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Negotiating difference in post-apartheid housing design

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This article considers the visual qualities of design practice in post-apartheid housing for the poor. We specifically address the visual power of social mapping within the context of a 'coloured' housing development in the Cape Town suburb of Mitchells Plain. Considering South Africa's history, expanded design practice helps to commence the undoing of apartheid's embedded and lingering impact by mitigating power differentials between planners and designers, on the one hand, and informal housing residents, on the other.

Keywords: design; housing; rights; social mapping; post-apartheid; South Africa

Introduction

At least until September 2008, before the current global crisis caused by capitalism, the 'absolute reign of flexibility' (Bourdieu, 1998) was neoliberalism's governing rationale. This 'reign' facilitated the normalising presence of simultaneously temporary and formal employment in Japan, the banality of global corporate mergers formalised in Switzerland via World Trade Organization deregulatory regulations and the privatisation of public education in the USA.

While flexibility blurs temporary–formal/deregulatory–regulatory/private–public in the 'overdeveloped' world, a kindred flexibility inflects 'informality' in housing residents of the 'underdeveloped' world (e.g. Kudra, 2009; Rizzo, 2011; Rosen & Venkatesh, 2008; Ross, 2009; Sajar, 2005; Williams, 2008). This is a dynamic informality in a city like Rio de Janeiro where it might be understood to be more island-like, or 'urban islands' as Fabricus (2008, p. 2) puts it. Favelas and favela housing as island-like emblems of the informal are not to be confused with absolute isolation or subjugation without the possibility of agency, as Favela da Rocinha in Rio exists in relation to more formal areas like Copacabana, to and from which Rocinha residents shuttle for ('formal' and 'informal') work and entertainment. Thus, as Fabricus states, favelas and those who live in them, not unlike the sea, have 'several genealogies and geologies' (2008, p. 2) connecting with the waters and other islands around them, with some islands coming to be 'independently and suddenly', while others tending to 'build slowly on an underlying urban structure' (2008, p. 2).¹

Beyond the way that scholars have come to see subjects like those in Rocinha, the contingent dimensions of neoliberalism's flexibility are increasingly embedded within the prevailing standard assumptions in urban planning and design scholarship itself. This is especially the case in scholarship on the underdeveloped world. For example, Fabricus calls upon geographers, architects and planners to start 'accepting partial knowledge and relinquishing epistemic control' (2008, p. 8) of the formal and informal as she tries to do

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when considering Brazil. Aksikas links informality and marginality so as to capture and encourage scholars reporting on the ‘existing interdependence between the formal and informal spheres’ (2007, p. 251) in Morocco. Roy urges an understanding of the informal that constitutes a hybrid space where scholars, following Giorgio Agamben, come to see informality not as the “‘chaos that precedes order, but rather the situation that results from [order’s] suspension”” (2005, p. 149). Fabricus, Aksikas and Roy, at some level, agree that planning and design practitioners and scholars, with their ‘expertise’, do not always recognise the complex subject positions occupied by informal communities, much less engage these communities in non-hierarchical ways.

The Freedom Park housing development in Cape Town’s predominantly ‘coloured’² Mitchells Plain suburb³ demonstrates how a visual design tool – social mapping in this article – can be used to engage in a politics that deconstructs the state’s power to use planning and design to racially construct and subjugate some to the informal. Centring the visual in design, here, acknowledges and goes beyond recent scholarship asserting the importance of resident involvement in the planning and design process if the upgrading of informal housing is to be thoroughly successful (see, e.g. Appadurai, 2001; Beardsle & Werthmann, 2008; Castillo, 2001; Ismail, 2012). We forthrightly assert that a visual design tool like social mapping can actually help to mitigate the racial difference that, under apartheid, urban planners and designers helped to make manifest by historically and structurally using racial difference as a measure justifying unequal housing allocation.

