



them at a distinct disadvantage in securing a rightful place in the city through regular work, authorized residential accommodation, and access to infrastructure and social services. The banality of such exclusionary practices makes it seem that the plight of the urban poor is somehow natural, inevitable, or unavoidable. Those city dwellers who are without work, without officially sanctioned shelter, and without the requisite social capital to buy a place in the city, find themselves continuously off balance, out of place, and on the move. In the headlong pursuit of the ephemeral status of world-class city, the urban poor have become expendable, sacrificed on the altar of urban progress and revitalization.

Yet the urban landscape is always a contested terrain, where the propertied, privileged, and powerful seek to establish one set of rules governing the use of urban space that is compatible with their city vision, and, conversely, the propertyless, underprivileged, and powerless make use of whatever means are at their disposal to challenge the status quo. In other words, official efforts aimed at imposing a coherent spatial order on the cityscape are never frictionless undertakings with uncontested outcomes. Building the planned (or figured) city is always mirrored in the simultaneous growth and development of the unplanned (or disfigured) city. Municipal authorities, urban planners, and city officials invariably encounter opposition, ranging from noncompliance to outright resistance. In this sense all cities lead what amounts to an unsettling double life: the unintended use of urban space always operates in tandem—as a kind of parallel dimension of everyday life in the city—with the official version of the orderly cityscape. By utilizing urban space in ways that facilitate their immediate survival needs, the urban poor have transformed the cityscape—not through a significant alteration of the physical environment but through a redefinition of it. The urban poor make use of the cityscape in ways never intended by its original builders, planners, and designers. This steady encroachment of ordinary people on the officially sanctioned prerogatives of the propertied, privileged, and powerful constitutes a formidable social force in its own right (Bayat 1997a, 57; 1997b; Baviskar 2003; Staub 2005).

## 1

## Social Justice and the Rights to the City

*The right to the city is like a cry and a demand, ... a transformed and renewed right to urban life.*

HENRI LEFEBVRE (1996, 158)

In linking geographical mobility with contemporary globalization, Zygmunt Bauman (1998, 77) has declared, “Nowadays we are all on the move.” In distinguishing between different groups of mobile travelers, Bauman divides people on the move into affluent tourists and impoverished vagabonds, that is, between those who travel from place to place as “vicarious or actual privileged consumers of the world as a globalized spectacle” and those uprooted, desperate people who are forced to move by straightened circumstances beyond their control (quotation from Faulkner 2004, 93). For affluent tourists, faster forms of travel, streamlined border controls, and a ballooning service industry catering to their every need and desire have transformed what were once inaccessible places into exotic adventure lands for the leisure class. In contrast, the movement of vagabonds takes place out of necessity, not as a consequence of the calculated choice of consumer preference. As Bauman (1998, 94) puts it, “the vagabond is the alter ego of the tourist.” While tourists and vagabonds are separated by their dissimilar experiences of travel, their movements within the global economy are structured and shaped by overlapping and intersecting forces that allow a privileged few to enjoy the freedom of movement and at the same time deny these options to others. Indeed, the expansion of global spheres of privilege not only enables the temporary translocation of the tourist but also acts to limit the freedom (and choice) of movement of the world’s poor. Whereas affluent travelers can subject their choice of destination to the rational calculation of consumer preference, the rootless poor are often forced to move against their will (Faulkner 2004, 93–94).

Pulled by the illusive dream of steady income or pushed by despair and hopelessness, tens of thousands of recent arrivals have come to the greater

Johannesburg metropolitan region in search of a better life. Yet opportunities for socioeconomic advancement are largely restricted to those urban residents with inherited wealth, talents, and educational attainment. Johannesburg after apartheid has metamorphosed into a city where sociospatial stratification, racial inequality, and marginalization have become entrenched features of the urban landscape. An intricate mosaic consisting of an overlapping grid of legally sanctioned property regimes, statutory regulations, zoning ordinances, and institutionally enforced bylaws has helped to generate and reinforce these pervasive urban processes that have reconfigured the spatial landscape. Johannesburg is a city almost entirely constructed around a forbidding architecture of enclosure. The gradual expansion of such fortified urban enclaves as citadel office complexes, city improvement districts, gated residential communities, and sequestered shopping malls have produced a spatially uneven and hierarchically arranged landscape where large-scale property owners—protected by legally sanctioned barriers to entry, restrictive covenants, and exclusionary codes—clash with the claims of the propertyless urban dwellers who assert their right to the city by demanding a more egalitarian and collective understanding of land use (Blomley 2004, xiii–xxi).

### Exclusionary Urbanism and Spatial Injustice

In Johannesburg as elsewhere, the technocratic urge toward eliminating ambiguity, indeterminacy, and uncertainty in urban space is an ingrained habit of city building. Seen through the moralizing lens of those planning discourses that stress the need to maintain the orderly city, displacement mutates into spatial purification. The paranoid vision of workless legions of rootless vagabonds wandering aimlessly around the city has played a pivotal role in the construction of the postapartheid identity of the propertied residents of middle-class suburban neighborhoods. Middle-class anxiety about the dangerous city has spilled over into a visceral distrust, resentment, and indifference to the plight of the poor. As propertied and privileged urban residents retreat behind walls, the jobless poor are forced to survive in the atrophying public spaces of the city, with their deteriorating infrastructure, inadequate services, and limited opportunities for income generation.

Displaced persons have little choice but to continue carrying out what amounts to a nomadic existence shuffling between the cracks and crevices of social space. In contrast to the mapped and monitored spaces of sovereignty and municipal authority, the lived spaces of the displaced—the temporary shelters, the squatter camps, the unauthorized shantytowns, abandoned buildings, parks, cemeteries, prisons—exemplify the marginalization of those for whom there is no rightful place in the city. These dispersed, pulverized,

indeterminate spaces constitute the “Invisible City,” and they exist outside the boundaries of official scrutiny and institutional governance. Those who occupy these marginal sites are “both invisible and too visible.” Even if their voices are not silenced, their protests and complaints are largely unheard—and hence unrecognized (Delaney 2004, 847–848; see also Kihato and Landau 2005; Landau 2005, 2006; Groth and Corijn 2005).

In the past several decades, displacement has emerged as one of the most persistent themes in human rights law, as well as a central focus in the scholarly fields of migration, diasporic, and refugee studies. Such scholarship has been instrumental in prompting a greater interest in questions of the forced mobility of unwilling subjects, along with the linkage of these concerns to discourses of social justice and universal human rights, citizenship, and national belonging (Bales 2004; Bauman 2003; Landau 2006; Ong 1999; Simone and Gotz 2003). As a conceptual framing device, displacement is linked to various modalities of coercive movement, the spatialization of power, and the in-fra-politics of inclusion and exclusion. In a global age that typically celebrates hypermobility as the emblematic embodiment of personal and collective freedom, displacement focuses instead on mobility as a distinctive kind of coerced movement, “as against the will or wishes of subjects” (Delaney 2004, 848) who, because they are deemed to be out of place, are compelled to relocate. As a concrete manifestation of enforced deterritorialization, displacement draws attention to the microtechnologies of power, or how people are denied entry or removed against their will. The spatial practices of expulsion and exclusion blend together in ways that bring to light the capillaries of the workings of power hidden in everyday life (Delaney 2004, 848).

