that challenges the status quo is a threat to their commercial interests.”³⁴¹

In Madoya, one of the settlements in Huruma, a small number of powerful structure owners who owns most of the structures were able to stop this settlement from being included in the enumeration: “...the larger community either prevails over those vested interests and does the enumeration, or succumbs to them and there is little else that a development agency can do”³⁴², writes Makau, pointing to the need for the community members themselves to sort out the internal power relations. I will return to the conflicting interests of tenants and structure owners in the next chapter.

THE ENUMERATION PROCESS³⁴³

The enumeration process starts with the numbering of the houses, where each structure, vacant or occupied, is counted, Makau explains: “The message...is...that each and every household in the slum is important. And that any solutions...ought to consider each and every household. For the urban poor sample studies are not good enough.”³⁴⁴

The next step is the measuring and mapping of the settlement. I will here move outside my own case study to an example taken from a Video made by the SDI about the *South African Homeless People’s Federation* (The South African SDI partner). Rose Mologano describes the SDI method of mapping the community in comparison to that of “the professionals”:

The professionals take an aeroplane and fly over the community to take a picture and get an estimate on how the layout is done. But with ourselves we go there as a group, many people of the federation, get into the community. We’ll draw all the pieces of houses, the streets that are there...we are doing it practically within the community and after that we’ll sit together and make it as an official layout plan.³⁴⁵

This quote makes a perfect picture of the dominating Secondspace gaze of “the professionals”³⁴⁶ capturing a one dimensional picture of Firstspace (and this is even more true in the use of satellite photography, where one invisible eye captures a picture from a far distance)³⁴⁷ as opposed to “doing it practically” by

³⁴⁰ www.sdinet.org/rituals/ritual2.htm 2006-02-13. To continue the quoted passage even further: “As soon as the survey starts community leaders with vested interests in the prevailing situation of inequality are quick to step forward in attempts to obstruct or derail the information gathering exercise. In these situations it is natural for community surveyors to tend to walk away or ignore the contradictions instead of attempting to tackle the situation or to defuse it. This is where the role of the Federation leaders and capable support professionals becomes critical.” www.sdinet.org/rituals/ritual2.htm 2006-02-13.

³⁴¹ Makau, not dated, p. 2.

³⁴² Makau, not dated, p. 2.

³⁴³ The description of the process is generalised from various sources.

³⁴⁴ Makau, not dated, p. 2. See block-quote from Soja 2000, p. 17.

³⁴⁵ Rose Mologano 2003, Interview in Joel Bonick and Jeremy Beam (script and ed.): “The Engine of Our Organisation, part 2: Shack Dwellers International presents South African Homeless People’s Federation”.

³⁴⁶ Rubbo compares the professionalism of planning and architecture to “a form of colonialism.” Rubbo 2003-11-22.

³⁴⁷ As satellite photography and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) open up new possibilities for “the professionals” to map “the empirical content of Firstspace” it can lead to an overbelief in these methods of mapping – what Lefebvre described as the realistic illusion. Referring to his own doctoral dissertation – *The Geography of Modernization in Kenya* from 1968 – Soja writes: “What these techniques provide are more sophisticated and objectively accurate ways to do what most geographers, spatial analysts, and, for that matter, *the colonial adventurers and cartographers* in the Age of Exploration, had been doing all along.../The key difference brought about by this so-called quantitative ‘revolution’ in geography was the presumption that these increasingly accurate empirical

moving around in the three dimensional lived space of the community. This collective process becomes a social act that, while mapping the material Firstspace, creates a social space – Thirdspace.³⁴⁸

The next step in the enumeration process is to handle out a questionnaire to every household. The development of the questionnaire is “negotiated with the community.”³⁴⁹ The community members not only answer the questions but are also involved in formulating the questions. Every household gets a copy back of the information they gave and a preliminary analysis of the data. The “analysis of the data challenges the community about the accuracy of the data collected”³⁵⁰ and the results often change in the verification process. “The enumeration is a continuous process”³⁵¹, says Kimani. It can be seen as a constant process of negotiation within the community: a dynamic information where conflicts in the community are acted out.

An example of this is the neighbouring community Ghetto where the enumeration had come up with 813 households. Aaron Wegman who is the architect working with the communities says: “It didn’t make sense. How is it possible that so many people live there and I could only fit so many? But it finally came out that they put two names for one family”³⁵².../Right now there are 400 odd names.”³⁵³

INFORMATION AND POWER

I will now reintroduce Michel Foucault, and take his notion on the relation of power, knowledge and spatiality as a starting point to look at enumeration in relation to power in a Thirdspace discourse.

Makau defines information as “standardized knowledge that is held and owned by the community.”³⁵⁴ Foucault says that we have to abandon the notion that knowledge only can be developed independent of power. Instead he says that there is *no* knowledge independent of power, just like there is no power without knowledge. Power does not only need that or that knowledge, but also creates new things to know something about and is in itself a gathering of information.³⁵⁵ But Foucault, to return to the critique by Lefebvre rephrased by Sven-Olof Wallenstein, “only uses the abstract concept of *savoir*, and never speaks of knowledge as concrete, *connaissance*.” To Lefebvre this “means that he is unable

descriptions of geographical ‘reality’ also contained the intrinsic sources of spatial *theory*.” (Soja 1996, p. 76. Italics are mine). In an exhibition at the *Art and Science festival* at the Concert house in Stockholm in 2004 (Steaming from a project at *Konstfack* together with the Satellite board of Sweden) I tried to picture the gaze of the satellite by a gradual zooming into a satellite picture of Kibera (one of the largest slums of Africa) where the picture cracks up in an abstract field of pixels when it reaches the human scale (Commercial satellites like Quickbird can come as close as 60 cm/pixel from a distance of hundreds of kilometres, but they can not capture individual human beings).

³⁴⁸ In reality both techniques may very well work together. The problem occurs when the more and more accurate mapping becomes a goal in itself, outside the control of the community.

³⁴⁹ Makau 2003, p. 2.

³⁵⁰ Makau 2003, p. 2.

³⁵¹ Kimani 2003-12-08.

³⁵² The reason for putting down two names is of cause to get more houses after the upgrading.

³⁵³ Aaron Wegman, architect, 2003-12-07. Interview. If not a major “spill over” (people that have to be relocated) is counted for the same seems to apply to Kambi Moto where the numbers have gone down from 539 households in the original enumeration from October 2001 to my latest numbers from 2004 that counts 270 households. *Huruma Informal Settlements* 2001 and Wegman 2004.

³⁵⁴ Makau 2003, p. 1.

³⁵⁵ Sune Suneson 2003, “Inledning”, in Michel Foucault: *Övervakning och straff*, p. xiii-xiv. Soja says that this power-knowledge relationship, for Foucault himself, was “embedded in a trialectic of power, knowledge, and space”, and points out that: “The third term should never be forgotten.” (Soja 1996, p. 148) This relationship between power and knowledge in space becomes visible in Foucault’s use of the Panopticon and is also important in my reading of the colonial history of Nairobi.



