Whose knowledges shape our city? Advancing a community-based urban *praxis*

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OPSOMMING

Wie se Kennis(se) Vorm ons Stad? Op Soek na 'n Gemeenskapsgedrewe Stedelike *Praxis*

In die artikel word verskillende plekke van kontestasie en hoop in die middestad van Pretoria/Tshwane geidentifiseer, en die moontlike unieke kennis(se) wat vanuit hierdie kontekste gegenereer word, word oorweeg.

Ek neem 'n spesifiekeposisie in en argumenteer dat sodanige plaaslike kennis(se) meestal uitgesluit word van prosesse wat die stad nuut wil visioneer, ten koste van onsself. In plaas van die uitsluiting van plaaslike gemeenskappe met hulle unieke visies, ervaringe en kundigheid, suggereer ek die doelbewuste bevordering van 'n gemeenskaps gedrewe stedelike *praxis*.

Laastens bied ek die konsep van 'n Urban Studio as 'n moontlike trans-dissiplinere ruimte, in noue samewerking met plaaslike gemeenskappe, vir die generering van transformerende kennis, wat die moontlikheid van meer inklusiewe, regverdige en volhoubare stedelike woonbuurte kan verhoog.

1 Introduction: Rethinking our Epistemologies

In the Old Testament, there is a picture of a troubled city in the Book of Ecclesiastes (9:15). And it says, of this city, that there dwelled in the city a man, poor but wise, who saved the city; but no one remembered him.

This man, to me, represents an epistemological challenge raising the question of whose knowledges shape our city, which knowledges are regarded as valid, and who is remembered in the process of revisioning the city. I refer to all cities but in particular to Pretoria/Tshwane.

The absence of local and diverse knowledges from processes that shape our cities today, almost always inevitably leads to the absence of the very ones whose knowledges are not regarded. They might carry glimpses of vision and seeds of solution. But no one remembers them.

In this article, I will firstly do a brief mapping of different sites of struggle and hope in the inner city of Pretoria/Tshwane; secondly, I will argue that these sites offer local and unique knowlegdes to be utilised; thirdly, I will take a specific position, arguing for a community-based urban *praxis*; and, lastly, I will introduce the concept of an Urban Studio,

as a possible trans-disciplinary space for generating (and) transforming knowledge within local communities.

Whose knowledges shape our cities? Or, more fundamentally, in the words of David Harvey: "... whose rights and whose city?";[1] because whom does the city belong to and who has a right to the city, and whose knowledge has validity to contribute to a city revisioned?

In the next section, I locate my reflections in specific sites in the inner city of Pretoria/Tshwane. This will be followed by a reflection on epistemology from below or from within, and a proposal for a community-based urban *praxis*. Finally, the reflections of this article will be aligned to other research and a concrete space for trans-disciplinary urban engagement will be introduced.

2   Local Sites of Struggle and Hope: Unique Generators of Knowledge

In this section, I briefly outline a number of sites, all located in the inner city of Pretoria/Tshwane, and all representing local struggles and hopes of diverse communities in different ways.

2 1   Burgers Park

Burgers Park is a public open space situated in the old inner city core of Pretoria/Tshwane. It is in a neighbourhood that was all white in 1993 but 90 % black by 2000.[2] The Park is a local asset well managed by the city, and increasingly owned and used by local people: by local residents on a daily basis; hosting the inner city's largest community festival, the Feast of the Clowns, annually; regularly used by the emerging artistic community; and weekly used by a range of churches and religious groups.[3] But Burgers Park also always had a shady side. At night it is home to people who find shelter under the bushes; over the years it was often a place where someone would be found in the morning having done an overdose of heroin or cocaine.

Alongside Burgers Park Lane, next to the Park, three faith-based organisations are present, two churches and a church-based community organisation: the Tshwane Leadership Foundation; City Methodist Mission; and the Doxa Deo Inner City Campus. All three have invested substantially in the inner city at a time when most businesses, churches and banks disinvested from these areas.

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1   Harvey. *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolutio*n (2012) London/New York, NY: Verso Books 236.
2   Hillis, 2004. Cities: playgrounds or battlegrounds. Tacoma: Leadership Foundations Press 90.
3   Feast of the Clowns 2014 http://www.feastoftheclowns.org.za.