Viewing displacement through the prism of an inaugural or threshold episode, such as the moment of eviction, forced removal, deportation, expulsion, or arrest, has the effect of reducing what is less a singular event than an ongoing state of being, or what sometimes becomes a permanent condition of existence (Kawash 1998). Displaced people—those who are uprooted and evicted—are literally put into motion, compelled to be constantly on the move in search of work, adequate shelter, and access to basic resources. Often it is brute force that operates as the active agency behind displacement: people flee or retreat when “confronted with men with guns” (Delaney 2004, 849). Yet undue stress on the threat or use of physical violence as the *driving force* behind coerced movement overlooks the ordinariness and banality of displacement as an integral element of everyday life. Coerced movement is also brought about by the persuasive force of reason, or the application of legal authority: the enforcement of such routine regulations as municipal bylaws, statutes, immigration laws, and health and safety codes, can result, no less than the use of physical violence, in the dispersal and coercive scattering of people (Delaney 2004, 849; Mbembe 1992).



Assorted figures of displacement—the unemployed, those who occupy abandoned buildings, asylum seekers, undocumented immigrants, refugees, runaway youth, prostitutes, and the itinerant traders—inhabit a material world that is saturated with the legal signifiers of property and ownership, sovereignty and territorial governance, nationhood and citizenship. This inextricable conjunction of spatial emplacement and legal rights makes the lifeworlds of city dwellers meaningful in terms of the exercise, circulation, and justification of power. The ever-shifting interplay between material locations and legal signifiers renders ostensibly equal city dwellers legible as either legitimate city users (citizens, property owners, consumers, tenants, and guests) or illegitimate occupiers of urban space (undocumented immigrants, trespassers, squatters, or itinerant traders). Those who do not belong or are out of place are subject to removal and expulsion, exclusion and banishment (Blomley 2003; Flusty 2001; Landau 2005, 2006).

For newcomers to the city and for young people entering adulthood, social integration into the mainstream of urban life generally occurs through a combination of overlapping mechanisms: absorption into the everyday world of regular work, incorporation into the market for decent and affordable housing, and access to reliable physical and social infrastructure (piped water and sewerage, electrical power, social services such as health, education, welfare, and police and fire protection). These three mechanisms of social inclusion—steady income, decent housing, and access to basic urban services—intersect and complement one another. In combination, they anchor urban residents into a relatively stable place in the sociocultural fabric of the city. The rootedness in place—linked as it is to the materiality of locality and a sense of belonging—enables urban residents to mobilize and tap into the kinds of social networks necessary for their material survival (Keyder 2005, 124–125, 127).

Conversely, social exclusion refers to a failure of the mechanisms of social integration to incorporate the urban poor into the mainstream of urban life. The shrinkage of wage-paid employment under juridical-legal supervision, the lack of affordable residential accommodation, and highly restricted access to the physical and social infrastructure of the city has rendered the daily lives of the urban poor vulnerable in the extreme. Without regular work, authorized shelter, and basic social services, the urban poor are cast adrift from the ties that bind them to the urban fabric (Kihato and Landau 2005; Landau 2005, 2006).

The variegated multitudes of impoverished urban residents have crystallized into a permanent underclass, constantly moving back and forth between casual and informal work, self-employment, and unemployment, largely dependent on the outside assistance of others for their survival (Rogerson 1996b; Keyder 2005, 132). Displacement, exclusion, and marginalization of this propertyless underclass are the result of both deliberate policy choices of property

owners and municipal authorities and the everyday operations of property regimes, land markets, and the legal enforcement of codes, regulations, and bylaws. The visible expressions of revanchist urbanism—such as forced removals of homeless squatters from unauthorized settlements and arresting vagrants and beggars—constitute a war on the poor (Smith 1996, 1998). Municipal authorities have effectively criminalized the urban poor by treating the structural problems that arise from unemployment and poverty as matters of law enforcement. In the official mind popular illegalities such as drug dealing, prostitution, sleeping in public parks, erecting curbside stalls on the pavements, and panhandling, contribute to the disorderly city and therefore must be eradicated in order to fashion a cityscape that conforms to middle-class sensibilities (Merrifield 2000; Mitchell 1997).

But to focus exclusively on the draconian measures designed to drive the urban poor out of the city ignores the everyday routines that make it virtually impossible for the truly disadvantaged to survive in the city. The triumphant rise of market liberalism has tied the provision of such basic urban services as water, electricity, education, health care, and welfare to the commercial ethos of supply and demand. The commodification of urban services—with its “pay-as-you-go” logic of cost recovery—has driven a wedge between the haves and the have-nots. The inosculated overlay of property regimes, restrictive covenants, city bylaws, and land-use regulations has ensured that unwanted and undesirable people are denied entry to the fashionable zones of the urban landscape.

At a time characterized by diasporic peoples, hybrid subjects, and porous borders, it is not possible to understand or make sense of displacement and exclusion simply or exclusively in terms of citizenship and national belonging (Merry 2001; Sanchez 1997, 2001). Rather, new modes of urban governance have come to depend on strategies of spatial governmentality, that is, the adoption of regulatory techniques that aim “to manage populations in place” by grafting technologies of sociospatial control with discourses of community, risk minimalization, and security (Sanchez 2004, 871). These new modes of spatial governance operate along the lines of *legitimacy*, that is, on what side of the *criminal* law one stands. As a central organizing principle governing the use of urban space, exclusion revolves around the question of legality. The identification, categorization, and differentiation of urban space in terms of which city dwellers are legally entitled to use particular places has the effect of criminalizing some individuals and their behaviors while incorporating others “into the domain of the city” (Sanchez 2004, 866).

As part of a wider deployment of a range of technologies of control, spatial governmentality depends on a delicate balance between differential inclusion and differential exclusion. The theory and practice of differential inclusion rest on a hierarchical classification of social collectivities in terms of the relative

value and usefulness of their labor power at any given historical moment. In contrast, the theory and practice of differential exclusion direct their attention toward supernumerary urban dwellers, that is, those “surplus people” whose numbers are deemed excessive and whose working capacity is superfluous from the vantage point of their failed absorption into existing labor markets. The urban poor who inhabit unauthorized squatter encampments, who invade abandoned buildings, and who sleep on the sidewalks typically survive outside the law and the legitimacy and entitlements it provides. Enforcement of the plethora of municipal statutes, city laws, and health and safety regulations that outlaw such practices as constructing self-built shelters in unauthorized places, occupying abandoned buildings or vacant lots, sleeping on city sidewalks or in public parks, curbside trading, begging and panhandling, selling drugs, and prostitution constitutes a form of spatial governance that seeks to draw a protective boundary between the everyday spaces of privileged, propertied urban residents and the bare life of those whose toil is not counted as legitimate work. As an expression of municipal authority, power operates both as a totalizing force of urban order and discipline and as an individualizing mechanism that divides and differentiates the urban poor into different legal categories and classifications by criminalizing their survivalist strategies. In other words, power is efficacious because it defines who belongs and who does not, and because it differentiates between what rights to the city are legitimate and which are not. Because of their precarious existence at the margins of urban life, the urban poor are forced into a constant struggle to be *less excluded*. Exclusionary practices are effective precisely because they operate partially and differentially for different categories of the urban poor, thereby turning the struggles of displaced persons into a competition to be less excluded than someone else. Put in another way, exclusion thus becomes a matter of degree and distance. For the urban poor, it is the degree of exclusion and distance from the rights and privileges of citizenship that help to explain its efficacy. For the practice of exclusion is far more effective a strategy for keeping the urban poor off balance if “it is not an all-or-nothing proposition,” as Lisa Sanchez contends, “if it instills and perpetuates a hierarchy of the excluded who stand divided against power and who have a partial stake, a glimmer or hope, relative to those more excluded, of achieving inclusion and legitimacy” (Sanchez 2004, 881).