FIGURE 52. Milka Wangui.

to bridge the gap between the theoretical sphere and the world of practical action, and thus fails to see the potential of the everyday as well as the decisive role played by totality and centrality.”³⁵⁶

With Lefebvre enumeration can be seen as a way to escape the controlling power of the Panopticon,³⁵⁷ a reversing of the relation where the marginalised collects information about him/herself and the space that he/she occupies to win that space. This goes back to my reading of the informal settlements as appropriation of place as opposed to domination.³⁵⁸

Looking at the enumeration process as a whole I would claim that the one most important factor is the community involvement seen in each step of the process, from formulating the need of the enumeration, to planning, acquiring, retaining and using the information. Makau summarises:

No doubt the entire process is lengthy and very tedious. It is however necessary because at the end of the day you want to ensure that *the community accepts, retains, owns and defends their information*. If the community does not own the information, it is just a statistic in Pamoja Trust’s computers and its value as a development asset is zero.³⁵⁹

And it could be added that it might not only be zero, but instead works towards “controlling” the community instead of the community gaining the control of their own destiny.

ENUMERATION, POWER AND THE INDIVIDUAL

Before leaving the enumeration process I want to raise a question on power and the individual by a concrete example from Kambi Moto. The young woman Milka Wangui is not a Muungano member and she has lost fate in Muungano because of the enumeration:

When they had started Muungano and Muungano became strong these people from Pamoja came to take some photos. I was told to leave the key to Margaret [her neighbour]. When Pamoja came to enumerate they got a daughter of the landlord as the owner of the house. But I was a hawker in town, that’s why I couldn’t manage to be around when the photos were taken.³⁶⁰

Wangui says that it was because of this incident that she started to loose fate in the Muungano and points to two problems in the Muungano: “Some people have some hidden agendas [referring to the rich people] and some people are left hanging [the poor]” and “the community members and the people around the community members they have the intention of getting the whole place first priority to themselves, not for any other person.”³⁶¹

In the last chapter the registration fee was discussed as a major hindrance for joining the Muungano. It was also suggested that this wasn’t the real reason and that the real reason therefore had to be looked for elsewhere. Three alternative reasons were presented; lack of belonging; caring only for oneself; and wanting to be given instead of acting. The story of Milka Wangui gives two additional

³⁵⁶ Wallenstein 2002, p. 12. For a discussion on this see p. 14.

³⁵⁷ The Panopticon places the individual in space to produce knowledge about the individual, thus producing the individual him/herself. Foucault 1979.

³⁵⁸ See p. 41.

³⁵⁹ Makau 2003, p. 3. Italics are mine.

³⁶⁰ Milka Wangui, Resident in Kambi Moto, 2003-12-20. Interview. The interview was translated from Swahili by Eric Omondi, one of the collectors in the Muungano. His limitations in English raise questions on the accuracy of the interpretation.

³⁶¹ Wangui 2003-12-20.

reasons that have to be brought to the next chapter: The rich gaining instead of the poor and the committee members looking out primarily for themselves.³⁶²

Negotiation for Land

It is widely accepted that security of tenure is an over-arching problem that affects all informal settlements in the city with almost equal intensity/.../ Consequently land tenure regulation becomes the entry point for any upgrading activity. And while there is an appreciation of the need for better housing and other essential services, security of tenure is the foundation on which all other developments may be carried out.³⁶³

This quote from the *Planning Survey Report* of Huruma shows the importance of security of tenure both for the residents of the informal settlements and in the process of upgrading. But the process of land regularizations also brings different interests within the community to the fore.

I will start by looking at the negotiation for land between the community and the City Council – what I have called the *external power relation* – and then move on to look at the *internal power relations* within the community.

EXTERNAL POWER: THE COMMUNITY AND THE CITY COUNCIL

My understanding of the negotiation for land opens up with Lefebvre's thirding-as-Othering. This reading is grounded on the SDI homepage:

One of SDI's most important goals is to demonstrate to communities, professionals, city officials and politicians that alternatives to eviction can emerge from the development of negotiated consensus. In order to achieve this consensus the key development actors – organized communities and local governments need to shift perspective and think *beyond an "either/or" scenario*.³⁶⁴

It's necessary to move beyond the binary positions of the communities' *view from below*: "we want this space or we don't cooperate" and the city officials' *view from above*: "we relocate you or you don't get any development."³⁶⁵

Susan Wanjiru, the chairlady in Kambi Moto, explains why the City Council gave up the land to the communities of Huruma:

In my mind I think they have changed because they had no other alternative, nowhere to take us, so they accepted whatever we wanted so that they can help Kenya's people to grow up. And as they are visiting other countries they see that poor people are attended differently. That's why they change their mind.³⁶⁶

There are two things that are important here. The first is the insight that the city can't solve the housing situation without help of the citizens themselves and therefore accepts the initiative of the people – the appropriation of the place.³⁶⁷ The report on the *Huruma Slum Upgrading Initiative* says: "the Council

³⁶² These complain are also supported by a survey among the Muungano members by the newly installed executive comity on the 13th December 2003 under the title *Report about the virtues and vices identified in the Muungano of Kambi Moto*. The survey listed 26 members and 3 non-members.

³⁶³ *Huruma Informal Settlements* 2001, p. 4.

³⁶⁴ <http://www.sdinet.org/rituals/ritual4.htm> 2006-02-18. Italics are mine.

³⁶⁵ <http://www.sdinet.org/rituals/ritual4.htm> 2006-02-18.

³⁶⁶ Wanjiru 2003-12-11.

³⁶⁷ Against this view stands the fact that there has been a stop date set after which no more informal settling is tolerated. The belief that formal planning can catch up with the informal settlements and once again gain the control (like in the colonial days) might not only be futile but it may be even reactionary and contra productive.



FIGURE 53. Negotiations at the City council.



FIGURE 54. Jaimi Mbula (to the left) is a tenant and Henry Mongi is a structure owner in Kambi Moto.

acknowledges that issues of access to secure land, adequate housing and services for the poor are too broad for any one entity to solve alone. Solutions to these problems must involve collaboration between many actors.”³⁶⁸

The second important thing is the role of the global scale, where transnational contacts do not only affect the communities at grass root level but also the City Officials: “The network offers a growing set of living examples, in different parts of the world, where communities have negotiated successfully for secure land and then proceeded with development at scale”³⁶⁹, the SDI homepage states.