The remainder of the article is divided into two main parts – ‘Background’ and ‘Foreground’ – followed by a conclusion. In the ‘Background’ part of the article, historical context figures prominently. The background highlights the significance of an anti-apartheid struggle *mentalité* to the content of the mapping tools used by residents and design professionals working on the Freedom Park project. In South African black communities, including predominantly ‘coloured’ suburbs like Mitchells Plain and its Tafelsig neighbourhood where Freedom Park is located, the struggle consciousness of the 1970s and 1980s in particular did not always take the form of armed resistance; it was often a resistance taking the form of ‘self-organisation’.⁴ Anti-apartheid resistance in South Africa’s black communities, through self-organisation, came as communities engaged those immediately around them in a deep way, so as to create relations of social exchange. This depth entailed the development of a rich local knowledge of local geography and demography as well as of social needs integral to the social maps that would be used to develop a post-apartheid Freedom Park. As a result, social mapping as visual design tool, as referenced in the ‘Foreground’ part of this article, gave the Freedom Park project a quality going beyond the mere design of a physical roof over the head of the roofless; mapping authorised a community to forcefully articulate its realities and desires. This authority interestingly gave the maps contractual qualities empowering residents to claim their right to housing and to own property.

Background

After a 1948 whites-only election brought the National Party to power, ‘apartheid’, Afrikaans for ‘apartness’, became the template for South African state policies and practices. Inequalities experienced by black communities became embedded in land and housing allocation largely because the apartheid state effectively used the Population Registration Act of 1950 to rigidly construct something as malleable as race into concretised and hierarchical categories – broadly, and primarily, white, Indian, ‘coloured’ and African. ‘Population registration’ helped to constrict who South Africans could be,

and, after the Group Areas Act of 1950, where and how South Africans could live. This underlined the relationship between racial classification of groups *and* racial segregation as achieved through land and housing allocation. South African whites, with Group Areas, secured the best land. 'Non-whites' found themselves subjugated to substandard living conditions on the least fertile rural land and the most out-of-the-way urban areas literally rendered invisible on official apartheid-era maps. Group Areas permitted the apartheid state to, for example, designate a multiracial community like Cape Town's District Six a 'white area' in 1966 and, over the next 16 years, to forcibly remove residents classified as 'coloured' to the distant and, from conventional and particularly conservative white South African perspectives, not-so-idyllic suburb of Mitchells Plain and the Tafelsig neighbourhood of Mitchells Plain.⁵

Black South Africans and a relatively insignificant number of whites vigorously challenged apartheid as institutionalised through apartheid legislation, and the spirit of these challenges became the basis of the bottom-up design practices shaping Freedom Park. If there was a single pivotal declaration of opposition to apartheid, it was the Freedom Charter, adopted by the Congress of the People in 1955 outside Kliptown near Johannesburg. 'South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white' (Freedom Charter, 1955), proclaimed anti-apartheid South Africans at the Congress held in Kliptown close to Johannesburg. The Congress called for the repeal and replacement of apartheid policies and practices with non-racial and non-racist ones. They demanded that these changes take place within a multiracial democracy where access to decent housing would be a right, not a privilege. Such demands took on a different dimension, especially in the late 1970s and early 1980s, as civic associations (also known as 'civics') rooted in black communities provided a critical organisational structure. Civics were important in the 1970s and 1980s because they helped to usher in the routinisation of everyday protest beyond the mass congress, or rally covered by the foreign press. Civic associations organised a wide range of protest activities against, for example, rent and tax increases levied by the state even as access to electricity, water, refuse collection and housing remained inadequate or non-existent in black communities. At an even more micro-level, civics organised at the level of the 'street committee', a level of organisation at which community members helped to deliver social services to households, so as to skirt the indifference of the apartheid state. Most important, civics and committees served as a platform upon which the democracy denied by apartheid could be imagined and enacted.⁶