### **The Politics of Location: Struggling to Survive in the Depleted Landscapes of Despair**

Like sprawling urban agglomerations elsewhere, Johannesburg after apartheid has been subjected to the twin pressures of order and disorder. Ordinary

people—those whose marginal existence has been overlooked in the official planning scenarios—have encroached upon the interstitial spaces of the city, infringed upon official regulations governing the proper use of urban space, and intruded into orderly places where they are not wanted. The unsatisfied demand for proper residential accommodation has led to the proliferation of illegal building occupations, unauthorized shantytowns, and unofficial, informal settlements. The lack of wage-paying employment has forced discouraged work seekers into the bloated informal sector where they compete for space in already overcrowded niche markets. The legal geographies of various regulatory regimes have effectively criminalized all sorts of activities closely associated with the survival strategies of the urban poor, adding another layer of vulnerability to their daily existence (Landau 2005; Baviskar 2003).

Despite some notable achievements in assistance programs designed to bring relief to the “poorest of the poor,” Johannesburg after apartheid has remained a city where those residents who occupy the bottom rungs of the socioeconomic ladder have to scramble to find even a precarious foothold in the furious race for space and work. The inability of the municipality to keep up with the demand for low-cost housing has ensured that unauthorized, informal settlements are the only possible option for shelter. While the official gaze of urban planners looks on these encroachments as disfiguring the urban landscape, the urban poor have little choice but to take advantage of whatever opportunities for enterprise present themselves. The spatial unevenness accompanying the implementation of different strategies for disciplining the urban poor has left room for negotiation and accommodation in some places, while making violence and repression inevitable in others (Bremner 1999, 2002).

The conjoined practices of social exclusion, marginalization, and isolation do not exist in a vacuum. Instead they are embedded in a network of social practices that, taken together, constitute a contested field of sociocultural action whereby the propertied, privileged, and powerful seek to maintain (and even extend) the prevailing hierarchies and structural imbalances in the social order and, conversely, the propertyless, underprivileged, and powerless employ whatever means are at their disposal to challenge the status quo. Social collectivities such as trade unions, mass political parties, and social movements make use of conventional avenues of mobilization and popular protest, including strikes and work stoppages, political rallies, street demonstrations, and mass marches, in order to press for the redress of grievances. In contrast, such structurally atomized individuals as the unemployed and the unemployable, homeless squatters, curbside hawkers, itinerant work seekers, casual toilers, informal workers, migrants, refugees, immigrants, and other socially marginalized and excluded people constitute free-floating social clusters that operate

outside the formal institutional frameworks of organized workplaces, schools, and associations. This fluid condition of peripatetic nomadism means that these groups therefore lack the institutional capacities necessary for sustained, coordinated, and collective demand-making protests, since they do not possess the organizational power of disruption—that is, the means to withhold critical resources on which others depend. Instead they rely on various kinds of individualized direct action that Asef Bayat (1997a, 57; see also 1997b) has characterized as the “silent encroachment of the ordinary”—the intractable, molecular, protracted, patient, and persistent infringement of ordinary people on the prerogatives of the propertied, privileged, and powerful in order to survive socioeconomic hardships and to improve their lives. For the most part, these modes of everyday struggle are sufficiently fluid, open ended, and fleeting that they escape notice. In this sense they constitute what James Scott (1990, 118–119) has termed an “infrapolitics of the powerless.” These kinds of everyday encroachments typically take place without clearly defined leadership, coherent ideology, or structured organization (Bayat 1997a, 1997b).

Instead of constituting a central part of self-conscious political campaigns directed at the entrenched sources of urban power, these individualized actions are aimed primarily at extracting incremental concessions from property owners and city officials, where these marginalized, disenfranchised, and subaltern groups are driven primarily by the force of necessity—the need to survive and to live a dignified life (Bremner 2002). The institutionalized powerlessness of the urban poor is compensated for in their versatility and inventiveness in taking direct action, whether it is individual or collective, piecemeal or dramatic. These free-forming and largely spontaneous activities are directed primarily at the redistribution of social goods, including the unlawful and direct appropriation of means to life (squatting in unused buildings, tapping into electricity lines), the acquisition of objects of collective consumption (land, shelter, piped water, sanitation facilities, building materials), access to social services (schooling, health clinics, family assistance), encroachment on public space (sidewalks, street pavements, intersections, parks, parking lots), and the seizure of opportunities for petty entrepreneurialism (Bayat 1997a, 59).

All in all, these quotidian acts of insubordination, noncompliance, and transgression are linked to demands for official recognition of individual as well as collective rights to the city, that is, the capacity of ordinary people to participate in and enjoy the social benefits of inhabiting urban space (Emdon 2003; Kihato and Landau 2005; Pile 1997). What compels these disparate groups to adopt these largely spontaneous modes of small-scale direct action is not only the desire for an alternative mode of life but also the lack of institutional supports and conventional mechanisms through which they can collectively express their grievances and legitimately resolve their problems. In the official

mind, these “silent encroachments of the ordinary” disrupt and destabilize the urban social fabric. Municipal authorities, urban planners, and law enforcement officials are virtually unanimous in their distain for these unauthorized and often lawless actions, condemning them for disturbing their idealized vision of what the urban landscape should be and how it should function (Bayat 1997a, 58).

In order to survive, ordinary people who are excluded from the world of regular work, who are denied access to social services, and who are unable to afford decent housing must move through and transform urban space. Through their disruptions of the stylized aesthetics of what a good city should look like, these expressions of “insurgent urbanism” offer a resistant alternative to the institutionalized domain and dominant principles of planned urban development (Sandercock 1998b, 120–121; Holston 1999, 157–158, 165). In their struggles to carve out alternate ways of living, the urban poor engage in a politics of location, that is, a politics of lived spaces. These mobile tactics (at once blurred, awkward, and ambivalent) frustrate the efforts of urban planners to fix boundaries, regulate the authorized use of space, and facilitate movement and circulation. In the official mind, these spatial transgressions of the urban poor disrupt and destabilize the urban social fabric. As a consequence, conventional urban planning discourses construct unflattering images of the urban poor as outsiders who have transgressed spatial boundaries where they are not wanted and hence do not belong to the city. These demeaning stereotypes serve to legitimate municipal intervention into the life-worlds of the urban poor, where the criminalization of their survival tactics creates outcast groups of alleged lawbreakers (Bayat 1997a, 58).