A lot has changed since the early days of the Muungano movement. “The government before couldn’t let a person from the slum enter any office”³⁷⁰, says Peter Chegge. And Kimani says that: “From being excluded from even raising their case the communities of Huruma have now been able to sit at the same table as those government and city council officials.”³⁷¹ Chegge concludes: “That’s how Muungano *came to power in themselves*, to build their houses, because the owner of the land agreed to give the land.”³⁷²

To be sustainable the involvement of the people affected by the upgrading effort, has to be there right from the outset, in formulation of the laws and the regulations. Apiyo says:

So until the people are involved in deciding the landownership, the ownership of the structures, then we are not going to solve anything. People are going to be allocated land, they will sell, create more slums but by involving them and charring past experiences they would be able to even propose what laws or regulations should be put in place so that nobody is able to sell the housing unit or land and move to form another settlement.³⁷³

To get the right to the place is the final step in a process – starting with the appropriation of the place – of transferring power to the lived Thirdspace of the “inhabitants” and “users”. But the consensus between the communities and the city should not be understood as a final position. Instead I see it as a negotiated position between two parts at a certain point. (The face of the government could change tomorrow). The double legacy of the Muungano movement has to be kept alive through the creation of ever expanding networks that can empower the marginalized and excluded and create a (political) counterspace to the powers of states, city authorities and international agencies.³⁷⁴

INTERNAL POWER: TENNANTS AND STRUCTURE OWNERS

The agreement between the city officials and the communities are not enough. Power is not acted out only on the macro scale. Maybe an even bigger challenge is to solve the micro powers within the community.³⁷⁵ I will here focus on what I have found to be the main conflict in regard to the upgrading process: the conflicting interests of tenants and structure owners.

Both sides acknowledge the importance of security of tenure. The *Planning Survey Report* claims that: “The univocal concern expressed by the tenants and structure

³⁶⁸ *Huruma Slum Upgrading Initiative: Documentation of the Process leading up to Settlement Planning*, not dated, p. 1.

³⁶⁹ <http://www.sdinet.org/rituals/ritual4.htm> 2006-02-18.

³⁷⁰ Chegge 2003-12-07.

³⁷¹ Kimani 2003-12-08.

³⁷² Chegge 2003-12-07.

³⁷³ Apiyo 2003-12-20.

³⁷⁴ See the chapter “SDI: Global network of local federations”, p. 30-33.

³⁷⁵ Margaret Mogure explains that before the Muungano if your house was destroyed and you needed to repair it you had to go to the chiefs camp to tell him and pay him money ”but now if you want to repair your house nobody is bothering you.” Mogure 2003-12-11.



FIGURE 55. Robinson, an absentee structureowner or so-called “slumlord” in Kibera.

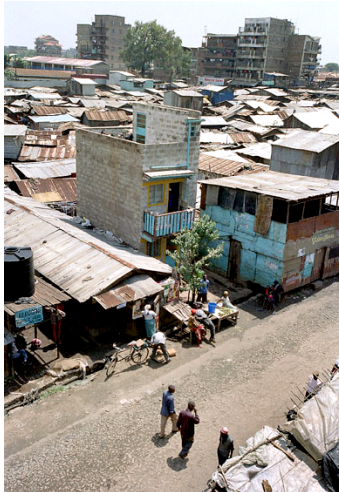


FIGURE 56. Ghetto with sample house in the centre of the picture.

owners...is the need for land tenure regularizations,³⁷⁶ But they also represent different interests in the process.

“Among the various interests involved, tenants are the most disadvantaged,”³⁷⁷ the *Nairobi Situation Analysis* states. They are usually poor households that have a very insecure tenure, since the whole system operates outside the formal legal regulations.

The structure owners are the owners of the structure but not the land, which is usually public land (like in the case of Kambi Moto). There are two types of structure owners: resident and absentee. The resident structure owners share the same living conditions as their tenants while the absentee structure owners (often referred to as “slumlords”) are wealthy individuals or “prominent public officials” who live elsewhere and have contributed to the commercialization of the informal settlements.³⁷⁸

As already told a small group of structure owners, that owns most of the structures in Madoya, managed to stop this settlement from even being included in the Huruma upgrading initiative. In Ghetto, on the other hand, the structure owners, being the initial Muungano members, were the ones that went to the City council to negotiate but they have then, since the building of the first sample house, obstructed the process. Salma Sheba, at Pamoja Trust:

But I think that when they started negotiating with the City council and ourselves our stand was to let the residents of the given village benefit. That’s now when they started fearing tenants would come in and gain the advantage before them.³⁷⁹

She continues: “Kambi Moto just came in later and they brought everybody onboard.” “We are together”, says the resident structure owner Lucy Wanjiku: “I agreed when I was having 14 houses. In fact I was the first person to agree to put them down because I believed that if we started something we must do it.” Later in the interview her picture of Kambi Moto changes: “But some structure owners don’t believe. Very few believe.”³⁸⁰

An alternative way from that of the Muungano in general and Pamoja Trust in specific is to compensate the structure owners – to buy them out.³⁸¹ Jane Weru takes the example of UN Habitat working together with the government in Kibera:³⁸²

They have come up with a very rigid method of working in mind and they are now taking it down instead of probably starting down and then developing the method of work and the solutions. So now they are going to compensate structure owners for loss of their houses. Now that’s something they have thought up there. They haven’t yet

³⁷⁶ *Huruma Informal Settlements* 2001, p. 4.

³⁷⁷ Syagga, Mitullah and Gitau 2001, p.125.

³⁷⁸ Syagga, Mitullah and Gitau 2001, p.125.

³⁷⁹ Sheba 2003-12-19.

³⁸⁰ Wanjiku 2003-12-09.

³⁸¹ Mathare 4a is a “famous” upgrading project where the structure owners were bought out. During my field study I heard a lot about Mathare 4a: First as a positive example from Ulrik Westman at UN Habitat, but then in negative terms from residents in Kambi Moto as the “project” – something coming from “outside” that the people didn’t want. There are other shortcomings, besides buying out the structure owners that have helped to create the bad reputation of Mathare 4a: The houses were designed without community participation and lack growth potential.

³⁸² The largest slum of Nairobi and one of the largest in Africa.

gone down to discuss this issue with the people. I think they have a very top-down kind of method of work and I think that's what differs.³⁸³

Jack Makau fills in:

I don't think it's possible to sort out the question of ownership in any other way than letting the community do it itself. The process takes time. It has to take time. It will take another ten years before Kambi Moto is finished. But in that time there will be hundreds of other 'Kambi Motos'.³⁸⁴

As I see it, these two statements sums up the turn from a Firstspace/Secondspace method of working to a Thirdspace method. The process has to come from the lived space (Thirdspace) of the individual communities instead of from the conceptual space (Secondspace) of "rigid" working methods that are implemented in the material space (Firstspace) – however good these methods might be on the paper.

The structuring of space is a constant negotiation between different interests of power, both micro and macro. The decision to compensate the structure owners sets a standard that becomes an external instrument of power. It deprives the community of the responsibility and control over the process and thus leads to disempowerment (since it makes the communities dependent on an external force to solve their internal problems).³⁸⁵ Instead of relying on a "manual" the process has to be "organic", evolving in relation to the individual communities.

"What the process has done is to give an entry into the community", says Kimani: "Eventually you'll have layers of people within the same community and each layer, once it's empowered, is able to push out those that are on top of them and suppressing them." He describes how the community in Kambi Moto managed to "push out the chair of that community, a very resourceful person and press down those who are very powerful."³⁸⁶

The process now created space for people like Chegge [the secretary of the Muungano]. So what will happen next is that we'll see – and it's inevitable, it must come – a group that will see Chegge and that layer as being too resourceful.³⁸⁷

The solution to the problem is grounded in space: "There is now the matter of having someone to say: 'Okay this is your space, start doing something about it,'"³⁸⁸ Kimani concludes. And this has to be sorted out in the design and construction process.

