Black urban, black research: Why understanding space and identity in South Africa still matters

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FIGURE 34.1: These photographs offer a glimpse of what it is to be black in the post-apartheid city; what it means to navigate, negotiate and live in a city that is as much a part of you as it is foreign. Research into the ‘black urban’ is not just a rational telling of the stories of black people living in South Africa’s urban areas, but also offers urbanists an opportunity to determine how far the country has moved away from its segregationist past.
It goes without saying that the search for responsive, integrated urban development has been a key objective for cities around the world, but strategies and plans to achieve this have varied in their focus, emphasis and prioritisation. The preponderance of approaches that speak to the basic principles of justice, equity and effective redress have, however, been a particular and dominant concern for cities that have experienced significant swathes of time under segregationist regimes and urban policies. Examining the changing urban environment is potentially fraught with challenges, particularly in a city marked by a history of institutionalised and spatial division, segregation and disconnection. It is largely undisputed that South Africa continues to grapple with these issues, and that they are far more complex than the popular post-apartheid vision might imply.

The reasons why disparities persist as cities have opened up and become more exposed to trends in the global economy and socio-economic change are convoluted and intricate (Amin 2002; Crankshaw 2008). The principal concern in this chapter is twofold: to investigate the changes in the perception and use of the city by young black professionals – the ‘black urban’ – as well as how researchers could contribute to this branch of urban enquiry. I suggest broadening the notion and practice of transformation in relation to research conception and methodology, in ways that are useful for interpreting space and identity more expansively, and that allow urbanists to intellectualise and analyse the interface between the profession’s concern (building resilient, congruous urban environments) as well as the demographic reality of planning in a country in which the vast majority of citizens are black (Figure 34.1).

Black urban, black research

‘Black’ is a term loaded with connotation and meaning that has been discussed (and measured) extensively within the social sciences (Gqola 2001; Marx 1998; Sellers 1997), with definitions based on etymological, anthropological, historical and even psychological approaches which are of some use to planners but seldom root identity in spatial terms. I sought to achieve this by merging ideas of identity with those of territoriality to help distinguish the connection between land and lifestyle, heart and home – finding the interface between the ecology of the mind and the geography of the post-apartheid South African city. To this end, I begin by considering the fundamental subject: what is the ‘black urban’? In this instance I derive inspiration from two sources: the work of Biko (1978) on black consciousness and the notion put forward by Gupta and Ferguson (1992) of race dynamics as shared historical processes that are made manifest and expressed in urban geopolitics and its morphology.

In his reflection, Biko (1978: 52–53) suggests that

being black is not a matter of skin pigmentation – being black is a reflection of a mental attitude … black consciousness therefore, takes cognisance of the deliberateness of God’s plan in creating black people black. It seeks to infuse the black community with
a new-found pride in themselves, their efforts, their value systems, their culture, their religion and their outlook to life.

The value of this definition lies in its multidimensionality, which highlights the need to move beyond superficial distinctions and physical characteristics and incorporate notions and ideas of blackness that are dynamic yet subtle and begin to move social scientists away from the vagaries of collective identity and broad-stroke characterisation. However, there appears to be a certain unease and reticence in engaging in a frank dialogue on the tone and nature of the intellectual and popular discourse that surrounds racial identity in South Africa, which is often highly charged, confrontational and divisive.

The euphemistic use of certain spatial and planning terms in academic and mainstream literature fails to move forward and make dynamic the conception of what the ‘black urban’ is. This is perhaps most evocatively translated in the lexicon and language that planning theorists use to articulate this conception, where the terms ‘township’ and ‘suburb’, or ‘previously disadvantaged’ and ‘economic elites’ have intimations and associated imaginings that have very little to do with strict technical definitions and that maintain the segregated city in the mind and in practice. In many ways, the reluctance to face this proverbial elephant in the room is further reinforced by the preponderance of racially based stereotypes which shade some of the pronouncements and statements made by high-profile state officials, who have at times engaged in the disquisition in ways that are chiefly adversarial and unconstructive (Du Preez 2009; Horáková 2011; Parker and Shapiro 2010).