### **Managing the Fragmented City: Locating Citizenship in the Postliberal City**

Everyday space is not only not self-evidently innocent but also bound into various and diverse social and psychic dynamics of subjectivity and power.

GILLIAN ROSE (1993, 37)

Captivated by the desire to propel Johannesburg into the lofty status of a world-class city, municipal authorities, urban planners, and city boosters have inscribed the story of the postapartheid metropolis in the conjoined narrative of developmentalism, cosmopolitanism, and modernity. But this trope of world-class city, as a specific modality of linear temporality, is not simply about making requisite improvements to the physical infrastructure, creating sites of luxurious spectacle, and introducing signature architecture. It is also about subjecting urban residents to a life-aesthetic that effectively transforms them



into law-abiding, model citizens who spontaneously and obediently comply with the normative ideals about how a good city should function. In other words, it is about regulating, managing, and controlling the ways that urban residents meet their daily needs in proper and moral ways. Yet for the urban poor, everyday survival largely consists of associating and moving in ways that are not conducive to such notions of citizenship (Simone 2002, 30–31; 2003; 2004c).

With its permeable boundaries and porous borders, Johannesburg has evolved over the past several decades in ways that urban planners could not have foreseen, let alone managed or controlled. Hence it is not surprising that recurrent, proleptic visions of a stable and orderly city have been tempered by an uneasy sense of imminent crisis and potential breakdown. Despite the elegance of their future projections, urban planning practices always come face-to-face with the countervailing impulses of antiplanning: the corrosive effects of unexpected friction, disruption, and resistance brought about by the stubborn refusal or reluctance of ordinary people to conform to the established rules governing the use of urban space. Urban planning regimes typically fail to grasp how the exercise of administrative power is necessarily open to inconsistencies, fissures, and ambivalences that allow for the emergence and persistence of an unanticipated, spontaneous urbanism (Pile 1997). City dwellers who lack places of their own have little choice but to opportunistically take advantage of overlooked gaps in existing power grids to reappropriate and reanimate indeterminate spaces, remaking them to serve their immediate needs (Groth and Corijn 2005, 503–505; Pile 1997). These improvised, extemporaneous expressions of the lived city constitute a perplexing paradox for urban planning practices. On the one hand, municipal authorities in Johannesburg have remained committed to eradicating the structural imbalances put in place under white minority rule and to addressing the plight of the poorest of the poor. These bottom-up reappropriations of indeterminate spaces reflect the inability of municipal planning practices to accommodate the needs of the urban poor, and their failure undermines the political legitimacy of the city administration. On the other hand, the capacity of informal actors and the urban poor to evade the municipality's disciplinary apparatus exposes the inherent weakness of urban regulation: the inability of the urban planning regime to obtain the normative ideal of governable subjects. These improvised expressions of the lived city project onto space and time an alternative mode of living in the city that challenges institutionalized authority and the dominant principles of planned urban development (Groth and Corijn 2005, 503–505; Simone 2001a, 2001b, 2002).

In Johannesburg after apartheid city builders have focused on reshaping the negative image and rejuvenating the neglected built form of the central city

(Bremner 2000, 185–193). These “imagineering efforts” encompass the disparate activities of all those cultural producers who create the discursive fields in which the practices of urban revitalization are conceptualized, debated, and transformed into facts on the ground (Rutheiser 1986). The key figures involved in imagineering efforts include city officials, urban planners, large-scale property owners, real estate developers, and corporate builders, along with their hired cadres of architects, landscape designers, engineers, advertising experts, real estate agents, and public relations specialists. This assortment of individuals in no way constitutes a unified group with a common ideology and common interests. Nonetheless, differences of professional identity and conflicts of interest are frequently transcended by a shared belief in the same strategic vision of Johannesburg after apartheid as a socially progressive, racially harmonious, aspirant world-class city with a postindustrial, high-tech future of cosmopolitan urbanity (see Rutheiser 1999, 322–323).

The new ethos of privatized urbanism has gone hand in hand with a shift to postmanagerial modes of urban governance, an emphasis on downtown renaissance, and the privatization (or commercialization) of municipal services. Instead of cultivating the enlargement and upgrading of urban public space, the entrepreneurial agenda has fostered new kinds of fortified urbanism: siege architecture and its disciplinary technologies (electronic surveillance and monitoring of movement) combined with the use of legal remedies to construct purified spaces cleansed of the unwanted urban poor. This “annihilation of space by law” entails the criminalization of the survivalist strategies of the urban poor, including the adoption of legal sanctions that restrict the use of post-public spaces (Mitchell 1997, 303).<sup>1</sup> In seeking to eliminate indeterminacy from the cityscape, urban planners typically call for a hardening of the urban landscape, looking for a reinforcement of boundaries and distinctions (Mitchell 2003, 381). The presence of homeless people, beggars, and idle youth across the urban landscape is the visible expression of joblessness and persistent poverty. Typically employing rhetoric that is couched in such phrases as “reclaiming the streets for law-abiding citizens” or “promoting the quality of urban life,” property owners and city officials have exploited “compassion fatigue,” or the growing intolerance that alleges a widespread erosion of public sympathy for the homeless and the unemployed. This new realism has bred a kind of callous indifference to the plight of the poor and the downtrodden, who come to be regarded as a nuisance. With the selective appropriation of a punitive or revanchist political repertoire, propertied urban residents

1. Ideas derived from interview with John Penberthy, Business Against Crime, June 19, 2003, and interview with Nazira Cachalia, program manager, City Safety Programme, City of Johannesburg, May 30, 2006. The interpretation is entirely mine.

have turned away from concerns with the protection and expansion of the rights of the most disadvantaged and instead have endorsed spatial strategies designed to keep the poor, the unemployed, and the unwanted out of their privatized places of work, residence, and entertainment (Mitchell 2001, 71). In this wholesale embrace of the enterprise culture, the imperative to appease entrenched business interests, along with the clamor to adopt fiscal austerity measures, has trumped the well-meaning political efforts to extend the rights of social citizenship, including the provision of basic social services, to the neediest urban residents (MacLeod 2002, 609–610).

The steady expansion of enclosed spaces—such social gathering places as upscale shopping malls and leisure and entertainment sites for affluent urbanites—represents the materialization of class privilege. Restricted entry to these places serves to communicate a sense of hierarchical space. Yet the ingenuity of these prohibitions, by their combination of strict enforcement and capriciousness, has managed to demonstrate in a concrete way the absolutist nature of regimes of private property. Rules, regulations, and restrictions function as constant reminders to the poor and unwanted that there are some barriers, no matter how trivial, that they overstep at their own peril (Bremner 2002; Landau 2006; Kaviraj 1997, 87). While they have jettisoned racial segregation as the principal regulative principle governing the use of urban space, municipal authorities after apartheid have nevertheless introduced new codes and sanctions that have reinforced the powers of exclusion. This hierarchical differentiation of the urban landscape has crystallized into a new post-public cityscape where the suffocation of public space has gone hand in hand with the steady accretion of privatized places with restricted access (Lipman and Harris 1999).