Design and construction

I will now turn to look at the actual transformation of the Firstspace of Kambi Moto in the design and construction. But the building of the physical structures is inscribed in the larger Thirdspace (the physical, mental and social space) of the

³⁸³ Weru 2003-12-06.

³⁸⁴ Makau 2003-12-06.

³⁸⁵ And it's a costly solution as well. Weru: "Let's say there are 1,2 million slum dwellers in Nairobi. Divide that by four. Those are 300.000 households. If I'm not wrong in Mathare they were paying 5000 Ksh per structure in compensation. Multiply 300.000 by 5000. How much is that? 1,5 billion just to sort out the structure owners." Makau: "And you don't really sort them out..." Weru and Makau 2003-12-06.

³⁸⁶ Kimani 2003-12-08.

³⁸⁷ Kimani 2003-12-08.

³⁸⁸ Kimani 2003-12-08.



FIGURE 57. Joseph Muketu.

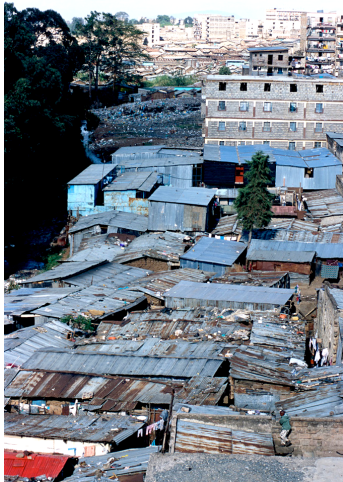


FIGURE 58. Githathuru informal settlement.

community where the different interests of the community have to be worked out and where power is acted out both externally (in relation to the architect/planner) and internally in “the (social) production of (social) space.”

The design process starts with identifying the priorities of the community. Is housing really one of these? After this I will look at the design of the house in the *dream process* and the building of the *cloth model*, a 1:1 model of the house. I will also discuss the *settlement plan* before finishing with the *construction*.

Besides the general Thirdspace perspective the process will be understood through Margaret Crawford’s concept *everyday space*, that was introduced on page 42 in the chapter “The place”, as a more concrete understanding of Soja’s Thirdspace.

IDENTIFYING THE PRIORITIES OF THE COMMUNITY

Design within everyday space must start with an understanding and acceptance of the life that takes place there.³⁸⁹

“There is one thing to do the upgrading. It’s another thing to do the right upgrading,” says the local architect Joseph Muketu³⁹⁰, and continues: “The community has a better understanding of the problems they have which they would like to see resolved in their new houses.”³⁹¹ The physical environment (Firstspace) is just one part of the problems of the slum dwellers and housing is just one part of the physical environment: “Housing is a small component of the reality of the slum dweller”, says Muketu: “They have other overwhelming problems.”³⁹² He divides these problems into three different areas: 1) environmental issues (housing being just one, others being sanitation and infrastructure), 2) social issues (lack of security for example) and 3) economical issues (lack of employment or other income generating activities).

“Not everybody should build a house”, says Weru, “a house is not a priority for everybody in the settlement.” The issue of different priorities connects to the problem of those who feel left out in the upgrading effort.³⁹³ How to solve this problem might be shown by the neighbouring community, Gitathuru, who has made a choice to start construction with a communal bathhouse (with shower and toilet facilities) instead of individual houses. Instead of prioritizing individual families this solution looks to the basic needs of *everybody* in the community *collectively*. Weru suggests (regarding Kambi Moto):

If there is a family that is not able to build a house within the settlement we should be able to build just the basic facilities [toilet and water] and those families could move around and they could settle around those facilities and not necessarily have to build a house and then they look at what is their real need.

“And the saving schemes should be able to sort that out”, she continues, pointing to the need of Pamoja Trust as the conscience of the community: “I think those are issues that we really need to push the scheme on.”³⁹⁴

³⁸⁹ Crawford 1999, p. 10.

³⁹⁰ Joseph Muketu is a young local architect working together with Pamoja trust to learn the communal design process.

³⁹¹ Muketu 2003-11-13.

³⁹² Muketu 2003-11-13.

³⁹³ See Milka Wangui on p. 51.

³⁹⁴ Right after my fieldwork the saving scheme in Kambi Moto put up a trust for those who are “not able” (of illness or other reasons). Another group that should be taken into account are those who see the settlement as just a transitory place and therefore don’t want to invest in building a house (see the chapter “the place” under “everyday space” on p. 41). The construction of a guesthouse with rooms to rent could be an alternative for this group and would also earn the community some money in the long run.



FIGURE 59. The dream process in Soweto, Kahawa with architects Joseph Muketu and Chrispino Ocheng.

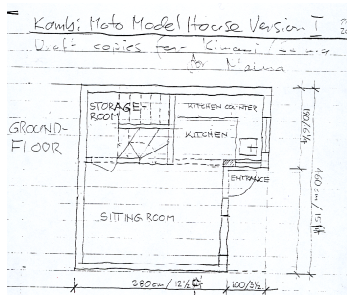


FIGURE 60. Kambi Moto model house, sketch.

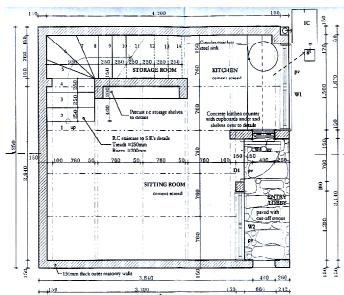


FIGURE 61. Kambi Moto model house, drawing.

These conflicting interests in the community have to be sought out in and through the structuring and restructuring of space: “You must do something practical; give them something practical. So they build, they start doing and the good thing is that they are together”, says Kimani. He takes this as an explanation of why Pamoja Trust have been able to “process Kambi Moto faster than the rest of the communities” in Huruma.

THE DREAM PROCESS

It is necessary for poor communities to re-locate their participation in the housing delivery process at the level of *the practical*. This means a move away from *the abstraction* of a struggle for housing rights, backed with lobbying, demonstration and litigation to the concrete activities of planning, design and actual delivery. In order to do this, communities need to start by dreaming and visualizing the kind of settlements and houses in which they would like to live.³⁹⁵

The actual design process starts with the community coming together in what is called the *dream process*, where the architect/s and the community sit together and work out the design. “To *dialogize design* in the city”, writes Crawford, “challenges the conceptual hierarchy under which most design professionals operate.” She continues: “Everyday life provides a good starting point for this shift because it is grounded in the commonplace rather than the canonical, the many rather than the few...and it is uniquely comprehensible to ordinary people.”³⁹⁶ The architect Joseph Muketu describes the process in Kambi Moto as “an interactive process with the community” where the community members “come up with alternative designs of the house they want to live in.”³⁹⁷

In the beginning of the dream process the community members come up with “the most expensive houses that they have ever seen”, says Muketu: “So actually they think of the upmarket houses that they have seen in Nairobi.” But the dream (Secondspace) have to meet with the reality of Firstspace: “When you take them through this process of identifying their resources they now start to scale it down and make it fit their capacity”, says Muketu.