The response by intellectuals in the planning field has been thoroughly considered, from reflections on how planners tackle profound socio-economic and political differences (Watson 2006); to highlighting the impact of creolisation, hybridised identities and the post-racial discourse in South African cities (Nuttall 2004a); to an engagement with the role of spatial planning in divided communities, which is perceived as a technical and methodical activity based on sound forecasting and management principles, but without a clear sense of how this will support or undermine the agenda of community and nation building (Wafer 2012; Watson 2006). However, the assessment and proposal made by Gupta and Ferguson (1992: 16) in dealing with this seeming unease offers a constructive avenue for forward movement:

The move we are calling for, most generally, is away from seeing cultural difference as the correlate of a world of ‘peoples’ whose separate histories wait to be bridged ... and toward seeing it as a product of a shared historical process that differentiates the world as it connects it. But if we question a pre-given world of separate and discrete ‘peoples and cultures,’ and see instead a difference-producing set of relations, we turn from a project of juxtaposing pre-existing differences to one of exploring the construction of differences in historical process.

In taking this view, which requires planners to look beyond the racial edifice, this theorisation concentrates on responding to a set of select but fundamental questions which could assist in establishing a more congruous link between identity and space, and convincing planners
of the value in doing so. It is an approach that attempts to scratch the surface and reveal the subtext (and possibly subversion) that often exists in uncovering the ‘world of peoples’ and in the historical relationships between various delineated identities and groups.

The second point involves the intellectual prism and mode of theorisation through which black people and communities are studied. There is substantial literature on the depictions of black youth in popular culture (Bogatsu 2002; Diouf 2003; Dolby 2001; Forman 2002) as well as studies by anthropologists on black urban communities and social movements (Donham 1998; Leclerc-Madlala 1997). Urban planning in South Africa has tended to examine the black urban in terms of the effects of the implementation of socio-economic policies designed to address inequality (Nattrass and Seekings 2001), the various development trends that have shifted the dimension and extent of the black middle class in the city, and how the state has evolved in order to address the shifts in policy and action (Southall 2007; Turok 1994). This work has been invaluable in providing a multifaceted sense of this aspect of identity, and although much of this literature has been unavoidably generated from the perspective of the ethnographic ‘outsider’, it has generated significant insights and points for debate.

Still, there remain avenues for research that require further exploration and analysis. Perhaps the most critical aspect for spatial planners relates to better understanding the conception of blackness in national discourse and how this has impacted the state’s formulation and conception of black-owned business development, and by implication black economic empowerment. The distinction between black foreign nationals and South Africans has been problematic, and a perception of the country as being separate from the rest of the continent is manifest in the state’s approach to managing investment and business growth in the space economy. The violence and conflict that arises from this socio-political exceptionalism has been well documented (Crush 2011), but the implications for how this policy grey area is reconciled and how that may affect economic growth and the expansion of the black professional, capital-accruing class (especially in townships) needs to be further scrutinised.

Another gap in black urban research emanates from Onyeani’s (2000) provocative call to move away from unabated consumerism. For spatial planners and economists, this potentially involves moving beyond research into the purchasing habits and trends of the black middle class (Southall 2007) and towards models and systems that help explain where black professionals could invest in immovable property in the longer term. This approach also includes identifying how the mapping, organisation and delivery of bulk infrastructure, transport and utilities could strengthen the growth potential for established black-owned businesses.

With regard to the broader transformation agenda, Johannesburg’s Growth and Development Strategy (CoJ 2011: 16) suggests that ‘the inequality and divisions based on race and class continue to affect all sectors of South African society. The National Planning Commission notes that the work to create an economically just, prosperous, non-racial and democratic society continues’. In light of this policy recognition, studies
probing institutional restructuring processes (Mangcu 2003; Parnell 2004) and strategies to build the state's capability and capacity have been revealing. They have provided a platform from which researchers can find ways to interface with and connect black urban research to cross-cutting concerns such as fostering urban resilience, forming platforms for sustainable economic growth, and a more just redistribution of capital and resources. This could possibly move popular and academic discourse away from declarations of expropriation without compensation or the blanket nationalisation of the nation's mineral wealth, and would, in effect, achieve a stated objective of this chapter – to grapple pragmatically with how planners re-imagine non-racial cities by confronting race in the first instance.

