**Design (Govern)mentalities:**

**Implications of design and/as governance in Cape Town**

Ramia Mazé

**Introduction**

Design is enmeshed in power relations and hegemonies, political regimes and ideologies. These political dimensions are more explicit in architecture and its histories of service to states and empires, democracies and dictators. In architecture, the politics of form has been widely theorized in terms of the “panopticon,” a building type conceived two centuries ago by the social theorist Jeremy Bentham. A panopticon prison, for example, distributes cells around a central guard-tower, such that inmates are both physically separated from one another and subject to a centralized surveillance mechanism. The philosopher Michel Foucault (1995 [1975]) elaborated the panopticon prison not only as a building but as a mechanism of power. For Foucault, it articulated the shift from one paradigm of governance to another: from top-down rule by a sovereign over territory through physical force to modern forms of control over social relations through a variety of mechanisms. Modern government, thus, takes form on an everyday and ongoing basis through “governmentality” (Foucault 1991 [1978]), which includes hard urban and architectural forms that physically contain and control a populace as well as less tangible mechanisms, such as surveillance, that steer people’s perceptions and behaviors.

Political analysis has also entered into design through concepts such as ‘governmentality.’ Langdon Winner (1980) points at Robert Moses’ urban plan for New York, which, among other choices to similar effect, included height limits to highway overpasses that prohibited public busses and thus access to beaches and parks for some social groups. Elaborating his concept of “political ergonomics,” Winner (1995) argues that different design choices result in “different social contracts” between a user, civil society and the state. In terms of “the tangibility of governance,” Dori Tunstall (2007) elaborates how national design standards for voting ballots and voter information directly affect whether or how individual or groups of people vote. Mahmoud Keshavarz (2016) examines passports, camps and borders as designed things deployed by the state as instruments of migration policy, as well as the use of these as forms of resistance by migrants against state violence. This vein of Foucauldian thought in design scholarship exposes and unfolds how government and policy literally touch and control people through designed forms of governmentality in everyday life.

Today, design as a service profession for government is rapidly expanding. “Design to drive renewal in the public sector” and “modernization of public administration” is proclaimed in the European Commission’s (EC 2013) Action Plan for Design-Driven Innovation. The EC plan implemented by ‘Design for Europe’ highlights examples of employed designers and entire design units in national and municipal government as well as the master’s course ‘Design for Government,’ for which I’m responsible, in collaboration with ministries in Finland. In my context, design has been an integral part of the Finnish government’s 2016 Strategic Program and written into the City of Helsinki strategy. Design has thrived and expanded in within political economies of governmental (neo-)liberalization, redistribution of governmental services, and rationales of renewal and innovation (Julier 2016). This is evident in Finland but also far beyond, as such rationales are perpetuated through the UN and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Eliadis, Hill and Howlett 2007b) – and through international design organizations.

The rapid expansion of design within government is rapidly outpacing political analysis of its forms and implications. Further, the forms of design expanding within government – namely, design thinking, co-design and service design – are not those previously interrogated in the Foucauldian vein. When Christian Bason (2016), currently chief executive of the Danish Design Center and formerly head of the cross-governmental MindLab, argues for “policymaking as designing,” he is advocating for the design of processes and strategies rather than the design of forms that physically contain and control.

The expansion of design in government can be argued as part of a larger political-economic shift. As Foucault argued, previous forms of ‘hard’ state power through military and physical means has gradually been displaced within modern and liberal governance by more subtle and less tangible forms. Here, the double-meaning of the panopticon is indicative. The panopticon prison does control through physical separation and containment but, more profoundly, it is the ‘soft,’ psychological power of surveillance that operates invisibly to instill individual self-governance and social order. A relevant parallel in design, articulated by Keshavarz and myself (2013), is the management and direction of people’s experiences and subjectivities within consensus-driven participatory and co-design processes.

As it expands in conjunction with the emergence of modern forms of governance, design within and upstream in government is overdue for political analysis. Public administration scholars, such as Pearl Eliadis, Margaret Hill and Michael Howlett in their book *Designing Government* (2007a), examine the expanding range of political instruments used in governance. They articulate the shift from ‘government’ *per se* to processes of ‘governance,’ that is, from hierarchical and centralized institutions and top-down enactment of power and policy to more “networked” arrangements and “interactive” mechanisms. This includes, I argue, designed forms and forums, which must also be interrogated.

Within my research, I am interested in how design operates in terms of governance and governmentality, by which I mean the regulation and steering of conduct. For example, I study how design provides new understandings of – and capacities to manipulate – the interface between the personal and the state. In this article, and in order to explore this in action, I turn to some examples highlighted through the World Design Organization.