“Everyday urbanism demands a radical repositioning of the designer, a shifting of power from the professional to the ordinary person”, says Crawford. Muketu confess that: “As a designer I sometimes feel that maybe I’m losing my conventional position in the dreaming process.” He compares to the architect education that “makes the designer feel like he is in charge of the whole process” and that he can “dictate things for the occupant of the space.”³⁹⁸

Hard as it might be for the architect it might be even harder for the community to “evolve from the position of understanding the designer as having the authority in the process.”³⁹⁹ Muketu says that it’s a matter of making the community members understand that:

They can also determine the kind of environment they want to live in just like the environment they are living in now. They didn’t depend or rely on a designer to come up with it for them.⁴⁰⁰

“Slum dwellers have always been the architects and engineers of their settlements”, the SDI homepage states: “In many cities, local governments are

³⁹⁵ www.sdinet.org/rituals/ritual6.html 2006-02-18. Italics are mine.

³⁹⁶ Crawford 1999, p. 10. Italics are mine.

³⁹⁷ Muketu 2003-11-13.

³⁹⁸ Muketu 2003-11-13.

³⁹⁹ Muketu 2003-11-13.

⁴⁰⁰ Muketu 2003-11-13.



FIGURE 62. Aaron Wegman in Kambi Moto.



FIGURE 63. Lars Reuterswård.



FIGURE 64. The cloth model in Sowetho, Kahawa.

now beginning to see that the urban poor can play a significant role in creating housing stock for low-income communities. This process allows communities to redefine their relationship with the professionals in their city.”⁴⁰¹

But this doesn’t mean doing away with the architect altogether: “So what is the role of the architect then?” asks Aaron Wegman, the architect responsible for the design of Kambi Moto. When he compares to the interests of the engineers, the developers and the builders he answers that it’s “space-making as such”, and in relation to the members of the community it’s “to be concerned about the individual needs of each family but *at the same time* have the picture of the whole settlement.” Wegman continues: “You constantly move from the micro to the macro and vice versa. So at the same time you are an architect but you are also an urban planner.”⁴⁰² Lars Reuterswård at UN Habitat says:

There is always a normative element. We can never leave our professional role, lay flat on our backs and say: ‘Of course people shall do exactly what they want’. Because they are not. This is a process of change and we are here to bring qualities, but it must be qualities that people want and that they can appreciate, because it’s a dialog, a pedagogical process.⁴⁰³

From the Thirdspace perspective of everyday space the community should play the lead role in this mutual dialog. To Crawford: “Widespread expertise in everyday life acts as a levelling agent, eliminating the distance between professionals and users, between specialized knowledge and daily experience.”⁴⁰⁴ Weru takes the example of a community that “went and did their dreams” and came to the office to say: “This is our design! Can you come and help us to refine it? Provide the technical support to refine this dream.”⁴⁰⁵ And Wegman writes:

Essentially the professional input should be in a manner to add value to the community’s effort. Such a co-operation must be manifested in empowering the community. Creative and good ideas, which are developed by the communities, turned into practical and successful solutions through specific input from the professionals.⁴⁰⁶

THE CLOTH MODEL

An important step in the design process is the construction of a “sample life-size house that represents the shelter aspirations”⁴⁰⁷ of the community. Muketu says:

Then we go to another level where we don’t just want to leave them [the community members] at the point of seeing their design on paper. We want them to see their design in its actual form and its scale 1:1. That means we want to take them into the house they have designed and allow them an opportunity to experience these places. So that’s when we come to the cloth model house.⁴⁰⁸

The SDI homepage describes the cloth model as a “democratic appropriation” of ordinary “middleclass” housing exhibitions: “The difference is that these house models are life size and not miniature models” and that they are “designed and constructed by [the community members] themselves.”⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰¹ www.sdinet.org/rituals/ritual6.html 2006-02-18.

⁴⁰² Wegman 2003-12-07.

⁴⁰³ Reuterswård 2003-12-18.

⁴⁰⁴ Crawford 1999, p. 12.

⁴⁰⁵ Weru 2003-12-06.

⁴⁰⁶ Aaron Wegman, not dated b. *The Role of the Architect in the People’s Housing Process*.

⁴⁰⁷ www.sdinet.org/rituals/ritual6.html 2006-02-18.

⁴⁰⁸ Muketu 2003-11-13.

⁴⁰⁹ www.sdinet.org/rituals/ritual6.html 2006-02-18.



FIGURE 65. Joseph Omondi.

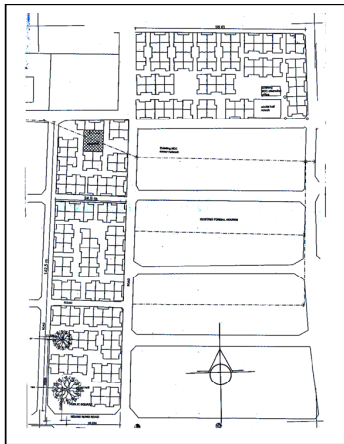


FIGURE 66. Settlement plan for Kambi Moto.

“The cloth model allow the poor to discuss and debate housing-designs best suited for their needs” and “to enter into dialogue with the professionals about construction-materials, construction-costs and urban service.”⁴¹⁰ Joseph Omondi, one community member, says: “Before the building we made the cloth modelling, several. From those we chose one that we saw was fine for us. So we can say we also contributed to the design or somehow what the houses should look like.”⁴¹¹ The material, a timber structure clad in cloth, “is meant to ensure that...it’s a temporary house, such that the community can feel confident to even suggest changes on that level because it’s not a permanent house.”⁴¹²

The putting up of the cloth model also “presents an opportunity for social growth for the community. People are coming together and working together.”⁴¹³ The report on the *Huruma Slums Upgrading Initiative* says that the house model “was an attempt to reconcile several issues that affect sharing of land and that can only be ideally dealt with at the community level.”⁴¹⁴

The cloth model becomes a “paradigmatic example” of Thirdspace.⁴¹⁵ In the same way as the body functioned as both a concrete space and a symbolic space, a real and imagined space for struggle, the cloth model becomes a space in between the abstract Secondspace of the drawing (and the miniature model) and the materialised Firstspace of the permanent house: a community built model not just as a visual object but as a three dimensional space to experience.

THE SETTLEMENT PLAN

The cloth model leads up to “the evolution of a common community vision” of the settlement layout:

Apart from making a physical representation of the house they would like to own the house modelling process was also aimed at developing a community plan for the sharing of land space in the settlement.⁴¹⁶

The settlement layout is then “reflected back to the communities through mass meetings and through sustained dialogue with already established saving schemes.”⁴¹⁷

The planning starts from the lived space of the community. Architect Aaron Wegman says: “What I’ve learnt the most from the informal settlements is how people move on the land”.⁴¹⁸

What was very important to understand, as an architect from urban planning point of view is that a neighbourhood is something that has grown over time and you can’t recreate it within a few months when you pull down this thing and build it up somewhere else.⁴¹⁹

There are two things that are important in this in situ approach: The first is that “you leave, or you try to leave, existing social structures and the built

⁴¹⁰ www.sdinet.org/rituals/ritual6.html 2006-02-18.