Planning also requires that urbanists develop a deeper understanding of how identity is translated, negotiated and reflected in the urban morphology and that they ask the basic question that confronts us: what does the ‘black urban’ look like? In the same way that black consciousness encapsulates an idea that transcends skin colour or cultural background, the study of the black urban needs to become much more graduated and nuanced. It is critical to engage in this enquiry of the post-apartheid black urban city (whatever that may be) because in doing so academics are able to engage unflinchingly with the problems often associated with work in the field of spatial identities. In the process, one tends to hit an analytical wall (Gupta and Ferguson 1992) in attempting to devise an ecumenical vision of race and racial identity in a framework that defines being black in very simple and narrow terms (Gilroy 2000; MacDonald 2006). From a personal perspective (one that is the culmination of extensive reflection, numerous discussions and interviews as well as site research), I have found that developing a more liminal and autobiographical research methodology (Bettis 1996; Perera 2004; Sandercock and Forsyth 1992), over methods that employ a more collective understanding of ‘blackness’ (Anise 1974) or ‘the urban’ (Amin 2008), has been most beneficial. The limits of narrative, memory and interpretation must be acknowledged, but these tools have been invaluable in placing descriptors to the intangible urban and turning the analysis toward a desegregated, as opposed to a homogenised, group who continue to arbitrate their historical roots and the demands of modern-city living in post-apartheid South Africa.

Given this particular preoccupation, what are the main analytical tensions that mark this idea? Concentrating on the young constitutes the primary focus of this project, but research methodologies that concentrate on gender, nationality, sexuality and income levels reveal that specialist knowledge of socio-spatial issues undoubtedly remains resonant (Donham 1998; Nattrass and Seekings 2001; Sandercock and Forsyth 1992). Close scrutiny of the views and impressions of black urban professionals interviewed revealed that the general sense of exclusion and dislocation appears to be diminishing, but is not completely exorcised, while simultaneously an overt pride in personal identity exhibited in personal style, language, art and appearance is emphasised. There is also fierce debate about the term ‘black’ itself – the style and substance of identity in a post-apartheid urban context (Nuttall 2004b) and about how this is perceived by others and negotiated by black South Africans themselves.
TUMEDISO: For me, being black is all about what you feel and also what you look like ... It has little to do with the colour of the person's skin itself, but how people respond to how you look and what assumptions they make about that ... You can act black without actually being black. It's complicated and difficult to explain, but I know it when I see it ... I know what it is and what it isn't. Of course you can understand race as being simply about melanin levels and we as black people discriminate against other blacks also. You know ... some of us are lighter than others and we ourselves have ideas and preferences about that that we might not necessarily think about in a conscious way, but it's there [...] so that someone like Beyoncé is seen as a beautiful black woman ... prettier than say, someone who is much darker. Really my point [...] is that a black mind and a black skin are not the same thing ... and that we as black people have our own issues in relation to that, which have nothing to do with other races at all.

BOITUMelo: As a black man working in the corporate sector, the main issue for me isn't just about being black, and believe me, it's an issue, always has been [...] but I've also found that because my parents sent me to a good school, I speak English in a way that's ... what can I say ... acceptable? When people first make contact with me over the phone and then find out what my name is, a lot of the time they're shocked because the name doesn't gel with the accent. Still, I think it's allowed me opportunities that I might not have had if I spoke with a heavy Xhosa or Zulu accent and I have to admit that I think it's made it easier for me. The way that I speak seems to make being in the corporate world easier. Why that is, I couldn't tell you ... maybe it's just easier to understand me when I talk, but the issue there for me is not just about how I look, but how I project myself as a black professional ...

INTERVIEWER: While you work for a firm in the city, you consider Meadowlands home, right?

BOITUMelo: Yes ... but that's different. Different place, different atmosphere, different people ... In some ways I'm not the same person when I'm home, but everyone is in some way different in their work life than they are in their personal one. How much that has to do with the fact that I'm a black Sowetan who works in the city, I don't know ... My sense is that it probably does, but I'm not sure how.

Inherent in these statements is the second tension, which involves the consideration and adjudication of race as a descriptor of identity and as a feature of culture, highlighting perceptions of blackness and the internal dialogue that many young black professionals have with themselves and one another. The observations made by Boitumelo in particular signal the influence of context on behaviour and conduct in ways first deliberated by environmental psychologists and urban anthropologists in the mid twentieth century when confronted with a groundswell rejection of housing projects which were delivered with technical proficiency but lacked an appreciation of society, of lifestyle, livelihoods and even humanity (Rainwater
Perhaps the lessons of public housing’s impact on social dislocation have not been learned or have been explicitly ignored. Still, these interview excerpts could also give urban researchers guidance concerning how the scale of enquiry could be made smaller, more contextual – examining a neighbourhood as opposed to an entire city, for instance – and also point to the challenge that expanding the transformation agenda (Mangcu 2001) and rethinking spatial planning (Harrison et al. 2008; Todes 2008, 2011) represents. Here, one is inspired by the provocation to express an ambiguous sense or suspicion that many black professionals have connected to living and working in a colonial, North Atlantic public/professional realm while sustaining a postcolonial, black identity in the private/personal one.