*Design within Government and the World Design Capital®*

The expanding forms and roles of design in government are evident in the phenomena and content of the World Design Capital (WDC). This is a title awarded biannually to one city around the world, following a bidding process to the World Design Organization (WDO)™. The WDO as an organization and the WDC phenomenon are manifestations of design as an instrument of national policy. “Design as an essential component in national strategies to stimulate the development of sustainable economic, social, and cultural growth” (WDO 2019) was the premise of a WDO-organized international conference at the inaugural WDC in Torino, Italy, in 2008. Behind each WDC city is a powerful lobby assembled for the competitive bid process and implementation – 2012 WDC Helsinki was backed by national and municipal government, an array of business and cultural actors, and widespread popular support, “one of the most extensive cooperation projects ever implemented in Finland” (Icsid, now named WDO, quoted in Berglund 2013). Thus, each WDC can be seen as an instantiation of how governments frame and instrumentalize design as part of policy.

A WDC, furthermore, spotlights how government can use design. Each WDC selects and promotes a particular design profile and examples through communication materials and a program of events. For example, WDC Helsinki included sustainable design and design activism within a profile of citizen-engagement. This, alongside promotion of mainstream design innovation and creative industry, entailed a complicated profile “as activism at the margins shades into design policy and commercial opportunities” (Berglund 2013: 209). Eeva Berglund argues the WDC Helsinki perpetuated a Finnish historical strategy of governmentality through technocratic mainstreaming and consensus-building: “In fact what [WDC Helsinki] promotes is less the design of objects or even services and more the design of the right kinds of citizens” (Berglund 2013: 207-208). Thus, by drawing a parallel to Foucault’s ‘governmentality,’ she articulates how such profiling becomes a way of forming and steering a populace in particular ways.

As such a spotlight, the designation of Cape Town, South Africa, as the subsequent WDC in 2014 was particularly significant. For one thing, 2014 marked the 20-year anniversary of the end of apartheid rule in South Africa. For another, this first and still sole WDC in the Global South, amplifies Cape Town’s “world city syndrome” (McDonald 2012). As described by David McDonald, this denotes a persistent fixation of governmental and other interests in Cape Town on being a ‘world city’ in the normative mold set out by UN-Habitat (2001). He further describes how neoliberalism is part and parcel of the world city formation process and outcome, including the homogenization and commodification of lifeworlds, “(de)Africanization”, and strategies for containing dissent and marginalizing opposition. Thus, and for the purposes of this article, 2014 WDC Cape Town spotlights some problematics of (post-apartheid) policy as manifested in and through design.

To a great extent, the design profile of WDC Cape Town continued that of other WDCs. Many among the hundreds of examples (especially those within theme “Beautiful Spaces, Beautiful Things”) were those recognizable spatial and material forms readily photographed and featured in the *Financial Times* (f.ex. van der Post, 2014). Less tangible, but familiar forms of design within government, were two, unconnected projects including a series of high-profile “pioneer workshops” and the VPUU project.

The pioneer workshops were explicit instruments of government, created to fulfill the target of Cape Town’s mayor to engage to every one of the city’s 111 wards. As captured in a polished video (WDO 2019), designers had multiple roles, for example in identifying and selecting participants, framing the agenda and preparing ward councilors, as well as facilitating the workshop to generate a proposal that could thereafter be visualized and put forward for city council allocation of funding. Design roles went well beyond mere facilitation, including tutoring (f.ex. framing four possible definitions of ‘design thinking’ for participants to choose among), prioritizing (coaching participants to “critically assess own ideas”) and decision-making (a voting procedure to progressively narrow and select proposals). Thus, a politics of consensus that is typical within participatory design (Keshavarz and Mazé 2013) is also evident here, including the use of design to frame, select and steer competing and even conflicting interests and voices toward a particular end.

A more visible example is the VPUU project. This was the first of only three examples (out of the hundreds eventually included) in the bid prepared by the City of Cape Town for the WDO (Cape Town Partnership 2011). Images from the VPUU project, branded within the highly visible yellow WDC branding and banners, met everyone passing through the arrival gate at Cape Town International Airport during 2013-2014, including myself. Yet, the significance – and political dimensions – of VPUU are much more profound than these widespread but superficial depictions.

*The Case of VPUU (Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading)*

VPUU stands for ‘Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading’, which is simultaneously the name of a non-profit company, a project in Khayelitsha and other locations, and a South African-German Development Cooperation program initiated in 2001 by the German Development Bank (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau or KfW). KfW provided 10.5M Euro (Graham et al. 2011) pooled with other South African governmental funds and, with Cape Town as the executing agency of the program, Cape Town’s Khayelitsha township was selected as a site for implementation in 2005. The three-pillar model for implanting VPUU is a general model following UN-Habitat and also implemented in two South American countries by KfW (Bauer 2010). The VPUU model has since been rolled out in five municipalities of the Western Cape Province (Cassidy 2015). This setup illustrates the global and multi-level political-economic dimensions of VPUU, which underpins its organizational, operating and political logics.