Post-apartheid South Africa as a project has been about trying to align activist ideals and political mechanisms of the civic association movement into the policy formulations and regulatory practices of a (sometimes) reticent state. The process of social transformation, as desired by a housing community like Freedom Park, dates back to the late-apartheid period. Even before the first democratic elections in 1994, the National Housing Forum started to address apartheid-housing disparities. Consisting of 19 stakeholders in the private, NGO and political activist sectors, as well as representatives of the exiting apartheid state, the Forum led to the brokering of the October 1994 National Housing Accord. This agreement included a stated preference for 'people-centred development' as a core value rhetorically reminiscent of the Freedom Charter and civic association movement. The Accord – taking the form of a government white paper (see Ministry of Housing, 1994) – did very little in terms of specifying just what is people-centred development. Subsequent legislation, the Housing Act of 1997, amended in 1999 and 2001, also did very little to clarify the contours of people-centred development, except perhaps to position housing delivery as 'a product and a process' (Housing Act, 1997, Preamble). More detailed treatment of people-centred development came with the Housing Code (Housing Act, 1997, Section 2.4) intended to add

administrative heft (especially in financial accounting) to the more general provisions of the 1997 Housing Act, but not much more. In short, the meaning of people-centred development formally known as the People's Housing Process (PHP) with the establishment of the Housing Code (Housing Act, 1997, Section 2.4) has largely depended upon the political orientation of entities partnering with communities like Freedom Park. Moreover, according to the Housing Code, these partners can be NGOs, development corporations, government or private sector entities, or religious groups connected to, for example, a church or mosque. Obviously, the political disposition of a post-apartheid progressive NGO like the Development Action Group (DAG) will differ from that of a private sector entity primarily motivated by profit. (This is the case even as DAG increasingly markets its consulting services in order to generate revenue, in addition to funding from the South African state and overseas sources.)

Foreground

Activists in Cape Town formed the DAG in 1986. This was at a time of great political tension in South Africa. As the apartheid state decreed multiple states of emergency, 'states of exception' as states of emergency became the norm as the regime faced heightened black resistance to inequalities in schooling and health care, as well as black resistance to rent increases, tax increases and the forced removals of residents from places like District Six. DAG, in the tradition of the civic associations, emerged within this context bent on assisting black communities dealing with the ramifications of forced removals entirely based on apartheid's racial constructions. As an extension of this type of work, in a post-apartheid context, DAG has continued its housing activism by vociferously advocating for the development of state housing policies and practices beneficial to the poor, advocating for and then actually implementing upgrades to informal settlements and more permanent housing developments, and serving as sponsoring organisation for communities like Freedom Park participating in the PHP.⁷ The process has been particularly understood by DAG to be 'a self-help housing mechanism which allows groups of people to pool their resources and contribute their labour to build their own homes subsidized by the state' (DAG undated). This has meant adding resources (e.g. personal savings, micro-loans from a partnering organisation like the Kuyasa Fund and sweat equity of residents) to the state's proscribed housing benefit payment. Above all, DAG has, as a sponsoring organisation, promoted housing activism in which residents take control of their own housing needs by, for example, lobbying the mayor and ward councillors and by allying with other activists to articulate concerns and demands that would transform a neighbourhood as well as a city, or by, more transformatively, making members of a community like Freedom Park co-producers of their own houses and immediate built environment as opposed to consumers of the housing envisaged by the professional planner and designer.⁸

Residents of Freedom Park were designers in their own right since Freedom Park was founded on 16 April 1998, even before DAG became a key interlocutor. This was the date that residents of the Tafelsig neighbourhood of Mitchells Plain met at the home of Mrs Najuwa Gallant, a community organiser. Many of the Tafelsig residents at the meeting lived, at that point, in informal housing frequently located in the backyards of other Tafelsig residents. The construction quality of these backyard homes ranged from semi-solid wood construction (the so-called 'Wendy houses') to a patchwork of wood, cardboard (corrugated, if lucky) and aluminium structures. Backyard rents were unreasonably high, especially given that access to basic utilities was precarious, if

available. Tafelsig backyard dwellers who had initially met at Mrs Gallant's home later met with their city council representative in an effort to formally access a sizable amount of unused land across the street from Mrs Gallant's home. However, they doubted that anything would come of this meeting. So, from 24 to 27 April 1998, a group of Tafelsig residents who called someone else's backyard 'home' decided to seize the vacant land instead. They named their new community 'Freedom Park'.