Planning’s greatest analytical strength is in its concern for what can be seen (the physical entity that is the city), done (tangible actions that can be taken) as well as perceived (the socio-spatial dynamic) and how this can be concretised in the policy frameworks, investment strategies and infrastructure plans of South Africa’s cities.

The initial insights

In designing this study and reflecting on its potential significance and value, the research process was first intended to determine whether or not there was a need to examine this topic and how to develop an approach that would be useful to planners. My first step was to interview three individuals who met a set of loosely defined criteria – young, black professionals working and living in Johannesburg, but who had also spent some time in different parts of the city and had an inherent knowledge and appreciation of the divided city as well as perspectives on the topic that were not specifically intellectual but rather innate and the culmination of a lived experience. The purpose of engaging in this interview process was to gauge more precisely which issues tended to be highlighted and to gain a sense of the research trajectory. This stage was also intended to clarify whether or not there were strong impressions or collective ideas about issues that have struggled to find a foothold in the general discourse around space and race. While the inherent strengths of this part of a research process are valuable in terms of conceptualising what may be a vague idea, the excerpts presented here are notional and personal. The difficulties involved at this stage of the research process are clear. A liminal approach based on the impressions of three individuals may not allow one to make categorical findings and reach significant conclusions, but they can help reveal ‘the underlying’ – points of contention and interest – as well as signal issues and dynamics that may be more complex than is fully appreciated either by academia or the popular media.

The first part of the process largely involved a loosely structured interview process that was intended to obtain lay points of view on what it was to be a black professional in South African cities in 2013 and what general issues and concerns confronted their experience of living in the city. Focusing on Johannesburg, the study then sought to analyse and extract the main points, many of which do not inherently involve a spatial or socio-spatial appreciation of the city. The interviews were framed to garner and elicit impressions and tended to focus on personal viewpoints. In subsequent stages of the research process, more analytical
perspectives were utilised in an effort to better link the findings and impressions but this chapter reflects on and investigates the insights of the three initial respondents. Finding space-specific topics for exploration and discussion was initially difficult – development, integration and identity tend to be understood and conceptualised predominantly from philosophical, sociological and anthropological lenses in a variety of contexts (Marx 1998; McKee 1993). The challenge for planners is to translate and expand this understanding in a spatial sense. In doing so, the tenor and cadence of the deliberations that were held with the three initial respondents revealed some intriguing concerns, and to some extent debunked some long-held assumptions about the ‘black experience’ in the post-apartheid urban landscape. Essentially three corresponding themes can be examined.

The first is largely an intellectual one that confronts planners with the prospect of traversing the proverbial intellectual minefield that has become broad-based black economic empowerment and the South African black middle class, as well as the persistence of what Dixon and Durrheim (2003) have termed ‘informal segregation’. Work by prominent black South African intellectuals and opinion makers (Mangcu 2001; Mbeki 2009) has tended to focus on the vagaries and complexities of economic development and the politics of race. While this takes the debate in directions that are worthwhile, the contribution of planners may be to extend the conversation into subjects relating to the effects of spatial dislocation, interrogating some long-held beliefs and misperceptions concerning how and why black professionals spend their incomes and capital. From a more analytical viewpoint, the possible contribution may lie in revealing the undertone of the discourse by concentrating not only on what is said and by whom, but by examining the space economy, socio-spatial dynamics and use of space as an analytical conduit that could reveal how people ultimately and actually practise and exercise their prerogative – political, economic or otherwise.