Some of the interventions of these faith-based organisations included seven social housing projects in the area around the Park; recycling a church roof to develop 27 communal housing units; developing innovative HIV/AIDS care programmes, offering a refugee centre with practical assistance and English classes, and, in addition, assisting with the integration of refugees into local communities; providing a drop-in centre for homeless people and a 24-bed transitional housing programme for women at risk; a day-care centre for 60 neighbourhood children; and a conference centre used by churches, trade unions and whoever else.[4] [5]

In this precinct, one learns that it is possible to upgrade so-called bad buildings without displacing existing tenants. One learns that churches have the potential to mediate social inclusions beyond what government is able to do. But one also learns that churches respond differently to vulnerability as one church tries to assist homeless people off the streets with services, whilst the other seeks to get them off their street by opening sprinklers on them.

This little precinct is today modelling the possibility of mixed-income housing, ranging from a women's shelter to communal housing to 3-star hotels and upmarket penthouse units selling at more than R 1,2m a piece, all within one city block. The precinct is illustrative of how investment in an area has the potential to arrest further decay and even reverse the trend of disinvestment or of gentrification at the expense of vulnerable people.

The Burgers Park precinct generated a wealth of local knowledge and expertise, from below and from within, which can be built upon in working for urban regeneration that is truly inclusive.

2 2   Salvokop

Just on the opposite side, behind the Tshwane Central Station is Salvokop, an old railway community with 174 houses but with almost every house having 4-5 backyard shacks, the approximate number of residents counting well over 2000 people. On the western border there is a growing informal settlement, named Baghdad by the residents, now having more than 200 informal structures.[6] At the foot of the Freedom Park Monument, only five minutes from the Central Business District, the Salvokop land is prime property, owned by the National Department of Public Works. To access the main gate of the Freedom Park Monument one has to drive through the Salvokop neighbourhood. On the one hand, the fibre of this community is slowly unravelling in terms of the physical conditions as expressed in the housing stock. On the other hand, there is

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4   Tshwane Leadership Foundation 2011 http://www.tlf.org.za.
5   Yeast City Housing. n.d. http://www.yeastcityhousing.org.za.
6   Ramnarain. Conversation with Manisha Ramnarain on site in Salvokop; 15 January 2014.

significant social infrastructure that was created by different social partners in conjunction with the community.

An old church property in Salvokop was purchased by Yeast City Housing, a faith-based social housing company, who converted the space into a multi-purpose community centre in partnership with the Tshwane Leadership Foundation. It is now offering a community hall for community and church meetings, space for local churches to worship in, day care and after school programmes for neighbourhood children, a community hall for community meetings, and on this site a community-based social housing company recently completed an apartment building with 82 social housing units.[7]

Another faith-based organisation, Popup, runs a skills training and health care programme for people in the community who otherwise would lack access to affordable basic health care. Two shelters for homeless boys also function in this area. Across the road from the church, Crossroads is a shelter for boys coming off the streets. At the western entrance to Salvokop, under the thick trees, members of African initiated churches gather for worship, representing yet another local, indigenous asset.

The landlord of most of this land – previously Transnet and now Public Works – has given no indication for the past 20 years of what a re-imagined city would look like in Salvokop, in particular for those who have lived here for many years and are still living here. Residents feel particularly vulnerable as they are tenants and might be displaced. This becomes clear from conversations with people working for local faith-based organisations but also from concerns expressed in meetings of the local community forum.

And yet, despite the evident poverty, uncertain future and transitional nature of this area, significant social infrastructure has been created by different social partners, mostly in conjunction with the community. These partners included Popup, the Tshwane Leadership Foundation, Yeast City Housing, and the Jopie Fourie Primary School.

Engaging with this community raises critical questions such as: what can be learnt from the social partners in terms of social infrastructure development? Why does the physical deterioration happen as it does, and why does national government as landlord allow it? Why are the social partners and community unable to arrest decay? Why are there virtually no conversations and consultation with local residents and social partners about future plans and development of the area (the lack of such consultative and participatory processes is evident from conversations with social partners and community members)? Is it possible for local assets to be mobilised to build a healthy local

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7   Yeast City Housing. n.d. http://www.yeastcityhousing.org.za.

neighbourhood in close proximity to the resources and infrastructure of the CBD, without displacement of current tenants?