By 2000, furthering their cause, Freedom Park residents enlisted DAG to provide formal political and administrative skills. The City of Cape Town agreed in 2001, after mediation and after the *Grootboom (Government of the Republic of South Africa and Others v Grootboom and Others 2001(1) SA 46 (CC))* South African Constitutional Court case, to provide additional services to Freedom Park.⁹ The city's decision was hastened by the national government's decision to reprioritise housing delivery in 2001, as a response to the Constitutional Court case and general political pressure. In 2003, formality was in sight for the residents when Freedom Park signed a memo of understanding with the City of Cape Town.

Before DAG agreed to work with Freedom Park residents in a much more binding way, members of the community, as squatters, faced eviction in 2000 and perpetual informality until the 2003 agreement with the city. DAG convinced Freedom Park residents that long-term success, i.e. formality, depended upon more formal organising by residents themselves. This was intended to eliminate the *status quo* in which multiple groups represented the interests of the Freedom Park community. This dispersed representation was a challenge, in South Africa, and somewhat unique to blacks in mixed faith 'coloured' communities without a mosque providing a centralised organising structure. So, religiously diverse, churches and mosques provided relatively uncoordinated support to Freedom Park residents. (This contrasted with the structure and organisation of black African communities, with the benefit of strong traditional kinship and tribal affiliations providing coordinated momentum.) Some backing from nearby civic associations also existed and Freedom Parkers took advantage of this, but not necessarily in coordination with nearby churches and mosques. Added to this, Freedom Park residents solicited and obtained support from local branches of the two major political parties in the country, the African National Congress and the Democratic Alliance. Of course, these two competing political parties were not in synch with each other, and therefore failed to efficiently work with churches, mosques and civics.

Based on its previous experiences working with other communities, DAG eventually asked that a singularly recognised association be formed as the foundation of self-organisation. Hence, Freedom Parkers – working across religion, civics and political parties – formed the Freedom Park Development Association (FPDA) in 2003 complete with a constitution. The new association had a board consisting of 10 members formally elected by residents. Some board members would actually become Freedom Park beneficiaries. (Notably, all but 1 of the 10 members first elected to the board were women underlining women's leadership role.) The five top vote recipients – the 'top five' – assumed more administrative offices. These executive committee positions included a chair, a secretary and a treasurer who would be in charge of the day-to-day FPDA operations. Formally meeting every week, the 'top five' also organised subsidiary structures of the association concerned not just with the procurement of formal housing but also with, for example, integral concerns like childcare, a community vegetable garden and a neighbourhood watch. Thorough minutes were kept of board meetings as well as of the more formal meetings with an array of stakeholders. (This included detailed amendments to minutes of previous meetings.) Formal organisation delivered a united voice in communications with the city in particular. But the

FPDA also served as a mechanism through which residents of Freedom Park could hold something and someone more directly accountable.

A great deal of the accountability came as a result of the board's mediating role. Specifically, FPDA board members, and particularly the top five, acted as a middle entity between the residents and the housing professionals (inclusive of DAG and its in-house designers). Board members as individuals and a body simplified and legitimised communications between residents and housing professionals. The entire design process started when the board and residents met to represent the community's desires with spoken words and eventually with drawings in the form of social maps. After board members and residents reached agreement, the board met with DAG's professional staff, which, for the most part, consisted of at least one permanent DAG staffer (usually a programme director), an architect, an urban planner and a structural engineer, with the latter three professionals most often being Cuban nationals with community-based design experience in Cuba, but also, interestingly, Afghanistan. (The Cuban government sent professionals to South Africa, filling critical skills shortages across the country, in exchange for hard currency desperately needed by Havana.) FPDA board members basically negotiated difference in post-apartheid design with the parties to the discussion being Freedom Park residents and DAG's housing professionals including professional designers. (This was a difference textured by both race and professional status with, as Sidanius, Pratto, Martin, and Stallworth (1991) and Guimond (2000) suggest, the historical and structural characteristics of dominant institutions being transmitted to its agents via formal education and socialisation as professionalisation.) Correspondingly, at a certain point, the board and professionals reached enough of an agreement to send whatever had been resolved, for the moment, back to the residents with FPDA board members representing the results of its meetings with the housing professionals. This back and forth continued until a given task or concern was resolved either fully or sufficiently. Freedom Park residents, the FPDA and DAG (with its in-house professionals mostly from Cuba) proceeded with this participatory tool. This instrument, along with social maps drawn in 2003, assisted in the nurturing of a pre-contractual relationship between Freedom Parkers and the design professionals. Trust grew as the community's maps were translated into more 'formal' drawings for the community to consider.