The second, and allied to the first, is the practice of ritual and tradition. For example, there appears on the surface to be a perception that the practice of animal slaughter is generally accepted as long as the regulatory requirements for the practice of this ritual are met and it is performed in accordance with a set of traditional principles. In procedural terms, you can apply for the requisite permit before the slaughter takes place without having your neighbours telephoning the police to put a halt on proceedings. For a section of the young black community this is seen as officious tampering and interference with the practices of traditions that many continue to hold dear and practise, not simply as a cultural rite but as a means to connect with the spiritual and ancestral realm. However, for those purchasing properties in highly regulated urban complexes and suburbs, the regulations mean that they are able to practise the ritual only in other parts of the city and away from where they reside. Consequently, the tension arises not over the ritual in and of itself but as a result of a) the legal and official consequences of performing it, b) the offense others (on the ‘outside’) might take as a consequence, c) a significant and very real sense of cultural restraint (and even non-adherence) that is perceived to come with living in the formerly white suburbs and, perhaps most interestingly, d) how the move of young black professionals into these areas will potentially affect the practice of certain rituals in South African cities in future.
The third theme relates to the middle- and long-term consequences of development in townships and the effects this has had on spending and investment patterns as well as on the decisions black urban professionals make about where to live. The prevailing wisdom (Donaldson and Van der Merwe 1999) seems to conceptualise the movement of this sector of the population as being mainly in one direction – from township to suburb. Furthermore, the assumption correlates this movement with upward economic mobility. Studies on residential mobility patterns in Johannesburg (Prinsloo and Cloete 2002), for instance, seem to indicate that property prices in these areas tend to increase marginally with the influx of middle-income black households, and that the economic profile of surrounding commercial and industrial development has needed to change and transform with this movement.

Initial interviews point to a combination of factors that may have delayed or mitigated a possible move closer to work opportunities in the north: job losses during the economic recession of 2008, the growing difficulty of accessing loans under the new credit regime stipulated in the National Credit Act (No. 34 of 2005), as well as the high rental costs in suburban townhouse complexes. A deep socio-cultural connection felt by many young black professionals in South African urban areas is at times superseded by the economic imperative to pursue employment and to structure one’s life to meet this livelihood objective. An examination of data derived from the 2001 Census, and that completed a decade later, appears to give this overview some statistically based credence (see Plate 52).

INTERVIEWER: You live in the northern suburbs, work in the city centre and consider the township home. Has this been difficult for you to adjust to and how has it affected your ability to ‘live your life’?

BOITUMELO: I wouldn’t say difficult … maybe interesting is the word. I quite like the fact that I live this way. It helps me to compartmentalise my life and for now that’s been good for me, because it means that certain aspects of my life never meet … collide. It hasn’t been an overly confusing experience. But now that I’m in a serious relationship with a woman who’s not from Soweto, the differences have been much more obvious and dealing with that has been difficult. She’s black, but her background is very different … very different, so adjusting to that side of my life has been hard for her sometimes. Just because she is black doesn’t mean she immediately appreciates what that means to me and how I live my life. […] I think it’s important to understand that for many South Africans, where they live isn’t home. I live in the ‘burbs but it isn’t home … and whenever you get married, or introduce your children to the ancestors, have a family event – you do that at home, not necessarily where you live. Buying an apartment was more than an investment; it allows me to occupy the ‘two worlds’ I was talking about earlier.

INTERVIEWER: What is your view about body-corporate rules banning some of these activities?

BOITUMELO: I think it’s just easier and less stressful to do these things in the township where people just understand without you having to explain. It can feel a little alienating if you can’t perform a home-coming ceremony in your own townhouse complex at a place
you own because you’ll be breaking the body-corporate rules if you do [and] while I understand this kind of ceremony can insult people … what am I supposed to do – not be Xhosa?

INTERVIEWER: No … just don’t be Xhosa in that way, in that place at that time.

BOITUMELO: I might be okay with that sometimes…

The continuing developments in formerly black townships, such as the eKhaya projects or the construction of a series of commercial developments along Klipspruit Valley Road in Orlando and Pimville by the City of Johannesburg, the Maponya Group and other private property-investment companies, have had the dual effect of retaining investment and spending in these areas and attracting young black professionals back – either to reside permanently or to visit. This may also be indicative of low domestic saving rates in South Africa in general (Aron and Muellbauer 2000) but among black professionals in the middle- and low-income brackets specifically. An environment shaped by high levels of income inequality, soaring consumption, a falling housing market and a decrease in employment opportunities, along with social issues such as HIV infection rates and the failing public education system, have combined to create the proverbial ‘perfect storm’ of economic decline, thus narrowing possibilities for upward mobility. The South African political economy during and after transition has in some ways been more tentative than radically transformative (Marais 1998; Von Holdt 2010) and studies of mobility and consumer patterns appear to be evidence of the limited change in the country’s space economy.