VPUU is a case that reveals several layers of design in the context of governance today. First, as spotlighted within WDC Cape Town, it can be understood as part of ‘design policy,’ that is, as illustrating a claim or directive about South African and Cape Town government and policy for a local and global audience. Secondly, it is an example of modern forms of governance – in this case, security policy conducted in a ‘networked’ and ‘interactive’ way through an assemblage of stakeholders, local and global financing, models and (govern)mentalities – in which design is increasingly instrumental. Lastly, and in focus for the remainder of this article, VPUU is an example of the varied, designed and politically-loaded forms and forums through which governance is conducted in and beyond government today.

*Research standpoint(s)*

My interest in VPUU started with a 2-week research visit to Cape Town during WDC preparations in 2013. This included a visit to the African Center for Cities (ACC) at the University of Cape Town and limited qualitative research including a visit to VPUU in Khayelitsha and an informal interview with Kathryn Ewing, PhD in urban design and architecture, a VPUU founding director and former worksteam leader of ‘situational crime prevention.’ This article should be understood as a critical essay, drawing primarily and retrospectively upon a proliferating body of literature since my own visit.

Subsequent to my visit, I have followed the development and studies of VPUU at a distance, which has been possible because of its ongoing and obligatory self-evaluation (required of development projects funded by KfW and other foundations). It’s important to note that VPUU is privileged and likely disproportionately highlighted among the many projects in Cape Town and Africa because of its funding situation and global affiliations (KfW, UN-Habitat, WDC, etc.). It has been the focus of several research studies, including those unaffiliated with VPUU by Vanessa Barolsky (funded by the Canada-based International Development Research Centre), Leon Schreiber and Michael Barry. While the Schreiber and Barry study was conducted through their affiliations with North American universities, it can be relevant to note that Schreiber is currently a member of parliament in South Africa for the Democratic Alliance party. VPUU is described and discussed here primarily on the basis of existent research about the project, including that of scholars mentioned above and others associated with ACC (f.ex. Mercy Brown-Luthango, Liza Rose Cirolia, Mntungwa Gubevu, Elena Reyes and Ruth Massey) and their collaborators such as Ash Amin.

**VPUU: Governance and Governmentality**

Governance in Cape Town, as elsewhere, has shifted from policy created and enacted top-down from a singular authority to more ‘networked’ and ‘interactive’ forms distributed across a variety of stakeholders with different interests, (inter)dependencies and agency. The lack (or withdrawal) of direct government and complexity of governmental arrangements is particularly evident within Cape Town’s 450 ‘informal settlement pockets.’ In a city of 3.8 million people (continuously inflated by urban land invasions by homeless and landless people, new and illegal land occupations), over 20% of households live in such settlements (Amin and Cirolia 2018). By default and by intent, VPUU has become a key intermediary between the state and the populace in Khayelitsha, instrumentalizing, creating, and regulating policy, functions more traditionally performed by formal institutions of government.

Literally doing governance in Khayelitsha, VPUU organizes and regulates security. A primary instrument, and one of three pillars in the VPUU model, is physical safety. This is addressed (and depicted in WDC imagery) through interventions in the built environment including architecture, lighting and common spaces, as well as organizational forms such as community patrols to support the police service. Thus, VPUU creates a variety of tangible interfaces between the state and populace. VPUU’s operations also extend beyond and upstream, aiming at preventing violence in the first place by affecting public health (Lloyd and Matzopoulos 2018), social cohesion (Barolsky 2016) and civic enfranchisement (Schreiber and Barry 2017). VPUU is a thus case of the “pluralisation of the governance of security” (Shearing and Wood 2003: 403).

Security, safe spaces and prevention are, however, not only delivered top-down, by government or even through intermediaries such as VPUU, but also evolve naturally and out of necessity. In terms of “governance from below,” Amin and Cirolia elaborate local and bottom-up “planning rules and practices, deep-rooted cartographic knowledge, established decision-making processes, controlling parties, social battles, hidden rules and rituals of access and allocation” (2018: 277). These may be unknown, ignored or marginalized within formal governance interventions, Amin and Cirolia argue, which may unwittingly produce low morale, inertia, resentment and opposition. Yet, the social contract between the state and populace is inevitably lived out through direct interactions with and through intermediaries and interfaces. Thus, examining these, and some relevant political tensions and dynamics therein can also suggest wider implications for design.