Social mapping is not new. This type of mapping developed in the 1970s and 1980s as researchers and designers sought an effective medium to help people document and record their environments. Researchers and designers found mapping to be a useful way to visually describe the spatial and affective dimensions, attitudes and behaviours of the users. Influenced by developments in environmental psychology, sociology and activism for people-oriented planning, the cognitive mappers, such as urban planning theorist Kevin Lynch (1960), identified paths, edges, nodes, landmarks and so on, as physical elements people used to structure their conception of the city. Others like British sociologist Brian Goodey (1974) experimented with maps by asking adults and children to sketch their city to demonstrate how the conceptions of the city differed according to age, sex and social status. Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1975), in considering the sensorial aspects of spaces, frequently returned to a variation of maps as he advanced his study of 'topophilia', which, according to Tuan, is where perception, attitude and values of geography propel human self-understanding. The social map of Freedom Park exemplifies what Tuan called 'schemata', a mental map that assists the somatic intelligence of the racially constructed body in adapting and responding to environmental stimuli as the body navigates and spontaneously acts in space. Inferred in the map were the multiple 'schemata' of the Freedom Parkers in the transposable and transportable form of a sketch, made sharable with the assistance of DAG's

ideal version of Freedom Park. This can be read from the map's drawn elements as well as from the labelling of spaces. Mapping aided the residents as they envisioned and articulated a place amply serviced by well-structured streets enabling easy access for policing and cleaning. The residents indicated a desire for a safe and well-kept area. The street lamps reinforced a sense of safety of well-lit streets. They drew other basic social services located close by having a 'Laer Skool' (Afrikaans for primary school), a clinic and a high school immediately adjacent to the perimeter of the site, near the entrances. Access to telephones was clearly noted in the map, suggesting their importance. What the residents indicated in the map should be read as what was absent in Figure 1: sense of safety, healthy and clean environments, easy access for children to schools and medical care nearby. The labelling of the maps spoke most vocally in the diagramming of public spaces. Clearly, having places for children to play at the parks was a key concern for the mapmakers, not to mention a centre for art and culture. In particular, the residences gravitated around the parks, underscoring their significance. When the two social maps are read together, they disclose an understanding of the housing struggles experienced by residents as they represent the disparity between their lived-space in Figure 1, and the absence of what they would like to have in Figure 2. Between the existing (Figure 1) and the ideal (Figure 2), the maps indicate the progression from informal to formal conditions, only achievable by recognising the community's wishes as uniquely and clearly stated through these drawings.

As stated earlier in this article, the FPDA was important in the process. With the social maps, as with other elements of the overall design process, the FPDA moved between residents and DAG's housing professionals. This meant that, once the maps were produced in a charette organised by the FPDA and residents, FPDA board members brought the drawings to DAG's professional designers who translated site realities and resident dreams into more formal site drawings. (Social mapmaking was but one charette, or workshop, facilitated by the FPDA with the assistance of DAG's programme director, Ardiel Soeker; others included a 2002 land tenure workshop – e.g. weighing individual ownership, cooperative ownership, renting [to buy] and instalment sale – and a 2004 technical workshop on the housing delivery process.) There was a back and forth between the parties until the community's desires were in sync with what was actually possible in the professional opinion of DAG's in-house designers. This exchange on paper, with the FPDA as mediator, eventually became *papier machette* models of the site. Eventually,



Figure 2. Envisioned social map of Freedom Park (2003). Note: Courtesy of DAG.

these back-and-forth discussions between stakeholders about the models led to cardboard model houses. This process continued a few nights a week for three years until residents were ready to fully and forcefully engage the city.