⁴¹¹ Omondi 2003-12-11.

⁴¹² Muketu 2003-11-13.

⁴¹³ Muketu 2003-11-13.

⁴¹⁴ *Huruma Slums Upgrading Initiative: Documentation of the Process leading up to Settlement Planning*, not dated, p. 5.

⁴¹⁵ See note 240 on the Panopticon as “the paradigmatic example” in relation to “the body” on p. 34.

⁴¹⁶ *Huruma Slums Upgrading Initiative: Documentation of the Process leading up to Settlement Planning*, not dated, p. 5.

⁴¹⁷ www.sdinet.org/rituals/ritual6.html 2006-02-18.

⁴¹⁸ Wegman 2003-12-07.

⁴¹⁹ Wegman 2003-12-07.



FIGURE 67. Ghetto informal settlement.



FIGURE 68. Little lanes in Ghetto.



FIGURE 69. Corridor-like spaces in Kambi Moto.

relationships and you deal with the buildings.”⁴²⁰ The other is that the planning, to quote Crawford again, “starts with an understanding and acceptance of the life that takes place there.”⁴²¹ Instead of the abstract geometrical Secondspace of the drafting board or the computer “the plan has been made one to one on site” by people that “were responding intelligently to the typographic situation”⁴²², says Wegman: “When you have a little valley or a little hill you don’t just go in a straight line with the road, you go around, because it means less digging.”

He describes a walk through the informal settlement of Ghetto: “You hardly see where there is an entrance and then you start to enter this labyrinth of little lanes and suddenly squares open and you see that this is quite an amazing space.” It resembles “a medieval town layout.”⁴²³, Wegman concludes: “Obviously it makes a more people friendly environment.”⁴²⁴

Compared to Ghetto the character of Kambi Moto is somewhat different. As earlier described the settlement as a whole is forming an L between two mud-roads and the courtyards translate into corridor-like spaces. While the small scale business face the streets the corridor-like spaces become a semi private space, an extended living room, that serves multiple purposes such as cooking, washing up and hanging clothes to dry. Another important aspect of this “closed off” space, with an entrance at one end, is probably when it comes to security.

In the plan for the upgraded Kambi Moto these corridor-like courtyards have disappeared for a schema that instead governs the flow of movement in the settlement. This raises questions on the role of what is typical for the structuring of space in a *particular* settlement in relation to what is a good neighbourhood structure in the *mind* of the urban planner.

Another question that can be raised is the role of spaces for small-scale businesses. It is clear that the generating of a livelihood may be the most important aspect in the housing of the urban poor. In a paper on Planning Principals⁴²⁵ Wegman puts emphasis on the mixed land uses of the informal settlements. In Kambi Moto the livelihood issues are for example considered in the creation of a space that can transform a catering outlet into a whole co-op restaurant with a shop.⁴²⁶

While the creation of new possibilities for livelihoods are important in the settlement planning I would like to point to the already existing small-scale businesses of the community. One of the residents of Kambi Moto has supported himself and his family through a coal business, operating from the same spot, since 1975. Being a member of the saving scheme he is still worried about what would happen to the space of his business and wants to be shown where to live before moving away “because he needs his business.”⁴²⁷ Susan Wanjiru, the chairlady in Kambi Moto, explains the problem “that some members don’t come to the meetings to raise their point. If he comes to the meeting we as a community can join one another and see what we can do. But when he keeps quiet nobody knows his problem.”⁴²⁸

As the construction process moves forward new problems come to the fore. The planning has to be an incremental process (just like the construction of the

⁴²⁰ Wegman 2003-12-07.

⁴²¹ Crawford 1999, p. 10.

⁴²² Wegman 2003-12-07.

⁴²³ Or the vision of Jane Jacobs “unplanned” city.

⁴²⁴ Wegman 2003-12-07.

⁴²⁵ Aaron Wegman, not dated a, *Planning Principals*.

⁴²⁶ Wegman 2004, p. 6.

⁴²⁷ Wanjiru 2003-12-09.

⁴²⁸ Wanjiru 2003-12-09.



FIGURE 70. Taking down shacks to rebuild Kambi Moto.



FIGURE 71. Construction in Kambi Moto.



FIGURE 72. Construction in Kambi Moto.



FIGURE 73. The new houses in Kambi Moto.

individual houses) to be able to deal with the constant negotiation for space in the community

CONSTRUCTION

The construction process in Kambi Moto fits well with the accepted best practice of today, known as *participatory slum upgrading*, and described in the UN habitat *Global Report on Human Settlements 2003* as a holistic in situ approach where the community is involved from the outset.⁴²⁹ The built environment (Firstspace) of Kambi Moto after upgrading will also live up to the new paradigm of upgrading (the legacy of Jane Jacobs): a low-rise multi storey neighbourhood on a human scale with high density and mixed land uses; with dwellings offering its habitants possibilities for small scale business and with a multiple use of semi-private and communal spaces; done through self construction using local building materials.⁴³⁰ At the same time it's important to point out that neither the building process nor the built environment are the crucial point when it comes to empowerment in slum upgrading. The SDI homepage states: "There is no formula to house design, construction and management."⁴³¹ Instead it has to be worked out in each individual case in response to the lived space of the community:

In some cases the Federation concerned, having translated their dream house into a blue print, will contract out the development, either to community based guilds, construction companies or a blend of both. In other house construction will be conducted on a self-built basis, with families contributing the labour.⁴³²

But even if it's the global network of local federations organised in a peer-to-peer exchange, resolving the macro and micro scales that are the key to empowerment in slum upgrading it's still important to see how this takes physical form.

The houses in Kambi Moto are built through an incremental process. It "evolves organically, depending on their [the individual families] possibilities", says Weru. The incremental building of the house is important to those with lesser saving power and keeps the transitional aspect of the informal settlement in the formalization of the neighbourhood.⁴³³ Due to the high density of the settlement any growth has to be on the height. The houses in Kambi Moto are built on a very limited footprint of approximately 4.2 x 4.5 meters. This has made the community go for a ground plus two structure that can even be extended to a ground plus

⁴²⁹ UN Human Settlements Program 2003, p. 132. See p. 4.

⁴³⁰ These ideals for upgrading were lined out by Dick Urban Westbro, following Charles Correa in his *The new landscape: the self-help city* from 1989. In relation to Westbro's call for urban agriculture I would like to point to the possibility of roof-gardens in Kambi Moto, not only creating an extra food production but also an extra private outdoor space in the crowded settlement. Dick Urban Westbro, Professor at KTH in Stockholm, 2005-10-18. Speech at "Hem ljuva hem", conference held at the Architecture museum in Stockholm.

⁴³¹ <http://www.sdinet.org/rituals/ritual6.htm> 2006-02-18.