Under white minority rule the so-called nonwhite majority of the South African people experienced citizenship negatively, that is, as a package of formal rights and entitlements of which they were deprived. A central element of the antiapartheid struggle was the demand for universal citizenship rights in an undivided South Africa. In postapartheid South Africa, as elsewhere, there is an unresolved tension between the unconditional values and universal human rights that citizenship embodies and “the sociohistorical conditions of its appearance” (Bouillon 2002, 81). This opposition between citizenship as an ontological status grounded in a “statutory body of inalienable rights” (Bouillon 2002, 81) and citizenship as a contingent praxis, or the practical enunciation of what it means to belong to a place, lies at the heart of ongoing struggles over what Henri Lefebvre (1996, 173–174, 195) has called “the right to the city.” Competitive battles over which urban residents have legitimate access to and rights over specific places and available resources constitute the central dynamic of what it means to belong to the city. For Lefebvre, the right to the city is linked to claims of city dwellers to a legitimate presence in the

city through the appropriation of urban spaces. Conversely, the right to the city legitimates the refusal of city dwellers to be excluded or removed from “the networks or circuits of communication, information, and exchange” that endow urban places with their meaning (Lefebvre 1996, 173–174, 195). In the postliberal city, everyday practices of exclusion and marginalization effectively qualify citizenship rights by making formal entitlements conditional on securing legitimate access to places and resources. Excluded from or chased out of places in the city, the urban poor have little choice but to try to reshape the locations where they find refuge in order to meet their immediate needs for shelter and for other basic resources. Taken together, these efforts of the urban poor to appropriate spaces of the city, to transform them and use them in ways designed to ensure their everyday survival constitutes what James Holston (1999, 157–158, 165) has called “spaces of insurgent citizenship.”

The demise of classical liberal modes of thought has gone hand in hand with the shifting meanings of citizenship (Ong 1999). New strategies of postliberal urban governance “conceive of citizens, individually and collectively, as ideally and potentially ‘active’ in their own [self-management]” (Rose 2000, 97). By ceasing to be a possession defined by simple rights of persons, citizenship becomes a capacity to act in relation to the particular circumstances in which individuals find themselves. By extending the logic of competitive marketplace into arenas previously monopolized by the municipality, new modes of urban governance have fostered a kind of entrepreneurial citizenship in which calculating actors strive to realize and actualize themselves through the range of choices available to them. This radical transformation from citizenship as possession to citizenship as capacity, as Nikolas Rose (2000, 99) puts it, “is embodied in the image of the active and entrepreneurial citizen who seeks to maximize his or her lifestyle through acts of choice, linked not so much into a homogeneous social field as into overlapping but incommensurate communities of allegiance and moral obligation.” In the postliberal city the practice of citizenship involves enrolling alert citizens in an active engagement with minimization of risk and maximization of choice, whether through Safer Cities initiatives or Neighborhood Watch groups or through private schooling or participation in contractual associations (such as gated residential communities). By attaching itself to the popular rhetoric embodied in such slogans as “zero tolerance” and “no broken windows,” this entrepreneurial image of citizenship seeks to awaken a sense of individual moral obligation and responsibility directed at the policing of personal conduct. The postliberal vision of a purified, hygienic, moral space inhabited by a well-regulated citizenry serves to justify and legitimate the spatial exclusion of anti-citizens—those who threaten the project of citizenship itself—from the alleged virtuous places of the city (Rose 2000, 97, 99, 103, 106; Merrifield 2000; Smith 1998).

The new ethos of municipal governance represents a sea change in official thinking whereby the strict assignment and enforcement of individual responsibility has replaced the emphasis on communal and collective values (Brodie 2000, 124). But unlike the minimalist night-watchman state imagined by conventional advocates of neoliberal policies, these new modes of post-liberal urban governance have defined a new role for municipal agencies and bureaucracies as active partners in managing the affairs of the city, seeking to facilitate, enable, shape, and stimulate the self-governing activities of a multitude of dispersed entities—associations, business enterprises, communities, and collectivities of all kinds—who assume for themselves many of the powers, responsibilities, and duties previously controlled by municipal authorities. The characteristic features of these new strategies of urban governance are familiar: downsizing and streamlining the bureaucratic administration of the municipality, decentralizing decision making, devolving power to intermediate bodies (such as public-private partnerships, trusts, and associations), privatizing many functions of the municipal machinery and exposing them to marketplace pressures and entrepreneurial styles of management, introducing managerialism and competitive pressures to guide policy decisions, and displacing the monopoly of knowledge controlled by state functionaries with the knowledge of review generated by financial experts and paid consultants. These new modes of urban governance not only pluralize the agencies and bureaucratic bodies involved in municipal administration, but also introduce novel kinds of monitoring, regulation, and control through the techniques of the new public management. All in all, this shift from old-style managerialism to competitive entrepreneurialism requires a “reduction in the scope of direct management of [urban] affairs by state-organized programmes and technologies, and an increase in the extent to which the government of diverse domains is enacted by the decisions and choices of relatively autonomous entities” (Rose 2000, 96–97; see also Harvey 1989b, 3–7).

### **Citizens without a City: The Ontological Insecurity of Irregular Work and Impermanent Shelter**

The breeding places of disease, the infamous holes and cellars in which the capitalist mode of production confines our workers night after night, are not abolished; they are merely *shifted elsewhere!*

FRIEDRICH ENGELS (1970, 74)

Johannesburg has come to resemble what urban theorists have called the “dual city”: the urban expression of multiform processes of spatial restructuring whereby two equally dynamic sectors—the high-flying, information-based

formal economy and the downgraded, labor-based informal economy—co-exist, intersect, and interact, albeit in highly uneven ways. The aesthetics of consumption reflect this process of class differentiation. At one extreme, upscale malls offer low-volume, high-quality commodities to the discriminating middle classes. At the other, the informal marketplaces catering to the laboring poor provide high-volume, low-quality commodities and rudimentary services. By their stylized architectural design, upscale shopping malls enforce the spatial boundaries between formal and informal economies. Formal commercial transactions are sequestered behind protective barriers, leaving informal barter, or the spontaneous trade of everyday life, to the small-time vendors, hawkers, and service providers who occupy the outside streets and sidewalks. These remnants of public space are reconfigured as the last refuge of the desperately poor, the marginalized, and the unwanted. In the postliberal city, the atrophied streetscape no longer operates as the congregating space for middle-class strollers celebrated in the modernist imagination. Instead, stripped-down public spaces are forced with an increasingly dispassionate narrow-mindedness into the exclusive role of conduits for the uninterrupted flow of vehicles and the dumping grounds for the urban poor (Landau 2006, 125–145; Simone 2001a, 2001b; Flusty 1994, 14–16).