2 3   Capital West

The area to the north and west of Church Square is framed as the Capital West Precinct in the city's long-term plans.[8] [9] This area hosts a number of challenges. The infamous Kruger Park and Schubart Park complexes are in this area. Once providing sub-economic housing, under the city's management these properties were allowed to degenerate to a point of no return. In 2011 the City of Tshwane evacuated 700 families from Schubart Park[10] and recently revealed their plans to renovate this complex into, what the mayor said, (the New) Jerusalem once they are done with it.[11] [12]

And yet, the theological vision of the New Jerusalem is a place where poor and rich will dine at the same table; a city where some will not build houses and others live in them; or plant gardens and others eat the fruit; but where people will benefit directly from the fruits of their hands.[13] The city's vision of a New Jerusalem for Schubart Park, to the contrary, first had to rid the place of 700 poor families in order to make way for a more "desirable" population.

Marabastad, just a few blocks away from Schubart Park, is a neighbourhood with an immensely rich history.[14] [15] Affected by forced removals in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Marabastad until today continues to be marginal. In 2002, 2000 informal residents were moved from here to Mamelodi Extension 6 to make way for new developments.[16] Twelve years later, the proposed developments never occurred. Those who lived informally in Marabastad still live informally in Mamelodi Extension 6, now twelve years later, and subsequently a new population of people started to live informally in Marabastad.

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8   City of Tshwane 2009-2010 *Tshwane launches West Capital Project* http://www.tshwane.gov.za. Published 13 August 2013.
9   Hlahla (2012) Schubart Park to be demolished, *Pretoria News*, 11 April 2012, http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/gauteng/schubart-park-to-be-demolished-1.1273329#.U3sVTFWSyfo.
10   Brand, De Beer, De Villiers, Van Marle 2013 "Poverty as Injustice" *Law, Democracy and Development*, 17 273-297, http://dx.doi.org/10/4314/ldd.v17i1.13.
11   Esterhuyse (2013) "Schubartpark word luuks" *Beeld,* 14 August 2013 12.
12   Hlahla (2012) "Schubart Park to be demolished" *Pretoria News*, 11 April 2012, http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/gauteng/schubart-park-to-be-demolished-1.1273329#.U3sVTFWSyfo.
13   See Brueggemann (1993) *Using God's Resources Wisely. Isaiah and Urban Possibility.* Westminster: John Knox Press.
14   Mphahlele (1959) *Down Second Avenue.*
15   Van der Waal & De Jong (1998) *Marabastad: fountain of life. A diversity of cultures creating new opportunities.* Pretoria: Pretoria Inner City Partnership.
16   De Beer (2008) Contesting inner-city space: global trends, local exclusion/s and an alternative Christian spatial *praxis*, in *Missionalia* 36:2/3; (Aug/Nov 2008) 181-207.

Also in the same area, just north of Schubart Park, land has been secured by a community-based social housing organisation, Yeast City Housing, for the development of 750 social housing units, as well as a small complement of retail and community facilities. This was after struggling for fourteen years to secure this land from the City of Tshwane, despite it being dedicated for this purpose. This development, to be known as the Thembelihle Village, has started in the second half of 2014.[17] It will be the first development of its kind since the forced removals of people from Marabastad at the end of the 1960s, and early 1970s. Although it will be the first infrastructure investment of its kind in this precinct, it is not even mentioned as part of the Capital West Initiative by the City of Tshwane.

This precinct raises its own set of questions or themes: does local government have the capacity and is it desirable for it to manage housing? Unless community-based responses become bold in claiming inner city space, private sector and government led developments will continue with regeneration that tends to be socially exclusive and urban gentrification that marginalises the poor even further. Innovative and bold community-based interventions in this area highlight the necessity for government to acknowledge and integrate such community-based interventions into integrated, inclusive strategies for urban regeneration.