*Forms of governmentality*

VPUU is situated within the apartheid legacy of governance and social-spatial policy. Khayelitsha (“new home” in isiXhosa) was established 25 km from the city center in 1930 by the apartheid state. Apartheid implemented the national social policy of segregation in spatial terms, dividing people into four racial groups and zoning land on a racial basis. The 1950 Group Areas Act zoned municipalities for mutually exclusive and racialized land ownership and occupation. The act was instrumentalized through large-scale property expropriation and forced relocation of 1.7 million people. Principles of European modernism were referenced in defense of the ‘hard’ divisions, clearances and borders between areas: “following Le Corbusier’s lead, named the Surgical method... through surgery we must create order,” states the *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Matters Relating to the Colored Population Group* (Republic of South Africa 1976). The ‘hard’ legacy of spatial segregation remains – patterns of post-apartheid urban development and settlement have largely taken place within, and thereby reinforced, the inherited apartheid spatial framework (Amin and Cirolia 2018).

VPUU does not aim to solve this political legacy. Within Khayelitscha, VPUU operates in the evolving aftermath of apartheid and post-apartheid policy, in which the pledged housing, infrastructures and public services have not been fully delivered nor evenly distributed. The informal settlements, largely consisting of shacks, that were previously considered as temporary have become established and are increasingly treated by the government as permanent (and thus subject to upgrading).

Within Khayelitsha, VPUU aims at violence prevention through a three-pillar operational model (Graham et al 2011): ‘social crime prevention’ through community patrols, education, legal, health and social services aimed to prevent or support victims of violence; ‘institutional crime prevention,’ in the form of job training, economic development and facilities, and; ‘situational crime prevention.’

‘Situational crime prevention’ refers specifically to interventions intended to upgrade the built environment. This includes a series of public walkways through the informal settlement and areas for sport and gardening. ‘Active boxes’ are the hallmark of this part of the model – regularly spaced, lit and staffed structures that multi-function as watchtowers, safehouses, commercial spaces and community centers. Though widespread in WDC imagery, these forms are hardly spectacular. Fabricated from shipping containers, locally-sourced and inexpensive materials, it’s not necessarily evident what is designed and what is merely found or improvised. There are also immaterial infrastructures such as a mobile phone-based GPS system operated by designated locals (primarily women) to register perceived safety and incidents of violence. In contrast to the imposing road, wall and lighting systems that divided and separated areas under apartheid planning, VPUU infrastructures connect, light up and make common paths, spaces and data. These are nonetheless forms of “governing matter,” to borrow a concept from Amin and Cirolia, which control and steer access, mobility and visibility. Belief (perceived safety) and behavior (community oversight, peer-monitoring and self-control) are governed in a quasi-panoptic sense.

As spotlighted by the WDC, it is these forms of ‘situational crime prevention’ that may conform to traditional expectations of design. Less evident in WDC, the other two pillars of VPUU could also be understood and analyzed as design. Indeed, these parts of the VPUU model include processes and strategies akin to those in design within government and ‘policymaking as designing.’ For example, the composition and procedures of decision-making bodies is one of the strategic and determining mechanisms within policy-making. Furthermore, how specific relations are regulated, for example through legal and social contracts, is part of policy implementation. Beyond the ‘hard’ elements indicated above, these are also relevant and partly unfolded below.

*Governance forums*

Governance through shaping particular organizational forms is evident in how VPUU’s Safe Node Area Committee (SNAC) is setup and conducted (cf. Cassidy 2015; Schreiber and Barry 2017). Preceding action within a particular area, VPUU sets up a SNAC through a process that includes: an audit and interviews within relevant local organizations; a “social compact” developed during the consultation process, and; election of SNAC members by consulted stakeholders. Half of the 16-member SNAC are stakeholders come from local government structures, the other half are from community- and task-based organizations (f.ex. early childhood development or health forums), NGOs and faith-based organizations. Following the setup of the SNAC, VPUU provides an 8-week leadership training course for members, then a community planning process begins with a baseline household survey and a series of community workshops, which culminates in a community action plan. VPUU consults SNAC on a monthly basis, and SNAC also acts as a recruitment/training body for the local security patrol and other activities. The main decision-making forum for VPUU locally, SNAC selects the issues to be addressed and is key to many community activities.