The steady influx of newcomers who have flocked to the greater Johannesburg metropolitan region, including displaced rural migrants, immigrants from other African countries, and itinerant work seekers from surrounding areas, has placed enormous pressure on the municipality to provide basic infrastructure, to extend the delivery of social services, and to introduce proper governance procedures. The proliferation of vast informal squatter settlements on the ex-urban fringe, the severe overcrowding in the existing townships, and unauthorized occupation of decaying buildings in the inner city reflect the acute housing shortage where the supply of stable, decent, and affordable residential accommodation has failed to match the rising demand. This lack of properly approved housing has given rise to all sorts of unregulated housing arrangements, including illegal land seizures, unauthorized occupation of abandoned buildings, and homeless encampments in public parks, on the streets, and in alleyways. In those inner-city neighborhoods, informal squatter settlements, and shantytowns where the municipality has achieved only limited administrative control, the urban poor have been forced to organize the provision of virtually every aspect of their basic needs, from clean water to building materials, from food to sources of heat, from fire suppression to informal policing. City dwellers who inhabit unauthorized housing accommodation face constant danger, ranging from uncontrolled fires and flooding to the predations of criminals and racketeers who seek to exploit their weaknesses. Those who have illegally commandeered makeshift shelter also face the



constant threat of eviction at the hands of municipal authorities who use the strict enforcement of city bylaws, building codes, and health and safety regulations to close down “bad buildings.”<sup>2</sup>

In the sprawling informal settlements that have proliferated on the ex-urban fringe, in the decaying inner-city neighborhoods of Hillbrow, Berea, and Joubert Park, and in the backyard shacks of the townships, the experience of daily life has produced a general sense of acute insecurity, displacement, and loss of place (Landau 2006, 125–145; de Boeck and Plissart 2004, 13–61). The movement of newcomers and old-timers in and out of these unstable locations has cultivated a kind of spatial fluidity that undermines the need for permanence, belonging, and stability. City dwellers who occupy these indeterminate spaces and marginal sites where the institutional supports of municipal governance barely exist, if at all, inhabit a sociocultural world where survival takes precedence over the kinds of enjoyment, fulfillment, and realization of potential that an alert citizenry have come to expect as their entitlement as rightful residents of the city. This state of exception is a zone not simply of exclusion but of abandonment as well, where, as part of the rational calculus of everyday living, emergencies become a normal state of affairs and tragedy becomes routine. The exception—expressed as constant menace and the threat of social death—becomes the general rule. This liminal state of being is characterized by the absence of the rule of law and its protections, where there is limited recourse to appeal to higher, official authority for redress of grievances, to ensure safety, and to gain access to municipal services (Agamben 2005, 23–24, 86–88; Landau 2005, 2006).

Estimates of the numbers of homeless squatters squeezed into overcrowded, unhygienic informal settlements on the metropolitan fringe are largely guesses, extrapolations from known data derived from small-scale surveys, official statistics, and journalistic impressions. These numbers refer to quantities that, at best, yield patterns and trends over time. Leaving aside the question of their accuracy or reliability, these figures indicate nothing about the movements in and out of homelessness, tactics that households employ to survive on a daily basis, and collective efforts required to make these places work. Equally important, these numbers fail to reveal anything about shack dwellers as human beings: their social relationships, their identities, their daily movements, or their survival techniques.

2. Municipal authorities coined the term “bad buildings” to refer to run-down, unsafe apartment complexes and hotels in the inner-city residential neighborhoods. For comparative purposes, see Gandy (2005a, 49–50). Ideas derived from interview with Graeme Gotz, specialist in policy and strategy, Corporate Planning Unit, Office of City Manager, City of Johannesburg, May 26, 2006; and interview with Geoff Mendelowitz, program manager, Better Buildings, City of Johannesburg Property Company, June 2, 2006.

All sorts of urban poor inhabit the city: paupers, beggars, the infirm, aged or sick people with little or no means of support; orphaned and runaway children, unprotected mothers with young children, widows, and other castaways without visible means of subsistence; jobless and idle youth, the casually employed, the chronically unemployed, along with the casualties of labor markets that favor the literate, the skilled, and the able-bodied. In their daily lives the urban poor suffer from the chronic insecurity of irregular and low-paying work, impermanent and unhygienic housing, poor or nonexistent health care facilities, and limited access to the panoply of social services that the middle classes take for granted. The forms of distress and social misery that the urban poor suffer include not only poverty in the strict sense of lack of reliable income but also the breakdown in the fabric of relationships that tie them organically to places, networks, and groups. In other words, the disaffiliation of the urban poor involves the intersection of two separate trajectories. On the one hand, positions along the axis of relationship to work range from attachment to a secure occupation, through participation in insecure, casual, and seasonal jobs, to the virtual absence of income-generating activities. On the other hand, positions on the axis of integration into social relationships vary from involvement and participation in solid social networks and intricate webs of interdependencies to social isolation and disaffiliation. The zone of disaffiliation thus entails both the breakdown in the reproduction of daily existence through income generation and a rupture in social bonds that link individuals to places, networks, and relationships. At the extreme, socioeconomic “insecurity becomes destitution and fragility of relationships becomes isolation” (Castel 2000, 520). Homeless vagrancy represents the near-total rupture in the social bonds of belonging, expressed most profoundly by a literal and figural detachment to place, whether a community, a neighborhood, a work site, or a social group. The pathetic figure of the homeless stranger, stigmatized as a dangerous idler, excluded everywhere, and condemned to roam in a sort of floating, liminal state of ceaseless movement, epitomizes this condition of disconnection and disaffiliation. Deprivation is not simply an extreme state of social misery and insecurity; it is the effect of a cumulative logic of exclusion that involves both expulsion from the income-generating world of work and a disintegration of social networks of support (Castel 2000, 520, 523–524; Delaney 2004; May 2000; Kihato and Landau 2005). Without structured responsibilities and unable to rely on the certitudes that govern the daily existence of the urban middle class, the urban poor inhabit places only temporarily and undertake movements that are often erratic, unpredictable, and circuitous. Efforts to eke out everyday survival are almost always provisional, impromptu, and uncertain (Kihato and Landau 2005; Simone 2002, 29–30).

For those without steady work and without access to permanent shelter, the spatial dimensions of social vulnerability dovetail with a breakdown in the cohesive networks of social belonging, where physical insecurity and social isolation are transformed into exclusion. In their daily lives the urban poor are subjected to a wide range of interdiction that impinge on their unimpeded movement in the city and that operate to keep them constantly on the move. These spatial interventions take the form of physical barriers (such as walls, gates, and checkpoints), surreptitious monitoring by omnipresent surveillance cameras, denial of entry to privatized enclosures, constant harassment, forcible evictions from illegal occupation of abandoned buildings, and arbitrary arrest. These accumulated technologies of dislocation produce disaffiliated persons who lack the kinds of social bonds, connections, and relationships that provide privileged access to the sites of cosmopolitan urbanity enjoyed by those with money and status. The urban poor are pushed to the interstitial spaces on the margins and fringes of the metropolis. Taken together, the concatenation of these social exclusions amounts to a denial of formal entitlements to the city, or a kind of truncated or empty citizenship of hollow rights that offer little protection in the conduct of everyday life (Lukose 2005; Caldeira and Holston 1999).

In a city where steady income, decent housing, and stable family life provide a secure platform for laying claim to the full benefits of citizenship, those who lack these accoutrements find themselves at a distinct disadvantage in claiming their right to a place in the city. The inability of the poor to assert their right to the legitimate entitlements of urban citizenship—like police protection, educational opportunities, health facilities, and access to the judicial system in seeking redress of grievances—has rendered them socially, legally, and spatially marginal. As virtually invisible occupiers of urban space, they are unstable inhabitants—rather than stable residents—of the city (Robinson 1999, 170–171; Simone 2001a, 2001b, 2004).