⁴³² <http://www.sdinet.org/rituals/ritual6.htm> 2006-02-18.

⁴³³ The way of involvement in Kambi Moto represents one model of participation in construction. It can be exemplified by the Dutch Structuralist architect Herman Herzberger as opposed to Nicolaas Habraken's support structure (inside which the occupant would be free to arrange the plan). Frampton writes: "Herzberger's antipathy to the mechanistic provision of flexibility, as found in the sophisticated infrastructural propositions of both Habraken and [Yona] Friedman, seems to have been vindicated here by the apparent spontaneity and ease with which the working spaces have been taken over and modified." Kenneth Frampton 2000, *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*, p. 290, 299.



FIGURE 74. The entrance of the new houses in Kambi Moto.



FIGURE 75. Inside the house of the Chegge family.



FIGURE 76. The transformation of Kambi Moto.

three structure: “Well it’s your land”, says Wegman, “and if you make the foundation strong enough it’s fine.”⁴³⁴

The construction process is built on a communal instead of individual participation where every member in the Muungano saving scheme does his or her time at the construction site on a rolling scheme. Wegman says that involving the people is “the only way to scale up this process.” It’s also a matter of “applying the house building skills that every person traditionally has”⁴³⁵, where, with Crawford, “widespread expertise in everyday life acts as a levelling agent, eliminating the distance between professionals and users, between specialized knowledge and daily experience.”⁴³⁶ Wegman continues:

Typically the women were leading, when you had to build a house and what it must look like, and they make beautiful architecture and beautiful original planning when you see the traditional village. Pick up on this note and translate it into urban context. That’s the goal.⁴³⁷

Kambi Moto is regarded a “special planning area” says Jack Makau and explains that community participation has replaced building standards.⁴³⁸ The “special planning area” becomes a way to escape the building by laws, going back to the colonial racial segregation order and representing a First- and Secondspace legacy where standards are conceived “up there” and taken down to be implemented in the physical environment. The special planning area opens up a possibility to proceed from the lived space of the individual community. Crawford again:

We believe that lived experience should be more important than physical form in defining the city. /.../ The city is, above all a social product, created out of the demands of everyday use and the social struggles of urban inhabitants. Design within everyday space must start with an understanding and acceptance of the life that takes place there. This goes against the grain of professional design discourse, which is based on abstract principles, whether quantitative, formal, spatial, or perceptual.⁴³⁹

⁴³⁴ Wegman 2003-12-07.

⁴³⁵ Wegman 2003-12-07.

⁴³⁶ Crawford 1999, p. 12.

⁴³⁷ Wegman 2003-12-07. Once again the role of the women is emphasized.

⁴³⁸ Makau 2003-12-01.

⁴³⁹ Crawford 1999, p. 10.

SUMMARY, WITH CONCLUSIONS

In this study I have tried to show how power can be worked out in slum upgrading by looking at the SDI (Slum Dwellers International) process as both global and local representatives describe it. I have also tried to see how it is worked out in a practical situation through a small case study in the informal settlement, Kambi Moto.

In the summary I will do two things simultaneously: I will give a summary of the study and at the same time try to answer my initial question on how power can be worked out in slum upgrading.

The first part of the study set the frame of interpretation: a rebalancing of space in relation to history and sociality as well as a rebalancing of conceived space and perceived space with lived space in Edward Soja's concept Thirdspace. This rebalancing was done through what Soja calls a *thirthing-as-Othering*: a move away from the closed logic of either/or to the open *both and also*. In my study *thirthing-as-Othering* has been the key to answer my initial question on how power relations can be worked out in slum upgrading, seeing slums as *both* a problem *and also* a possibility.

By looking at the colonial geohistory and the contemporary cityspace of Nairobi the second part opened up to the main questions of this study as well as presenting three different ways of using the concept Thirdspace in relation to my material.

The third part answered as a mirror to the challenges of the second part moving the study into the practical by looking at how the different levels in the concept Thirdspace could be answered by the SDI network.

THE INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS AS THIRDSPACE

Opening up the second part with the colonial history of Nairobi informal settlements could be established as Thirdspace: both a negative outcome of the dominating Secondspace of the colonial administration and as a *counterspace* where African ways of life could live on and where revolutionary movements could grow.

In a final chapter of part three this way of reading the informal settlements was tried out in the more concrete and contemporary microscale of Kambi Moto, the place of my case study. I made use of the concepts *appropriation* and *everyday space* to read the informal settlement as Thirdspace on a microscale. Appropriation ("assimilation of space by way of acknowledged corporeality")⁴⁴⁰ pointed towards a new power relation between the individual slum dwellers and the officials: the first step in a process of negotiation where the individual takes charge when the state fails to deliver. Everyday space was introduced to give a more practical understanding of Soja's Thirdspace.

THE COLLECTIVE SPATIAL STRUGGLE AS THIRDSPACE

By looking at the contemporary cityspace as *Fractal city* a new exaggerated polarization and "intensification of socio-economic inequalities"⁴⁴¹ was countered by "a new source of mobilized consciousness rooted in the more immediate collective struggle to *take greater control over the "making of geography – the social production of human spatiality."*"⁴⁴²

This second way of using Thirdspace was concretized in part three by looking at *Muungano wa Wanavijiji*: a citywide movement for a *collective struggle for spatial rights*. The dual legacy of the movement was stressed: getting its force from the communities and bringing it to scale by being organized (by community

⁴⁴⁰ Sandin 2003, p. 84.

⁴⁴¹ Soja 2000, p. 265.

⁴⁴² Soja 2000, p. 281.

organizers) and thus creating a citywide space for struggle empowering the slum dwellers in taking charge of the “making of geography”.

The need for a democratic rebalancing was also pointed out, not to empower just the leaders but every member of the community. Pamoja Trust was introduced as a conscience of the communities. Drawing from thirding-as-Othering I discussed the two forces to be resolved in the Muungano movement: the “revolutionary” fight against evictions, which lie behind the formation of the movement and the “democratic” rebalancing of this initial struggle. And drawing from Jane Weru at Pamoja Trust I first showed that if the “revolutionary” power of strong leaders, risking their lives in the struggle, was not balanced by a democratic base in each community there was no foundation to negotiate with the authorities for the right to the land on a macroscale and there was no empowering of the individual slum dweller within the community. But I also claimed that while creating this “democratic” base in the community the initial “revolutionary” power had to live on.

A possible solution to this conflict was presented: the creation of local savings schemes that could bring the community together on a microscale and economic and social networks on a wider scale that could form a “shared identity as members of the urban poor class.” This led to the need to resolve the micro and macro scales in a new politicized space.

THE RESOLVING OF THE MICRO AND MACRO SCALES AS THIRDSPACE

By looking at the history of interventions dealing with informal settlements since independence I wanted to establish two ways to look at cityspace: *the view from above* (the modernistic welfare housing) and *the view from below* (the aided self-builder). I claimed that these had to be resolved in an “alternative and intensely politicized way of looking at cityspace, combining both macro and micro perspectives...” that Lefebvre described as “the (social) production of (social) space,”⁴⁴³ and that Soja redescribed as Thirdspace.