By the time the project reached the formal design stage, which will be compared below with what unfolded in the Freedom Park case, residents had been ‘formalised’ if only because the lay voices of residents were formally articulated to city officials and their consultants legally charged with overseeing the project (see Figure 3). The final site plan benefited from the community’s knowledge of the dynamics between the neighbours and enabled the new plan to replicate the spatial relationships of the former site. It also allowed for correcting tensions between neighbours in the newly planned community. What was proposed was a clustering of housing units not unlike the former informal arrangement. Initially, eight access routes were placed to better integrate Freedom Park with the surrounding area. That number was reduced to better control flow, making the community safer. While the original plan contained proposals for a single, large open public space, the final site plan was changed to four smaller ones for easier maintenance. Further, the city requested five-metre-wide roads for automobile traffic, increasing the width of the narrower roads first proposed. It took nine revisions before both the FPDA and the city accepted the final site plan, which provided 289 lots for households already living in Freedom Park and an additional 204 for households on the waiting list (DAG, 2010, p. 26).

Social mapping in Freedom Park is significant and telling because, contrary to the design norm, it really marked the start of the formal design process particularly for those moving from the informal to the formal. Normally, four stages mark the ‘formal’ design process. Preliminary design comes first and is, as its name suggests, ‘preliminary’. It usually involves both clients and professional designers and can consist of just a few rough drawings quickly done on tracing paper. Nothing definite exists at this point in terms of the size and style of what will be built. Second, clients and design professionals engage in schematic design. This stage entails the elaboration of the preliminary design with the product still being quite conceptual but with a more defined sense of, for example, size and style as represented in drawings. After schematic design, clients and design professionals move into a much more concretised plan referred to as design development. Everything substantially takes shape during this third stage through drawings – style, building



Figure 3. Consultant hired by city explains the proposed layout options (2003). Note: Courtesy of DAG.

programme, room development, height of building, structure, etc. Finally, clients and design professionals enter the construction document phase in which the final contract is agreed upon. This contract contains a full set of working drawings used for cost estimation, bidding and construction. Importantly, clients and professionals must agree at each stage on what is drawn and drawn up before the parties progress to the next stage. In addition, the drawings themselves are contractual so, for example, whenever there is a disagreement that might lead to a court action of some sort, the parties and the court look to the drawings for terms of agreement. Drawings thus legally engage the client as contractually bound to the architects, while the architects become liable for the delivery of the approved designs.

By contrast, the formal Freedom Park design process started at the 'informal' social mapping stage with DAG's in-house team being active participants. This was the case, even though, technically, documents or drawings resulting from social maps do not have the force of law because they come into being outside the 'formal' design process. Normally, social mapping does not involve client and architect; it is, in fact, not really important from the standardised design perspective taught in design schools and from the everyday design practice of professionals in the field. Freedom Parkers, though, used social mapping to establish a working relationship between residents and professionals upon which later 'formal' stages depended. Social mapping initiated Freedom Parkers as individuals represented by an entity like the FPDA as natural and legal persons, fulfilling design's dependence on both a client and a design professional existing as natural or legal persons so that these parties might enter into a contractual relationship. The maps were important because they helped engender a degree of mutual trust where none had previously existed. This pre-contractual stage is important in the Freedom Park case in which the clients had an extremely limited legal persona under apartheid and a continuing tenuous legal status in the minds of Freedom Parkers even in the post-apartheid period. As relayed to us by Ardiel in late 2012, this whole process helped 'ordinary people to engage with professionals on an equal basis'. This, he added, helped 'confidence building' that apartheid hegemonically underdeveloped. Seeing community ideas turned into something more formal gave residents a sense that progress was being made – and even the sense that their rights were real.

We saw some of this confidence in Mona, a resident who gave us a tour of the project in 2008. Before moving to Tafelsig in the late 1990s, like many of the residents at Freedom Park, she lived in different 'coloured' suburbs and in backyard shacks. Like many other FPDA committee members, Mona received training in several of DAG's many self-empowerment workshops. As one of the beneficiaries, Mona has a share in the housing stock and she showed us her home. Housing stock in Freedom Park consists of modest single-family detached houses in two main configurations with bedrooms on the ground floor or on the second floor (see Figure 4). Built in masonry construction (concrete blocks and plastered walls), the houses have simple pitch roofs and exterior walls punched with wood frame windows, and are painted in an assortment of colours. Unlike the 'RDP houses', those at Freedom Park possess visual and spatial qualities. (Reconstruction and Development Programme houses are the typical incredibly Fordist and bland homes built for the poor by the state.) Their articulation grows from the variety of building volumes and the placement of units, where the fronts are not rigidly aligned facing the street. Moreover, the personalised exterior colours and front gardens in some but not all of the houses add yet another visual and spatial dimension. The open community spaces, gardens and the community centre complete with an exterior mural as a backdrop of the playground also helped to create the residential scale of the project desired by the residents.