2 4   Zoo Precinct

The Zoo Precinct is in the inner city north, anchored by the significant asset of the National Zoological Gardens. Adjacent is the Blood Street Mall, being one of the main transport hubs into the city. Along Struben Street, impressive new buildings have been built to house headquarters of national government departments. This precinct also hosts a number of community-based interventions. The Tau Village was the conversion of the old Transvaal Agricultural Union Building from a brothel – accommodating girls as young as eleven years old working as child prostitutes – into a social housing project with 80 apartments, a baby care centre, a safe space for girls at-risk, shop fronts, and an elderly care centre.[18] [19]

Next to the Zoo is the Rivoningo Care Centre.[20] [21] In the 1990s, homeless people died on the streets of the city with full-blown AIDS, not having had access to antiretroviral medication, and being discharged from public hospitals if their CD4 counts were low. In Rivoningo patients were accessing medication, nutrition and a caring environment. 60 % of the people who came through this facility did not die but recovered well

17   Swart (2010) Urban church. Re-developing space within Pretoria's Schubart Park complex. Unpublished March-Thesis. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.
18   Jackson (2010) "Hool word 'n plek van heling" *Beeld*, 26 June 2010 9.
19   Yeast City Housing. n.d. http://www.yeastcityhousing.org.za.
20   Hillis 93.
21   Tshwane Leadership Foundation (2011).

enough to be discharged. Today this facility combines palliative care with frail care for the elderly.

Adjacent to the Rivoningo Care Centre, in this same precinct, is the Gilead Community House,[22] [23] home to people discharged from psychiatric hospitals, living with chronic mental illness, and often misunderstood by their families and society. Were it not for Gilead, they too would be homeless. In both Rivoningo and Gilead, people who often experience marginalisation, reclaim life and become part of the urban landscape, from below, with unique knowledges residing among them. They tend to see the city from a different angle, which needs to be considered in revisioning the city.

Many of the sites I mapped above, represent people who otherwise would be marginal, but within these sites found spaces of belonging and a sense of own agency. These sites, connected to each other, could form a rich tapestry from below, representing unique and not-to-be-discarded local knowledges. Viewed from one angle, they collectively look like a *catch net* for all those who tend to fall through the city's cracks. Viewed from another angle they are much more: they are *launching pads* for people and movements finding their voice and agency, engaging the city as participants, neighbours and citizens, with a deep sense of ownership.
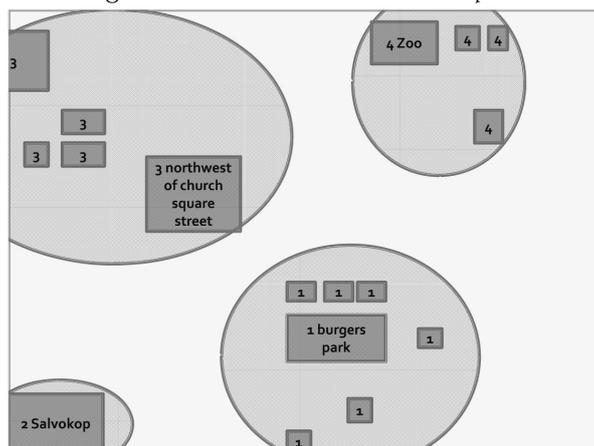

Fig 1:   Inner City Sites[24]

[The sites identified in Figure 1 includes (1) Tswelelang Foster Care Home, Kopanong, Hofmeyr House, Living Stones, The Potter's House, Burgers Park and The Jubilee Centre; (2) Salvokop; (3) Schubart Park,

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22   Hillis 93.
23   Tshwane Leadership Foundation(2011).
24   De Beer (2013) *Whose knowledges shape our city? Advancing a community-based urban praxis.* Unpublished panel presentation: seminar hosted by the Capital Cities IRT, University of Pretoria.

Kruger Park, Thembelihle Village and Marabastad; and (4) the Tau Village, Rivoningo Care Centre and Gilead Community House].

3   Epistemologies from Below and from Within

In their article *The View from Everywhere: Towards an Epistemology for Urbanites*, Foth, Odendaal and Hearn[25] offer "a critique of expert power and its claims to be universal and absolute". With reference to Eflin[26] and Hearn,[27] they specifically deconstruct the ways in which the knowledge constructs of white, educated, male experts dominate over women and other minorities, asserting the fact of knowledge being culturally constructed, always serving particular interests, and laden with "cultural baggage", therefore not as objective or liberating as it alleges to be.