Newcomers to the city, and particularly recently arrived immigrant communities, have charged ahead, not waiting for city officials to accommodate them, carving out their own niches in the indeterminate spaces in the city (Simone 2000). The diversity and unpredictability of disparate informal economies and the variety of networks that constitute urban spaces ensure that new opportunities for place-making are always potentially available. As white shop owners and small-scale manufacturers abandoned the central city, new arriviste black entrepreneurs, artisans, and traders filled in the available spaces with small- and medium-scale enterprises encompassing both retail and manufacturing. Countless numbers of small-scale enterprises that originated in the shadow lands between formality and informality have redefined and reconfigured the meaning of urban entrepreneurialism. Fledgling entrepreneurs have occupied

the porous zone between legality and illegality, taking advantage of the loose application of legal statutes, of zoning regulations, and of code enforcement (Robinson 1999, 170–171; Simone 1999, 173–187).

In the whirlwind world of fierce competition, small-scale enterprises typically pool resources, mobilize the assistance of extended family networks, and draw on the support provided by community ties, religious affiliation, and ethnic identification both within and beyond the city. Many of these small-scale ventures survive on the margins of legality, operating from largely invisible sites tucked away in the neglected spaces of the city. Informal, non-monetary exchange arrangements enable those facing financial hardship to trade vital services and, at the same time, learn valuable skills, work experience, and organizational capabilities for future use. The ceaseless competition of the impersonal marketplace has no regard for social justice, no patience for fairness, and no place for responding to genuine social needs. Cities are at once delightful sites of splendor, spectacle, and vitality, as well as frightful places of utter destitution, degradation, and immiseration. They bring together stark inequalities of wealth, lifestyle, and living conditions. But this does not make them any less fearful, insecure, or predatory places (Simone 1999, 2001a, 2001b).

More than anything else, it has been the rapid expansion of both the numbers and size of informal squatter settlements after the end of apartheid that has illustrated the failures of urban planning to accommodate the needs of the vast multitudes of shelterless work seekers who have poured into the greater Johannesburg metropolitan region. These informal settlements—with their broken-down or nonexistent infrastructure, patchwork of residential patterns of self-built, poor-quality housing squeezed onto tiny plots, and virtual absence of requisite social services (most notably health, education, and welfare facilities)—have become the new dumping grounds for the urban poor who lack a proper place in the formal city. These forlorn, featureless encampments are fluid sites of nervous movement, evolving, metastasizing, expanding, and contracting. The restless sojourners who have found refuge in these places of temporary residence seem to be constantly on the move, in transit from one place to another. These informal settlements, with their deprived spaces defined by their need for just about everything and their improvised income-generating activities, have become 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 reterritorialize their connections both inside and outside the city. The growth and development of informal trading networks have infused the city with their own temporal dynamics, practices, and values. The logic of survivalist economics—with its peculiar dynamics of collaboration and competition, casual work, and informal trading and exchange—has infused the urban world,

as Filip de Boeck and Marie-Françoise Plissart (2004, 43) describe in another context, “both metaphorically and practically, with its own moralities, its own ethics of accumulation, expenditure, and redistribution, and its own specific pathways of self realization.”

The provisionality of daily life in the city not only opens up opportunities for the accumulation of resources but also poses the danger of downward mobility, exclusion, and marginalization. The rhizomatic circuits of power and domination that insinuate themselves into everyday urban practices have triggered a variety of responses, ranging from surrender and subservience to subversion and resistance. Ironically, those highly localized struggles for empowerment and inclusion that work against the forces of oppression and domination tend to reinforce the conservative imagery of cities as places of unpredictable chaos, disorder, and moral decay, rather than as contested spaces where there is at least some hope for negotiation, compromise, and accommodation (Swyngedouw 2005, 128–129).

### **Zones of Indistinction: Social Vulnerability and Disaffiliation in the Postliberal Metropolis**

In the [squatter] camp, the state of exception, which was essentially a temporary suspension of the rule of law on the basis of a factual sense of danger, is now given a permanent spatial arrangement.

GIORGIO AGAMBEN (1998, 169)

Seen abstractly, the hallmark of modernist city building is the radical separation between private space and public space—a demarcation that corresponds, metaphorically at least, to the demarcation between inside and outside, where the former refers to the interior space of private domesticity and the latter to the exterior space of public sociability. On the one hand, private space functions as the exclusive domain or sequestered preserve of intimately connected individuals. On the other hand, public space operates as the shared realm of exposure and exchange, the neutral and accessible terrain of social interaction, and the interpersonal arena of chance encounter among strangers (Madanipur 2003, 200, 202, 232–233, 240). In Johannesburg after apartheid the erection of walls and barriers that encircle virtually every house and building, shielding them from unwanted encroachment or violation of private space, marks the visual achievement of the duality of inside and outside (Mbembe 2004, 385).

In the contemporary postliberal metropolis, however, this analytical distinction between public and private space is too blunt and crude an instrument to fully capture the intricacies and nuances of how power geometries structure everyday life of the cityscape. The blurring of the boundaries between public

and private space has brought into existence new subdivisions of the urban landscape, along with new functions and new meanings attached to particular places. In the postliberal city power to regulate, control, and authorize inclusion and exclusion to post-public spaces is typically diffuse and fragmented, polyvalent and invisible (de Cauter 2002).

In Johannesburg after apartheid a host of new mechanisms (both legal and extralegal) have come into existence through which the urban poor and the marginalized are expelled from where they are not wanted. These powers of exclusion are both concentrated in the formal agencies of the state administration and widely dispersed in the quotidian practices of everyday life. On the one hand, exclusionary practices operate through the deliberate actions of municipal officials who use their administrative authorities to regulate the use of urban space. For the most part, law enforcement and the court system function as the most visible expressions of formal state power. On the other hand, exclusionary practices come into play in the tangled skein of everyday life where, in cities fragmented into an agglomeration of privatized enclosures, urban residents lacking requisite skills, proper qualifications, sufficient money, and cultural capital are denied entry to secured sites of luxury. These powers of exclusion operate spatially through the intersection of ordering principles that categorize and stigmatize certain individuals or groups in accordance with their qualifications to belong and the identification of the localities or places where they belong. Without access to formal housing or to recognized sources of income, the jobless poor have literally no place to belong (Castel 2000; Simone and Gotz 2003).

To fully grasp how the powers of exclusion operate in the everyday life of the city requires us to visualize how the urban landscape is arranged as a bewildering, rhizomatic maze of disconnected spaces. The elaborate layers, barriers, and boundaries that overlay the cityscape facilitate the safe passage of middle-class residents, at the same time preventing the easy movement of the urban poor. As Steven Flusty (2001, 658) has put it, the emergent “urban panopticon” quite readily “translates into a city that has, in many parts, become a veritable labyrinth of interdictory spaces: barricaded streets, privately administered plazas, police helicopter over-flights, and traffic lights festooned with panning, tilting, and zooming video cameras.” The steady buildup of such “paranoid building typologies” as gated residential communities and similar “luxury laagers,” citadel office complexes, enclosed shopping malls for the affluent, and closed-off suburban neighborhoods has partitioned the urban landscape into a mosaic of fortified enclaves surrounded by the dead space of blighted zones with decaying infrastructure, inadequate service delivery, and deteriorating built environments. The intersection of architectural design and regulatory mechanisms has produced a new spatial order and an urban environment



characterized by intensified forms of spatial differentiation (Flusty 2001, 658–659; Christopherson 1994).