Related to this are images of young black professionals in popular culture and the media (Nuttall 2004a; Parker and Shapiro 2010) that often paint a picture of overt and perhaps obscene excess usually associated with perceived and alleged political patronage or corruption. This was demonstrated, for example, by the debate over the National Empowerment Fund’s decision to award funding to a high-profile black businesswoman (Ensor 2013; Pillay 2013). While a significant amount of content in the popular media focuses on the individuals involved, the prevailing representation of the black professional class as debauched and hyper-consumerist constitutes part of the broader discussion on identity and experience of the city.

REFILWE: I have given a lot of thought to this issue and I have had long conversations about it with friends … and the issue is complex because on the one hand black people are finally reaping the benefits which they have always been entitled to but were prevented from obtaining, right? I think I’ve heard a politician say that we didn’t struggle so that we could live in poverty or something like that … I have to agree with that idea insofar as, for many black professionals, success is wrapped up in money – and I think it should be to some extent. But on the other hand we ordinary people have no idea how these rich celebrities get that way. How they make their millions is not known to you and me and so what we end up seeing in the social columns are the nice clothes, the fancy mansions and the bling … precisely the kind of thing we all find aspirational. So my problem isn’t with the bling and the people who have it, it’s that we don’t know how they got it and how we can get there ourselves.
Boitumelo: Speaking financially, we are a country that does not really know how the economy functions, how money moves and where it’s being spent … we don’t save and plan. As long as those conditions exist, we won’t be going far as a country, let alone as a race. You just cannot have a discussion about black South Africans not saving without making note of the fact that the economy and how it works is still a mystery to most of us – even professionals …

Further research is required to ascertain the deeper significance of this changing economic dynamic in terms of how it has impacted on spending patterns and if these impacts will be enduring. The prospect for a new ‘growth coalition’, as expressed by Iheduru (2004: 1), which is facilitated by ‘a less patrimonial, less racially and ethnically divisive Black Economic Empowerment strategy’ may not materialise until planners can better appreciate not just where consumption occurs but accumulation as well. The reason for this is that while academics and journalists comment on the ‘proliferation of the growing black middle class’ many of those who supposedly comprise this sector of South African society remain largely unconvinced.

The significance

Despite this scepticism, there are those who critique the purpose, relevance and intellectual bearing of this kind of research, particularly in a country deliberately trying to move toward non-racialism. In the final analysis, does this preoccupation move the discourse away from the apartheid city in any meaningful way? Why does the ‘black urban’ matter? The simple answer is that South African cities remain segregated in many respects and while they have become less so, the problem remains and is often exacerbated by market forces, development trends and unregulated city expansion (Christopher 2001; Oranje 2012; Robinson 1998). In truth, the vision set out by progressive planning visionaries in the 1990s (Dewar and Uyttenbogaardt 1991; Parnell and Mabin 1995) remains largely that – a vision. Dedicating energy to race–space dynamics as an intellectual endeavour is important but it matters on much more than an analytical level or as a means of better understanding – it is also of personal importance.

Boitumelo: Seriously, I think it’s insulting and a little oblivious for anyone to declare that people should get over themselves … the people who are responsible for oppressing us [...] the people who have oppressed us don’t get to say when apartheid is over. I don’t think that they get to choose. We as a people need to emerge from the gutter that we were put in, forced to live in for generations, subjected to for so long.

Refelwe: This matters still because it just does, because while those who came before us fought against political control, our task as a generation is to think practically about
how we actually build the new South Africa, to make the ideas and dreams of Mandela real … to make them work in the real world. How can we do that if we refuse to confront the truth, which, for me, is that we can’t afford to conveniently forget our history. Having lived and travelled overseas, I think there’s a lot about living here that could be considered strange by outsiders … the private security companies that run like virtual paid armies … We’ll need to move beyond this at some point though.

The preoccupation matters because it forms part of the planning trajectory that ironically shifts the discourse away from racism and racialism (Dolby 2001; MacDonald 2006) and the dominance of the ‘insiders’ over the ‘outsiders’ (Gupta and Ferguson 1992), to an understanding of the city that begins to examine what sustainability and transformation are in their most fully realised states. By anchoring the discussion and analyses in both what we live and where we live it, planners can begin to unravel not just the socio-spatial city, but the psychosocial one as well. The principal intention here is to bring planners into a world rather than exclude them from it.

References