The setup and conduct of SNACs can be criticized. Barolsky and Doriam Borges (2019: 113) argue: “the objective of the consultative processes that do take place appears to be largely instrumental and designed to ensure the efficient implementation of the intervention through the selection and socialisation of a cohort of ‘responsible’ leaders who are tutored, through training, in the practices, norms, and ethics of the economic rational actor.” Lawrence Piper (2012, quoted in Barolsky and Borges: 112) has called the form of VPUU community consultation and the forums it creates, “‘designed’ in ways that allow for a very limited form of direct citizen participation in democratic decision-making.” Barolsky and Borges argue (2019: 112) that community meetings are held “largely as forums for the endorsement of decisions already taken,” since the key issues are primarily debated and decided within the SNAC itself. Wider consultation is thus primarily focused on how an intervention will be implemented, rather than its substantive grounds. Since the community action plan is signed by the mayor at the end of a ‘consultative’ meeting, Piper suggests (2012: 7), “the process is largely a symbolic one.”

Such critiques highlight the ways in which governance mechanisms are, indeed, designed. Who is invited is one of the primary mechanisms of governance, as Peter Sloterdijk (2005) argues in relation to Athenian democracy, for example, and the invitation is a powerful steering mechanisms within participatory design (Keshavarz and Mazé 2013). Membership could be perceived as political in VPUU: “Due to politics we were removed from that [SNAC]. People wanted to bring in their people and so forth” (former VPUU member interviewed by Barolsky and Borges 2019: 113). Yet, criteria used in the setup of VPUU and SNAC were intended as “apolitical” (Barolsky 2016; Uğur 2014 cf. Ley 2009). VPUU’s choice of 50% non-politically affiliated membership is explained by a VPUU leader, Michael Krause, as “a conscious and participatory one” (quoted in Schreiber and Barry 2017: 7). Schreiber and Barry explain the complex landscape and legacy of civic groups that emerged as a form of alternative government to the state during the apartheid era. Some civic groups, for example, belong to the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) aligned with the political party African National Congress (ANC). Tensions between political parties can lead to tense power dynamics and violence in townships as well as attempts to grab power within governance processes. In this context, VPUU has designed the setup of SNAC to diffuse and balance party-political stakes.

*Governmental arrangements*

VPUU and other such intermediaries operate precariously in-between the state and populace. The post-apartheid Constitution of South Africa promises housing and public services such as water, electricity and sanitation for all, yet millions still await such provision. Early models of centralized and top-down ‘government provision’ has shifted to a complex set of ‘governmental arrangements,’ while the same social groups continue to struggle, leading Amin and Cirolia (2018: 291) to argue that the “state violence of apartheid has given way to the violence of a neoliberal democracy.” In this context, and foreshadowing Cape Town’s recent plan (2012-2017), VPUU’s approach is incremental and *in situ*, ie. step-by-step upgrading of infrastructures and services where people live rather than large-scale relocation and new build. However, and characteristic of incrementalism, the gap between promise and delivery can persist – for example, in Khayelitsha, the main water pipes stop short. Distant communal water taps have necessarily become a destination and default meeting place for women, a physical and symbolic site of state shortcomings. Stepping into this gap, as VPUU does, is risky, particularly given historical distrust and solidarity built up in opposition. Indeed, according to Brown-Luthango, Reyes and Gubevu (2016: 490), delays have affected community participation in VPUU, “creating despondency and the feeling of failed delivery.”

The gap was lengthened by underestimation of tenure certification as a key step. VPUU was tasked with this in 2009 due to its “community-based design,” in the words of municipal department director Noahmaan Hendricks (quoted in Schreiber and Barry 2017: 5). In tenure certification, the city remains the sole landowner, but certificates of occupancy for shack tenants serve several functions. For residents, certificates strengthen protection against eviction and serve as proof of address for phone contracts, furniture store accounts, school enrollment, etc. For the electricity company that invests in building infrastructure, certificates provide security that service fees will eventually be paid by residents (or by the municipality in the case of indigent households). For the city, certificates signify participation in the upgrade and, as attached to specific geographic sites, enable the environmental assessment and zoning decision necessary prior to upgrading. Certificates thus function as a kind of social contract among diverse and potentially conflicting stakeholders within necessarily long-term ‘governmental arrangements.’ By 2013, 85-90% residents of the target area had acquired certificates, which reportedly had already increased trust and perception of safety amongst residents (Brown-Luthango, Reyes and Gubevu 2016).

Mediating certification, however, is politically-charged work, and VPUU decisions unavoidably wielded power over different parts of the community, as unfolded in the study by Schreiber and Barry (2017). One starting point, the so-called ‘Book of Life’ informal register previously created by SANCO, a party-political association, raised questions about bias and equity. VPUU initiated an additional process, which wascarried out by 30 field-workers recruited and trained through SNAC to use GPS devices and door-to-door surveys, to map 6,470 structures and their occupants. Further obstacles emerged in handling and interpreting the data, and occupancy evolved quickly: “People are born there, people die, people move, and people marry. We’re still struggling with causing the city to understand it’s not a static system” (Krause in Schreiber and Barry 2017: 12). Certificates are registered to the head of household, and VPUU made a decision to co-register women living in male-headed households, which changed the balance of power within the community (Brown and Gubevu 2014). Conflicts arose over intrafamily claims on the same structure. Along the way, the VPUU office was converted into a registry office with staff trained in conflict resolution, further cementing VPUU as a semi-governmental organization.