The urban landscape of Johannesburg is polarized along the axis of luxurious wealth at one extreme and abject impoverishment at the other. These multiple modernisms—on the one side, dynamic, cosmopolitan, and future-oriented, and, on the other, stagnant, survivalist, and immediate—coexist as polar extremes within the same evolving urban topography. Such spaces of chic cosmopolitan urbanity as the Johannesburg International Airport, the Sandton City Shopping Mall, Melrose Arch, and Montecasino entertainment resort stand in stark contrast to such “sites of indistinction” (Agamben 1998, 122, 170) as the rundown tenements, seedy brothels, and drug hotels of inner-city neighborhoods (Hillbrow, Berea, Joubert Park, Yeoville), and the proliferating informal squatter settlements on the metropolitan fringe. New modes of postliberal urban governance seek to unleash the profit-making powers of entrepreneurialism to restructure and refashion the cityscape in the image of vibrant, cosmopolitan urbanity befitting an aspirant world-class city, on the one hand, and to eradicate the miasmal parts of the cityscape while at the same time dislodging and removing those urban residents who inhabit them, on the other (Robins 2002).

These dual dynamics of space and power are grounded in a continuous differentiation between privileged insiders and excluded outsiders: while insiders enjoy the right to participate fully and directly in the collective life of the cosmopolitan city, outsiders are relegated to the margins of urban life, divested of legal protections and entitlements, and reduced to the limbo status of subjects, guests, or unwanted trespassers (Kihato and Landau 2005; Landau 2005, 2006). It is this force field of spatial liminality—at once material and symbolic—beyond the threshold of the law that constitutes what Giorgio Agamben (2005) has called the “state of exception.” The combination of intermittent work and precarious shelter with insecurity of tenure gives rise to an ontological state of being where the urban poor are terrorized by not knowing when and to what circumstances the next tragedy will intrude on their lives. For them, everyday life is a persistent state of emergency. The confluence of socioeconomic marginalization, resource deprivation, and physical subjugation reproduces this state of exception, where the urban poor are deprived of their legal and civil rights and reduced to an existential condition of biological necessity at the mercy of a sovereign power (Agamben 1998, 143, 159, 176–177; Landau 2005). Those who inhabit these sites of indistinction find themselves cast adrift from the institutional supports and juridical-legal frameworks that underpin and sustain the contemporary city. These sites emerge outside the conventional boundaries of municipal governance and beyond the scope of administrative regimes of municipal authority. The resulting juridical-legal abandonment

leaves those who occupy these marginal spaces suspended in a lawless, extra-legal limbo (Agamben 2005, 21–26, 45–46). In functional terms these places are vast dumping grounds for warehousing and containing the poor, disposal sites for depositing the wasted lives of marginalized urban inhabitants who, with no actual prospects for formal employment, have no real value within the circuits of capital that constitute the new global economy (Bauman 2003).

Conventional enclosures ranging from prisons, barracks, and asylums to households, schools, and factories are well-known sites of discipline and confinement. As monitored spaces folded in upon themselves, these enclosures are common sites where those in authority seek to instill habits of work and discipline, to produce a homogeneous orderliness, and to regulate and individualize the conduct of people in accordance with certain normative prescriptions. This juridical-institutional model of disciplinary enclosure enables us to grasp how the microphysics of power operates in confined spaces with fixed boundaries and immobile populations. Yet this Foucauldian-inspired approach is not particularly helpful in helping us to make sense of such marginalized sites of exclusion as refugee camps, informal squatter settlements, and homeless encampments. Unlike conventional disciplinary enclosures defined by order, predictability, and regulation, these places are characterized by mobility, fluidity, and liminality.<sup>3</sup>

As unordered areas of spontaneity, unpredictability, and indeterminacy, these marginal sites obey a different set of conventions, protocols, and rules outside and beyond the boundaries of municipal regulation. The countless multitudes of homeless squatters who inhabit zones of indistinction at the metropolitan edge find themselves cut adrift from the institutional and juridical-legal frameworks that underpin the operations of the modern city. Without running water or electricity, squatters are compelled to forage on their own in order to ensure their daily survival (Kihato and Landau 2005; Landau 2006).

These sites of exclusion are not just spaces defined by movement, but they become what they are through movement. They are characterized by mobile habits: fleeting relationships, casual encounters, temporary work, and passing connections that homeless squatters assemble in their everyday struggle to survive (Simone 2001a, 2001b). Unlike enclosed disciplinary spaces, the marginal sites occupied by squatters are not cellular or contained, since they have permeable boundaries. They do not instill the kinds of codes of conduct amenable to what city officials would consider the civic virtue of law-abiding

3. Agamben's (2005, 10–11, 34–35) contention that the refugee camp is a place of legal exception becomes all the more compelling when he also suggests that this condition can be naturalized or stabilized as a prototype that reappears at such places as border crossings, airports, and informal squatter settlements on the outskirts of cities.

citizens. Homeless squatters experience a kind of nomadic displacement forged out of a “culture of the marginalized” (Shields 1991, 3–6). Those who occupy these spaces of squatter marginality engage in a variety of different behaviors, since in the struggle for survival, codes of conduct are situational, where no single set of rules applies, bargaining is always provisional, and there are no standard ways to act (Shields 1991, 3–6; Simone 2001b, 2003, 2004a, 2004c).

## 2

## Ruin and Regeneration Intertwined

[W]e should study not only how cities evolve but also *how they decline*.

ALDO ROSSI (1992, 152)

**A**s a general rule, cities are always experienced in space but studied in time. In other words, cities historicize space. As sites where the duration and deprecation of objects, persons, and memories take place in time, cities are haunted by their own histories. In this way, they not only stretch across time but also extend through space. Whatever traces of the past that remain provide a partial glimpse of what once was. Cities accumulate metonymic objects, artifacts, and discarded residues of the past as a kind of involuntary memory. To elicit this city memory is to arrive at a moment of recognition of how the present is both a fading reflection of what came before and a prescient foretaste of what is to come. City futures are immanent in the past. In this sense they are never complete but always already in a state of ruin. As emblematic artifices in the allegory of modernity, cities stand for the failure of intentionally planned futures to realize utopia. Susceptible to the countervailing forces of design and chance, cities are sites for the perpetual negotiation and compromise between the providential and the unpredictable, between the anticipated and the fortuitous (Patke 2000, 5–6; Cuff 2000, 18, 19, 37–39).

Expressed in theoretical terms, scholarly efforts to explain the itineraries of urban transformation in terms of available models like modernization, dependency, and developmentalism fail to acknowledge that the evolution of cities does not necessarily follow a predictable linear progression, each succeeding step unfolding logically from what came before. Urban biographies are shaped by such unexpected, extraordinary, and catastrophic events as war, popular rebellion, famine, disease, and natural disaster that leave a residue of physical wounds and psychic scars in their wake. It is in this sense, then, that cities do