Eflin[28] is concerned with epistemologies with their roots in "masculine preferences for decontextualised rationality"[29] lamenting the narrow confines of such knowledge generation.

In South African city-making the alliances between black political and administrative power and mostly white male consultants, do little to deconstruct these powerful, narrow and exclusive constructs of knowledge.

In contrast, Eflin[30] would propose "to broaden our view of what constitutes legitimate ways to create knowledge and vouch for its justifiability".[31] "Eflin asks that a range of epistemic voices be listened to; something like a democracy of ideas. This stance is consistent with a trend towards local, democratic, and alternative modes of knowledge production".[32]

The few sites I chose to map, represent diverse voices, people and needs, often marginality and vulnerability, but, importantly, also "other ways of knowing". It invites the knowledge (actions, experiences, struggles, solutions) of community-based organisations and vulnerable or marginal populations, often excluded from main stream knowledge

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25   Foth, Odendaal & Hearn (2007) "The View from Everywhere: Towards and Epistemology for Urbanites", in Remenyi (ed) *Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Intellectual Capital, Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning (ICICKM) (*October 15-16 2007, Cape Town, South Africa), Academic Conferences Limited.
26   Eflin (2008) "Women and Cognitive Authority in the Knowledge Economy". In Hearn& Rooney (eds) *Knowledge Policy: Challenges for the 21st Century.* Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.
27   Hearn (2002) "Global Transformations in Knowledge: Social and Cultural Issues" *Encyclopaedia of Life Support Systems (EOLSS)* (Vol. 1.24: Capital resource issue III: Globalization and world systems). Oxford, UK: Eolss Publishers.
28   Eflin 3.
29   Foth *et al* p128.
30   Eflin 3.
31   Foth *et al* 128.
32   *Idem* 7.

production. As Foth, Odendaal and Hearn[33]suggest: "[w]e need to be sensitive to the needs and voices of the marginalised. We need to cultivate and recognise 'an epistemology of difference'".[34] It is such "an epistemology of difference" and "other ways of knowing" that the poor man of Ecclesiastes and the diverse sites of the inner city also represent.

4   Towards a Community-based Urban *Praxis:* From Below, and from within

This article seeks to advance a community-based urban *praxis*, proposing that – alongside the visions of consultants, politicians and private sector – cities need to be revisioned from below and from within. A community-based urban *praxis* suggests an on-going cyclical process of embedded and embodied immersions; generating local knowledges through collective action; critically reflected upon, refined and improved; and replicated and sustained over time.

An articulate community-based urban *praxis* can go a long way to foster authentic, locally owned, locally driven, and locally sustained interventions for change.

Such an approach is advocated for by diverse voices ranging from grass-root social movements such as Shack/Slum Dwellers International,[35] to academics such as Huchzermeyer,[36] Deakin and Allwinkle,[37] and Deakin,[38] to authors writing on behalf of international organisations such as UN-HABITAT.[39]

A community-based urban *praxis* is visible in smaller or bigger urban interventions facilitated by local civic groups, whether they be community organisations, non-profit organisations, faith-based communities and churches, citizens groups, informal traders, slum dweller organisations, cooperatives, or many others.

A community-based urban *praxis* is different from that which is government or private sector led. Such an approach is not firstly about monumentality or financial profit but about the common good of the

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33   *Ibid.*
34   Sandercock (1995) "Voices from the Borderlands: A Meditation on a Metaphor" *Journal of Planning Education and Research,* 14(2) 77-88.
35   SDI South African Alliance (2012) http://www.sasdialliance.org.za.
36   Huchzermeyer (2011) *Cities with "slums". From informal settlement eradication to a right to the city in Africa.* Claremont, South Africa: UCT Press.
37   Deakin & Allwinkle (2008) *A Community-Based Approach to Sustainable Urban Regeneration. The LUDA Project.* The Social Sciences Collection.
38   Deakin (2012) "The Case for socially inclusive visioning in the community-based approach to sustainable urban regeneration" *Sustainable Cities and Society* 313-323.
39   Fisher (2001) *Building Bridges through Participatory Planning,* UN-HABITAT, http://www.gdrc.org/decision/BuildingBridges.pdf.

majority of people, and particularly those who are most vulnerable and excluded. It is *praxis*-based in as far as it results not primarily from top-down policy but from contextual, local and embedded/embodied immersions. In the process contextual knowledge is generated through action, refined through critical reflection, translated into improved action and sharing of good practice, in an on-going cyclical process.