The interactive and evolving process was one of several factors that caused delays and contributed to an impasse in 2013, when it became apparent that technical implementation of infrastructures that respected tenancy patterns *in situ* was prohibitively expensive. VPUU was caught in between, and city planner Marco Geretto (quoted in Schreiber and Barry 2017: 17) concluded that “the softer, social engagement process had gotten ahead of the harder, rezoning and physical-development-planning process.”

**Discussion and conclusions**

Spotlighted by the 2014 WDC Cape Town, VPUU signals several of the issues for design today. Design is embedded in national and municipal strategy and profiling policies. Increasingly employed and institutionalized within formal government, design is moving upstream in policymaking processes. In addition to more traditional and tangible forms of design, recognized as part of strategies to control and steer people and populations, design within government and doing governance beyond government also includes less tangible and as yet less scrutinized forms and forums. Tracing this expansion of design, concepts such as ‘governmentality’ can also be expanded for analytic purposes in order to better understand the role and agency of design in government and governance. Physically and politically functioning as ‘governing matter,’ design policy, workshops, environments, infrastructures, organizations and processes should be understood and studied not (or not only) as objects but as instruments or, in the terms of Amin and Cirolia (2018: 287), “agents of government.”

The term ‘agent’ elicits the dimensions of power latent within and wielded by design forms and forums that function as intermediaries or interfaces between the state and the people. As unfolded above, VPUU was setup and conducted in ways that recognized and responded to a specific and politically-loaded history and context. It cannot be extricated from – indeed, as much development in South Africa, it is complicit with perpetuating – apartheid socio-spatial legacies. Post-apartheid state pledges are even less straightforward to deliver through ‘governmental arrangements’ that are distributed and fragmented across local and global territories, at various levels of society and across societal sectors, and increasingly measured merely in the terms of annual audits and short-sighted party politics. VPUU and its aims, such as ‘security,’ ‘health,’ ‘cohesion,’ and ‘enfranchisement,’ are instances among many that are “refracted through a variety of rhetorical, political, material and operational dynamics which cannot be easily boxed as Keynesian, neoliberal, neo-patrimonial or other similar political descriptor” (Amin and Cirolia 2018: 275). As a case for my research purposes here, VPUU, its history and context, throw into sharp relief some of the dynamics and tensions at stake when design claims and does the work of governance today.

An example such as VPUU, in addition to revealing political dimensions relevant to design, also exposes potential limits. It cannot solve or even counteract long-term historical and deep-rooted socio-spatial problems, and it operates within the perhaps unending struggle of those social groups that continue to suffer the most. The setup of VPUU SNACs can be criticized for excluding some organizations and residents; yet it was only SNAC and its (even if only partly-representative) membership standing in a circle around the tenure registry office that saved the residents’ documents from fire and invasion by hundreds of homeless people affiliated with the Economic Freedom Fighters political party in the in the run-up to the 2014 national elections (Schreiber and Barry 2017). Forms and forums always in- and exclude, in different ways at different times; the case of Khayelitsha reveals that there may be no universally ‘right’ choices.

Even if such examples cannot or do not effect macro-structural change, neither should they be used as excuses, glorifications or apologies for the withdrawal of the state or for non-state governance. Just as previous and other forms and forums of governance wield power and, potentially, violence upon people and populations, so can examples such as VPUU. In Khayelitsha, for example, changes in the (gender) balance of power were effected, and ‘harder’ things could not be guaranteed by VPUU in the tenure certification process. The interfaces and intermediary roles of VPUU reveal that design within government and as governance is risky, and, indeed, it can also put others at risk.

The particular example of VPUU also reveals a further political problematic for design. The critique of Barolsky (2016) and Barolsky and Borges (2019) raises questions about representation, discipline, tokenism and suppression, which could be lenses through which to analyze committee organization and certificate registries as well as, more generally, (in)formal social contracts, community projects, participatory and co-design processes. A complementary perspective is evident in a case study of another project in Khayelitsha by Massey (2013). Massey’s research reveals how associated governance models and practices do not recognize and, indeed, threaten women’s social networks, which operate both through formal groupings such as sewing groups, environmental advocacy, “stokvels” (savings groups), burial societies and community policing forums, and, informally, through friend, relative and neighbor networks that share child and elderly care, food and resources. These are generally relevant and important questions in political analyses of design forms and forums, which Massey clearly articulates in terms of conflicting “(govern)mentalities.”