Figure 4. New homes in Freedom Park (undated). Note: Courtesy of DAG.

Mona introduced us to some of her neighbours who welcomed us into their home. The front entrance of one led into a living room, where the owner had it furnished with a carpet and a sofa. The house was 42 m². A few steps away, we arrived at the front door of Mona's home. She pointed to the incomplete paint and landscape work, adding that she would start saving for materials once the school fees for one of her two children were fully paid. A single mother of two, Mona's eldest was the first in Freedom Park to have successfully passed her secondary school matriculations. ('Matric' eases entrance into university, which was a detail Mona proudly mentioned as we continued our tour.)

Conclusion

However, Freedom Park victories need to be tempered in 2013. Freedom Park currently finds itself in the news because of ongoing conflicts between the newly formalised those who once squatted and new squatters wishing to become formal. A desire for formality has even led some new squatters to build clever underground shelters of a sort, with found materials, in order to create the barest semblance of formality. Police frequently face criticism from those who now formally reside in Freedom Park. Formal residents now accuse the police of not protecting them and their property from informal residents allegedly linked to gangs. What is more important, Freedom Park finds itself the subject of press about the community's seemingly intractable drug and gang problem. Added to this are new revelations of child prostitution.

Despite the appearance of a faltering progress, Freedom Park matters in 2013 just like it mattered when we started to follow the community in 2008. Freedom Park is of consequence because it represents what has developed after the colonial and apartheid state's monopoly over design. This was a design that had a particular impact upon the construction and life chances of black South Africans. In many respects, the design process itself giving rise to Freedom Park deconstructs the very binaries that colonial and apartheid planners and architects used to both bring about and reinforce white supremacy. This, along with the generally positive outcome improving the lives of beneficiaries, breaks the reiterative policies and practices of white supremacy. Design helps to make possible what was not imaginable. More importantly, social mapping as design practice

led to the possibility that apartheid's subaltern could effectively become post-apartheid rights claimants.

Perhaps we are of two minds on the Freedom Park because capitalism, in its neoliberal, form survives formal colonialism and apartheid. It functions with internal contradictions capable of making employment formal but temporary, deregulatory regulations and private publics in the underdeveloped and overdeveloped worlds. This reaffirms in our minds that design and social mapping alone is not enough as Freedom Park, like Favela da Rocinha in Rio, continues to be island-like with evolving genealogies and geologies moving forward, backward and sideways, sometimes simultaneously. With the absence of a more developmental state not so skewed towards neoliberal economic policies, there are deeper cultural challenges in play. Ardiel, DAG's programme director, shared with us that he had never seen difficulties like those he saw in Freedom Park in his many years organising Cape Town's black communities. Deeply troubled by what he saw emanating from a community with whom he shares a direct cultural affinity, Ardiel recalled organising difficulties that included not just meetings where swearing was commonplace but also meetings in which physical altercations were common. (On an early visit to the community, we witnessed a domestic dispute between a man and a woman holding an infant as community members and two researchers guardedly looked on to see if the situation would escalate.) This included an instance when someone working with Freedom Park's neighbourhood watch was rounded-up and brought to a community meeting and accused of stealing bricks. Were it not for DAG staffers and members of the FPDA board, according to Ardiel, the community, with its new rights, would have extralegally exacted its own justice on another community member.