This approach has the possibility, if acknowledged, to inform policy and strategy towards sustained urban change.[40] Huchzermeyer[41] refers to Murray's assertion of "informal settlements as incubators for inventive survival strategies where inhabitants have begun to reclaim available space for multiple uses, develop their own specific forms of collaboration and cooperation and reterritorialise their connections both inside and outside the city"; by affirming such an approach, policy makers could be steered from "aversion" and "elimination" to "respect" and "strategic support".

Instead, governments often criminalise those inhabiting informal settlements, or informal traders, or homeless communities. Terms such as "eradication, eviction, relocation and resettlement" are used, says Huchzermeyer[42] "to keep the poor out of the city" or "to remove them from it" in line with "world-class city aspirations".

Community-based approaches are critical to ensure humane and human-scale cities that build on the latent assets within them. In the context of capital cities monumentality often triumphs over people and facades of decency and sanitation over dignified spaces embracing vulnerability. An articulate community-based urban *praxis* could provide sane, decent and human-centred interventions and approaches to urban change and revitalisation making radical forms of social inclusion an imperative for assessing the quality of urban regeneration.

5 Aligned Research

The suggestions in this article are further explored in a research project entitled *"Faith in the city"*, exploring the role of faith – and community-based organisations or movements in engaging urban fractures, with particular reference to the City of Tshwane.[43] The *"Faith in the city"* research project is aligned to a university-wide research project on Capital Cities, entitled *"Capital Cities: Space, Justice and Belonging"*,[44] based at the University of Pretoria, exploring ways in which space, justice and belonging are sought, mediated or denied in capital cities of the

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40   Deakin 13-23.
41   Huchzermeyer 26.
42   *Idem* 59.
43   De Beer (2012) *Faith in the city: a trans-disciplinary research programme.* Unpublished research proposal, University of Pretoria.
44   Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria (2013) *Capital Cities: Space, Justice and Belonging.* Institutional Research Theme (IRT) proposal, 15 March 2013, approved by the University Executive in April 2013.

global South. This article raises a specific concern with the city of capital in its *denial* of community-based voices and interventions.

The considerations of this article also seek to align itself to the Faculty Research Theme of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Pretoria, where I am based in the Centre for Contextual Ministry. The theme of the Faculty Research Theme is "*Ecodomy: life in fullness*".[45] Ecodomy comes from two Greek words which mean "to build the household". And the focus of the Centre for Contextual Ministry, within that broader theme, is to foster community and church leadership that will help build healthy communities.

Considering a community-based urban *praxis* is to consider the urban household in its (dis)connectedness, from below, and the multiple sites of struggle, hope and intervention that seek (i) to resist exclusionary forces of death and decay, (ii) to outwit the thief that is out to steal, kill and destroy – whether the thief of apathy, or numbness or market forces, and (iii) to craft spaces and processes that could possibly mediate life, from below and from within.

This article, and the *"Faith in the city"* research project, would argue that fullness of life in the context of the city cannot be attained without allowing local, diverse and marginal voices from urban places signifying profound (un)fullness to inform our urban practices and policies – critically, correctively and constructively.

6 Urban Studio: A Trans-disciplinary Space for Generating Transforming Knowledge

Since 2012 the Centre for Contextual Ministry at the University of Pretoria has embarked on a process, in collaboration with the Tshwane Leadership Foundation (a community-based organisation), to create an Urban Studio. It is doing so by drawing a virtual line around the precincts I mapped, acknowledging their value as sites of learning and affirming the city as classroom.[46] The Urban Studio, based in the inner city of Pretoria, is a collective of sites offering possible trans-disciplinary spaces for generating (and transforming) knowledge in close collaboration between researchers, students, community-based practitioners and ordinary citizens.[47]