A further, and even more fundamental, critique is articulated by Barolsky and Borges. They point out that the paradigmatic (Western and Northern) notion of government is premised on a “contractarian” imaginary of state and civil society, premised on an imaginary of the classic neo-liberal, self-governing, “responsible” citizen. Barolsky (2016) argues that the UN-Habitat model, Cape Town municipality and VPUU are steeped in a “managerialist” discourse that presumes and idealizes rational and transactional relationships between “free agents.” Such paradigms and assumptions, argue Barolsky and Borges, can be fundamentally at odds with the realities, worldviews and “indigenous” imaginaries within Khayelitsha and South Africa. Their critique resonates with McDonald’s (2012) arguments concerning “(de)Africanization.” “World city syndrome,” McDonald argued, can be a post-apartheid and generally neo-liberal strategy for containing and de-politicizing uneven and unjust geographic development, socio-economic and spatial inequalities. This points further political dimensions to consider in analyzing design and design policy, the WDO and WDCs.

*Conclusion*

Design organizations embedded in government and doing the work of governance mark a historical and categorical expansion in the role of design in society. Design, which arguably developed in the West as a discipline and service profession to the private sector during the Industrial Revolution, is arguably still mired in associated political-economic logics, ideologies and worldviews. Indeed, reflecting on their extensive studies from within the UK Policy Lab, Jocelyn Bailey (2017) and Lucy Kimbell and Bailey (2017) articulate the dangers of further encroachment of private-sector, market logics into government through design. Design theory and has not yet expanded toward increasingly relevant discourses such as political science, public administration and critical theory of planning (wherein ‘governmentality’ and other useful concepts are developed). Specifically concerning design within government and ‘design for policy’, emerging and important theorization still typically take place in terms of discourses of organizational studies and design management. This exposes an urgent gap between the rapidly expanded and globally-promoted professional practices of design and its rapidly outdated theoretical foundations.

**Acknowledgements**

My visit to Cape Town was part of the project ‘Designing Social Innovation’ funded at Interactive Institute Swedish ICT by the Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems (VINNOVA), led by myself and carried out as VINNMER Marie Skłodowska Curie research fellowship. Regarding Cape Town, I am grateful for the introductions and inspirational scholarship of Henrik Ernstson and for generous tips from Johanna Jarméus and Yvan Ikhlef (cf. Palmer and Nitsch 2012). Thank you to Jocelyn Bailey, Eeva Berglund, María Ferreira Litowtschenko, Guy Julier, Lucy Kimbell, Minh-Nguyet Le, Charlie Mealings and Yemima Safra for profound recent discussions on design, policy, governance and governmentality.

**References**

Amin, A., and Cirolia, L.R. (2018) ‘Politics/Matter: Governing Cape Town’s informal settlements,’ *Urban Studies* 55 (2): 274-295.

Bailey, J. (2017) ‘Exploring the implications of design in policymaking,’ in *Proceedings of the Nordic Design Research Society conference NORDES*, Oslo, Jun.

Barolsky, V. (2016) ‘Is Social Cohesion Relevant to a City in the Global South?,’ *SA Crime Quarterly* 55: 17-30.

Barolsky, V., and Borges, D. (2019) ‘Is Social Cohesion the Missing Link in Preventing Violence? Case studies from South Africa and Brazil,’ in *Reducing Urban Violence in the Global South*, edited by J. Salahub, M. Gottsbacher, J. de Boer, and M. Zaaroura, 104-132. London: Routledge.

Bason, C. (2016) *Design for Policy*, London: Routledge.

Bauer, B. (2010) ‘Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading: Experiences from financial cooperation.’ Frankfurt: KfW Bankengruppe Corporate Communication.

Berglund, E. (2013) ‘Design as Activism in Helsinki: Notes from the World Design Capital 2012,’ *Design and Culture* 5 (2): 195-214,

Brown-Luthango, M., and Gubevu, M. (2014) ‘Summary of Inputs and Main Discussion Points: ‘Urban violence, safety and governance,’ CityLab Meeting, African Center for Cities, University of Cape Town, Oct 30.

Brown-Luthango, M., Reyes, E., and Gubevu, M. (2016) ‘Informal settlement upgrading and safety: Experiences from Cape Town, South Africa,’ *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 32 (3): 471–493.

Cape Town Partnership (2011) ‘World Design Capital Bid Book,’ available at https://issuu.com/capetownpartnership/docs/question\_43\_no1.

EC (2013) ‘Implementing an Action Plan for Design-Driven Innovation,’ Commission Staff Working Document, Brussels.