Notes

1. Fabricus wrote: 'These urban islands, like those of the earth's waters, have formed according to several genealogies and geologies. Some, like continental islands, share a history and underlying structure with those around them, as if they have collectively broken off from a land mass. Others, like volcanic islands, seem to develop independently and suddenly from more isolated and turbulent forces. Still other favelas, like coral atolls, build slowly on an underlying urban structure'. Significantly, Fabricus continued, 'These metaphors show how favelas differ in their relationship to their surroundings – their seemingly insular status belies the fact that submerged structures tie them to the city' (2008, p. 2).
2. 'Coloured' is a tricky term in South Africa. It is a racial designation particularly tailored during the apartheid era. The regime clumped into a single category 'mixed-race' peoples descended from Malay speakers brought to South Africa in the eighteenth century as slaves, as well as South Africans descended from aboriginal Khoisan peoples. The apartheid narrative failed to formally acknowledge that these peoples mixed with black Africans and whites as well. When apartheid forced South Africans to racially designate themselves, families split along racial lines, as apartheid forced something like race, especially malleable in a place with South Africa's history, into discrete categories. Today, while some legally designated 'coloured' during apartheid at the term and identity which they claim is not solely defined by apartheid's racism, others see the term as irredeemable. One colleague and friend who took up arms against apartheid from the age of 16 actually pours salt on the table – i.e. salt in the wounds inflicted by apartheid – even when we use 'coloured' in air quotes. He identifies as 'black', which gained currency in the 1970s with the rise of the Black Consciousness Movement championed by Biko (2002), as a term not just bringing together black Africans but all those (black African, 'coloured' and Indian) not enjoying the apartheid racial privileges afforded to whites. In this article, we use 'coloured', always in quotes, when referring to residents of Mitchells Plain and particularly residents of Freedom Park. In Freedom Park, some self-identify as 'coloured', some as 'black' and some as both. That we use 272 words in an endnote to begin discerning racial difference in South Africa says much about the place.
3. 'Suburb' is another fraught term not so much for those we engaged in this study as for some academics who prefer 'township' to describe the community highlighted in this article. (While

some academics think that 'township' can be redeemed in the fight for housing rights, we think that it is as redeemable as 'kaffir', i.e. better left in the dustbin as black communities seek the formality whites have enjoyed.) Those living in the housing development we study would never refer to themselves as residents of a 'township'. They use 'suburb'. Further, and interestingly, our Mitchells Plain interlocutors in the housing development more commonly think of black Africans as living in 'townships' even when the physical conditions of a predominantly 'coloured' community like the one we study are comparable or even more informal than the physical conditions in black African communities like Cape Town's Gugulethu and Khayelitsha. (Of course, we describe in broad strokes when, now, 'coloured' suburbs like the one we study has a very upmarket mall just down the road and a shebeen within it.) All of which goes to show the complexities of not only Cape Town in particular but also South Africa in general. For this study, we use 'suburb' – never 'township', 'location' or 'area' – because it is the official designation used by the City of Cape Town. Also, progressive housing activists working with the community that we study do not just prefer 'suburb', they exclusively use 'suburb'. And, most important, 'suburb' speaks to the aspirations of the community that we have come to understand over several years.

4. We use 'self-organisation' as it is a term used by professional housing advocates in Cape Town to characterise their community organising work. In many respects, the way that they use the term has echoes of the Foucauldian use of 'self-governance' (see Foucault, 1991), except that, instead of 'governmentality' as insidious exercise of power, 'self-organisation' emerges in the state's absence and it is empowering to subaltern communities seeking formality and visibility.
5. On apartheid-era laws, see Horrell (1982).
6. On the civic association movement, see Lanegran (1995) and Burnam and Schärf (1990).
7. For details on this process, see DAG (2003 a,b, 2004).
8. Keywords in DAG's own unique approach to implementing the PHP include the following: 'capacity building', 'community control', 'women's involvement', 'housing support center support', 'group savings', 'choices in home designs', 'choices in township layout', 'choices in building materials', 'use of second-hand materials', 'use of skilled and semi-skilled builders from the community', 'transparency' and 'high quality products'. Also see DAG (2003 a,b).
9. *Grootboom* came to be through the persistence of Irene Grootboom, a resident of Wallacedene, a Cape Town suburb about 40 km from the Cape Town CBD. The Constitutional Court, the nation's highest court, found that the government was not protecting the rights of citizens by not providing services for the Wallacedene informal settlement. Irene Grootboom died in 2008, still residing in a shack.

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