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45   Faculty of Theology, University of Pretoria (2013) *Strategic Plan: Faculty of Theology,* approved by the University Executive in August 2013.
46   Hillis 26-27.
47   De Beer (2013b) *Urban Innovation Hub: advancing community-based urban praxis through trans-disciplinary engagement.* Unpublished project proposal by the Centre for Contextual Ministry, University of Pretoria 2.
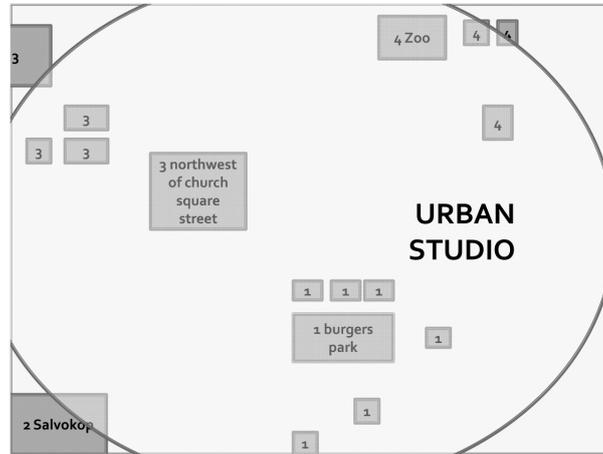
Fig 2:   Urban Studio[48]

[See Figure 1 above for more details about the different sites represented here].

Aligned with the Capital Cities Project, the Urban Studio is focusing on engagement with local inner city communities, affirming them as sites of learning, inviting "a range of epistemic voices",[49] and "other ways of knowing", as we consider the city of capital in its relation to urban vulnerability.

Hearn[50] highlights the need to reconceptualise knowledge as embedded in networks of relationships, socially constructed and culturally mediated. The Urban Studio would like to learn from the networks of relationships and socially constructed knowledge from below. It would engage in concrete projects, offer diverse courses on site, and do research that is engaged with the communities represented in the Studio. As Klein[51] articulates it: "The core idea of transdisciplinarity is different academic disciplines working jointly with practitioners to solve a real-world problem".

In partnership with the different sites and organisations located in the Urban Studio, both the Tshwane Leadership Foundation and others, collaborations of mutuality are fostered. "Local urban communities would not merely be hosts for the different possible engagements, but would also serve as research partners, teachers, and collaborators in

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48   De Beer (2013b) 10.
49   Foth *et al* 7.
50   Hearn 4.
51   Klein (2001) *Transdisciplinarity: Joint Problem Solving among Science, Technology, and Society.* Synthesebücher, SPP Environment, Basel, Birkhäuser Verlag.

articulating local challenges, research questions and proposed solutions".[52]

Research that seeks to advance a community-based urban *praxis* will involve "practitioners, people concerned, lay people or other identified groups of persons who are affected"[53] through participatory action research methodologies and action learning programmes. In the Urban Studio, such engagements are fostered, enabling shared learning and a deep sense of mutuality.

The work being done in the Urban Studio is closely connected to actual practice "helping to inform or shape practice, of both local communities and community practitioners, but also of researchers, students and the research community".[54] It is not only exploring conceptual or theoretical frameworks, but based on actual challenges and questions articulated by local participants and stakeholders, shared action, reflection, dialogue and research are engaged in to seek for real-life solutions and innovations.[55]

It is my assertion that such mutuality, from below and from within, could foster the kinds of knowledges that cities require: fostering an urban household from below, in which new kinds of belonging and new ways of knowing could help mediate new forms of justice and interconnectedness, more inclusive and more sustainable, because it is informed and owned by the people.

It would then be said that there dwelled in the city a woman or a man, a child or a migrant from a faraway place, poor but wise, who saved the city – and they will be remembered.

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52   De Beer (2013b) 3.
53   Bergman (2005) *Qualitätskriterien transdisziplinärer Forschung. Leitfaden für die evaluation von Forschungsprojekte.* ISOE-Studienttexte, Nr. 13: Frankfurt am Main; Pohl& Hirsch Hadorn *(2006) Gestaltungsprinzipien für die transdisziplinäre Forschung.* München
54   De Beer (2013b) 3.
55   *Ibid.* Bergman (2005) & Pohl & Hirsch Hadorn (2006).