I see the resolving of this micro-macro perspective in SDI’s creation of a global network of local federations (the third use of Thirdspace in this study) as the most fundamental answer to my question on how power can be worked out in slum upgrading. The network was shown to empower the individual slum dweller in making him/her an actor in transferring skills between communities, and at the same time a political awareness was transmitted, producing a social space for political struggle

It was established that in doing this questions are brought down from the conceptual realm of the “professional” to the practical lived experience of the “inhabitant” or “user”. Power is thus generated through a dual process: The individual community empowers itself in the building of strong local communities through savings and take charge of their own information through enumeration (as described in the case study) to be a link in the transnational network. The network empowers the individual community in becoming part of something bigger.

The global network was shown to go beyond both social movements and microfinance organizations, taking space as its bounding force and thus bringing together all the vested interests of the urban poor in the struggle for spatial rights.

To focus on the global network of local federations also moved focus from the search for a best practice formulated as a manual for slum upgrading (Secondspace) to be implemented in the material Firstspace. Instead the process emerge from the lived space of the individual community, while at the same time transferring the lessons from one case to the next through exchanges between communities in a city, in a country and between different countries.

⁴⁴³ Soja 2000, p. 10.

THE CASE STUDY

The fourth part of the study had the form of a practical case study of the informal settlement Kambi Moto in Huruma where I was looking at the process, or the “rituals” of upgrading in a concrete situation.

The process of shifting power to the lived space of the ‘habitants’ and ‘users’ (the *external power relation*) continued as one line, where the other line dealt with *internal power relations* between different interests within the community.

In the first chapter the day-to-day savings was established as the foundation of the process leading to both a Firstspace goal of getting money to invest in housing and a Thirdspace goal in building the community. Focus was placed on the social space – the building of a “culture of trust” on community level, between communities, in a city and a nation. This culture of trust was then questioned in the notion of the registration fee as exclusion focusing on the internal power struggle of the community.

Enumeration was presented as the other community-building base. It was explained as the community collecting information about itself to change their situation: to negotiate with the city officials about the right to their living space.

I tried to read the enumeration process, within a discourse of power and knowledge, as a way for the marginalised and excluded to collect information about themselves to reverse the oppressive control of the colonial cityspace. Empowerment in the enumeration was then questioned in the case of one individual, focusing on the problem of those who are left out.

The two chapters on savings and enumeration led to the chapter on negotiations for land, where the power relations, both external and internal, came to the fore most clearly.

The first section of this chapter dealt with the relation between the community and the city officials. In the discussion on how and why the officials changed and gave the land to the communities of Huruma, emphasis was laid on the need to move beyond the either/or positions of struggling communities and officials and instead work together as well as the role of global examples (the network) in the local situation. The need of the affected people to be involved right from the outset of an upgrading initiative was also emphasized.

In the second half of this chapter the internal power relations came to the fore in the different (often opposing) interests of tenants and structure owners. Two different solutions were presented. The first was to buy the structure owners out and the other to let the community sort out the question of ownership. From a Thirdspace perspective and referring to Pamoja Trust I tried to show that the second alternative was the only sustainable when it comes to empowerment: Instead of a rigid manual with a set timetable the process had to take time, to grow in relation to the individual community.

The solution had to be sought in the structuring of space through the design and construction process where different interests of the community could be negotiated.

A possibility of how to bring everybody onboard was shown in the *identifying of the priorities* where the building of shared communal facilities (water and toilet) was presented as an alternative starting point for the upgrading initiative that would include the whole community (also those who can’t afford to build a house).

To *dialogize design* in the *dreaming* process could transfer power from the conceptual realm of the professional (architect/urban planner) to the lived space of the community.

The clothmodel – a one to one representation of the housing aspirations of the community – was presented as a “paradigmatic example” of Thirdspace – a both

imagined space (a model of the house to be) and a real space (a space to experience and move around in).

The *settlement plan* was discussed as a way for the architect/planner to learn from the lived space of the people: a one to one planning that goes with the topography. And to try to leave the existing social structures and deal with the buildings. The importance of an incremental planning, that is able to respond to different needs in the community as they come to the surface when the process moves on was discussed in relation to small-scale businesses of the community.

Finally *construction* was described as an incremental process with growth potential where there was a communal (collective) rather than individual participation in the house construction. Kambi Moto was also described as a special planning area where community participation had replaced building standards (thus revoking the Secondspace control instrument of set building by laws from the colonial days).

While giving some possible answers of how power can be worked out in slum upgrading from a Thirdspace perspective the case study raises even more questions in relation to the internal power of the community. As Weru said: “It’s a power struggle...the more you go with the process the deeper down you get on the power ladder.”

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are some limitations that have to be pointed out: In focusing on the concrete, lived space, the text to a large extent moves on an abstract level. My role as an outsider “stealing information” from the community of Kambi Moto can also be questioned as well as the practical usefulness of the text. The SDI is already aware of questions regarding power in relation to upgrading. To do justice to the process and really evaluate it a much broader field study with numerous examples in different stages would be needed. And while the field study would need to be broadened the theoretical scope would need to be deepened.

A FUTILE DREAM FOR THE FUTURE

The upgrading effort in Kambi Moto may be taken as a starting point for a future vision for the postcolonial cities of the developing world where the slum dwellers take the lead by the appropriation of place to find a mutual solution to the problem of the Fractal city (a problem set already by the colonial structuring of space).

The appropriation of place can be seen through Lefebvre’s concept *co-option*, explained by Gunnar Sandin as the incorporation of one space into another where the “minor part may influence and perhaps eventually change the major framing of spatial circumstances.”⁴⁴⁴ The informal settlements can through upgrading transform the whole cityspace and change the city from being a city marked by the colonial structuring into a city structured by the lived space of the inhabitants. And in this process changing not only the physical outcome, (where the former informal settlements become areas that live up to the ideals of Jane Jacobs urbanism) but also the social space of the city.

This may seem like a futile dream but with Lefebvre “revolution” doesn’t have to be a total act but can be done individually – but at the same time the total have to be there. The individual or local are interdependent of the global. “If these poles seem irreconcilable”, says Mary McLeod, “it is, as Lefebvre suggests, because we need another, larger ‘reason’ – and, more important, another practice.”⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴⁴ Sandin 2003, p. 84. See also note 268 on p. 39 of this paper.

⁴⁴⁵ McLeod 1997, p. 28-29.

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Unless otherwise indicated illustrations are photos and video-stills by me from 2003.

Figure 4: National museum, Nairobi.

Figure 5-14: Nevanlinna 1996, p. 100, 101, 120, 131, 168, 169, 197, 201, 217, 247.

Figure 2, 15, 24, 34, 36, 49, 55, 56, 70-76: Magnus Rosshagen 2004-2005, photos.

Figure 60, 61, 66: Aaron Wegman 2003, drawings.

Figure 20, 21, 40, 41, 58, 67, 68: Ulrik Westman 2003, photos.