Eliadis, P., Hill, M.M., and Howlett, M. (2007a) *Designing Government*. Québec: McGill -Queen’s University Press.

Eliadis, P., Hill, M.M., and Howlett, M. (2007b) ‘Introduction,’ in *Designing Government*, edited by P. Eliadis, M.M. Hill, and M. Howlett, 3-20. Québec: McGill-Queen’s University Press.

Foucault, M. (1991 [1978]) ‘Governmentality,’ in *The Foucault Effect: Studies on governmentality*, edited by G. Burchell, C. Gordon, and P. Miller, 87-104. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Foucault, M. (1995 [1975]) ‘Panopticism,’ in *Discipline & Punish: The birth of the prison*, translated by A. Sheridan, 195-228. Vintage Books, 1995.

Graham, A., Giles, C., Krause, M., and Lange, U. (2011) ‘Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading in Khayelitscha, Cape Town, South Africa: Achievements and trends of a bilateral financial cooperation programme,’ in *Proceedings of the International Crime Prevention*. Forum Mönchengladbach, DE: Verlag Godesberg GmbH.

Julier, G. (2016) *Economies of Design*. London: Sage.

Keshavarz, M. (2016) ‘Design-Politics,’ PhD Diss., Malmö University, Malmö, SE.

Keshavarz, M., and Mazé, R. (2013) ‘Design and Dissensus: Framing and staging participation in design research,’ *Design Philosophy Papers* 1: 7-29.

Kimbell, L., and Bailey, J. (2017) ‘Prototyping and the New Spirit of Policy-Making,’ *CoDesign* 13 (3): 214-226.

Ley, A. (2009) ‘Housing as Governance: Interfaces between local governance and civil society organizations in Cape Town, South Africa,’ PhD Diss., Technischen Universität Berlin, DE.

Lloyd, S., and Matzopoulos, R. (2018) ‘Preventing Violence in Cape Town: The public-health approach,’ in *Reducing Urban Violence in the Global South*, edited by J. Salahub, M. Gottsbacher, J. de Boer, and M. Zaaroura, 183-207. London: Routledge.

Massey, R. (2013) ‘Competing Rationalities and Informal Settlement Upgrading in Cape Town, South Africa,’ *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment* 28: 605-613.

McDonald, D.A. (2012) *World City Syndrome: Neoliberalism and inequality in Cape Town*. London: Routledge.

Palmer, H., and Nitsch, K. (2012) ‘Commons in Cape Town,’ Stockholm: Royal Institute of Art.

Piper, L. (2012). ‘Development Trustees Not Rent-Seeking Deployees: The designed meaning of community participation in the Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading Project (VPUU) in Cape Town, South Africa,’ unpublished paper.

Republic of South Africa (1976) *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Matters Relating to the Coloured Population Group*. Pretoria: Government Printer, RP 38/1976.

Shearing, C., and Wood, J. (2003) ‘Nodal Governance, Democracy, and the New “Denizens”,’ *Journal of Law and Society* 30 (3): 400-419.

Schreiber, L. and Barry, M. (2017) ‘Land Rights in the Township: Building incremental tenure in Cape Town, South Africa, 2009-2016,’ Innovations for Successful Societies, Princeton University, available at http://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/.

Sloterdijk, P. (2005) ‘Atmospheric Politics,’ *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of democracy*, edited by B. Latour and P. Weibel, 994-1003. Cambridge, US: MIT Press.

Tunstall, E. (2007) ‘In Design We Trust: Design, governmentality, and the tangibility of governance,’ in *Proceedings of International Association of Societies of Design Research IASDR* conference, Hong Kong, CH.

Uğur, L.K. (2014) ‘Beyond the Pilot: Towards broad-based integrated violence prevention in South Africa,’ MSc thesis, Technische Universität Darmstadt, DE.

UN-Habitat (2001) *Cities in a Globalizing World*. London: Earthscan.

van der Post, L. (2014) ‘Cape Town: World Design Capital 2014,’ *Financial Times*, available at https://www.ft.com/content/e8abc21c-b371-11e3-bc21-00144feabdc0

WDO, ‘Design Policy Conference,’ available at http://wdo.org/programmes/wdc/past-cities/wdctorino2008/

WDO, ‘Open Design Cape Town’ video, available at http://wdo.org/programmes/wdc/past-cities/wdccapetown2014/.

Winner, L. (1980) ‘Do Artifacts Have Politics?,’ *Daedalus* 109 (1): 121-136.

Winner, L. (1995) ‘Political Ergonomics,’ in *Discovering Design: Explorations in Design Studies*, edited by R. Buchanan and V. Margolin, 146-170. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.