

Chapter 4

Urban renewal:
Towards a social
process

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4.1 Introduction

As the previous chapter stated, cities are dynamic complex social systems that constantly have to adapt to change. One of the challenges that require cities to constantly adapt to new circumstances is urban growth. According to Hendrix (2009:4) and Couch (2000:5) the growth of the world's population and migration to cities cause cities to become agglomerations of cultures and people. In South Africa a similar challenge is experienced as South Africa has one of the highest urbanisation rates in the world (Yari, 2011:6). This anticipated growth in the urban future implies that cities are faced with tremendous change. Urban renewal is commonly adopted to cope with changing urban environments (Chan & Lee, 2008:243). According to Hendrix (2009:3) current practices of urban renewal should be re-evaluated as the sustainability of some existing renewed centres are questioned because urban decay still occur. Healy et al. (1992:132) suggest that the solution may lie in the fact that the focus on people is often missed and misunderstood in urban renewal programmes.

There is a global trend in redevelopment practices to adopt more sustainable ways to ensure the enhancement of urban centres (Lee & Chan, 2010:9). In order to ensure more sustainable urban centres Lee and Chan (2010:9) emphasise the importance of acknowledging the social dimension of cities in urban renewal processes as social dynamics are important driving factors in cities. The creation of the city as sustainable social entity is therefore an important goal in spatial planning proposals (Newman, 2010:12 & Carnevale, 2007:80).

With the above as background, the main aim of this chapter is to understand urban renewal. The chapter first explores urban decay as motivation for urban renewal. Second, it contextualises urban renewal by discussing how urban design theories changed over time towards the current understanding of urban renewal as complex social process. As social dynamics are recognised as primary forces behind urban renewal, the chapter further investigates urban renewal as a participatory process and the role-players as possible building blocks in urban renewal. In the last instance the chapter offers design criteria to support sustainable social environments in cities.

4.2 Urban decay as motivation for urban renewal

Healy et al. (1992:23) point out that the concept and origin of urban decay is rooted in the conditions during the Industrial Revolution as witnessed in the overcrowding of 19th century London, New York, Paris and other major cities of the developed world. Urban decay has been a problem from the beginning of society, so the modern and post-modern world has had the same concerns (Healy et al, 1992:23). In current times decentralisation of economic activities has played a big role in the deterioration (Acioly, 1999:117). Acioly (1999:118) identifies the

following two additional reasons for urban decay, (1) the age and state of the urban centre and the (2) lack of leadership. Urban decay seems to be an important motivation for urban renewal initiatives, therefore this phenomenon and its underlying causes is further explored in the paragraphs that follow.

4.2.1 What is urban decay?

Urban decay is also referred to as “urban rot” or “urban blight” (Anderson, 2003:31). Anderson (2003:36) defined urban decay as “the process whereby a previously functioning city, or part of a city, falls into disrepair and decrepitude”. Since the 1970’s and 1980’s urban decay has been associated with especially Western cities, as pointed out by Lee and Chan (2010:264). With regard to the African perspective, Ahmad et al. (2010:32) state that urban decay in Africa is much more unique. Andersons (2003:31) explains that Africa has more diverse culture groups than Western cities, which makes the understanding of social cohesion much more complicated. From a Western perspective African cities are apocalyptically chaotic (Okaba & Nte, 2008:31). This view tends to label African cities as areas of infrastructural decay, high unemployment, high crime and all the known indices of underdevelopment (Okaba & Nte, 2008:31). Urban decay may further feature deindustrialisation, depopulation or changing population, economic restructuring, abandoned buildings, high local unemployment, fragmented families, political disenfranchisement, crime: in general a inhospitable city landscape. These harsh socio-economic conditions also tend to take a heavy toll on the social aspects of the environment (Ahmad et al., 2010:43).

According to Ahmad et al. (2010:43) urban decay in South Africa can be defined as: “the product of a former spatial regime contributing to forced segregation and contributing to people flow out of the city centre”. According to the available definitions urban decay is complex due to numerous interrelated factors (Ahmad et al., 2010:4). The most important and relevant aspects of the concept with regard to the South African context will be discussed in the following section.

4.2.2 Reasons for urban decay

According to Okaba and Nte (2008:6) urban decay has no single cause. It results from a combination of inter-related socio-economic global conditions. Acoily (1999:112) refers to urbanisation and decentralisation, therefore inward and outward migration, as major causes of decay. Authors such as Okaba and Nte (2008:6) and Ahmad et al. (2010:4) agree to similar reasons and causes for urban decay in Africa. They sort the reasons as centring around demographic trends (e.g. high urbanisation rates, population growth and migration); economic trends (e.g. decentralisation of business sector) and political factors such as South African Apartheid policy (Ahmad et al., 2010:4). How these factors contribute to urban decay in South Africa will form the focus of the discussion below.

4.2.2.1 Demographic patterns

4.2.2.1.1 Rural-urban migration as contribution to urban decay

The most popular trend in urbanisation patterns or movements is rural-urban migration. According to Hendrix (2009:4) this kind of movement and growth is especially common in developing countries such as South Africa and contribute to urban decay (Hendrix, 2009:5). Acoily (1999:121) states that rural-urban migration is seen as people leaving the countryside for an urban life. According to Acoily (1999:121) this causes two things to happen, namely (1) urban growth and (2) urbanisation. An urban lifestyle offers certain attractive attributes such as work, money and an urban vibrancy (Küsel, 2009:4). According to Küsel (2009:1) urbanisation trends in South Africa are driven mainly by rural-urban migration. The rates in South Africa range between 3-5% and include circular migration and natural growth (Küsel, 2009:2). Acoily (1999:123) explains circular migration as the temporary movement of a worker between home and host areas, usually for the purpose of employment. The idea is that immigrants usually return to their place of origin after a time of absence and again return to work (Acoily, 1999:123). The graph in figure 4.1 illustrates the rural-urban migration trends on a worldwide basis as calculated by Carnevale et al. (2009:3).

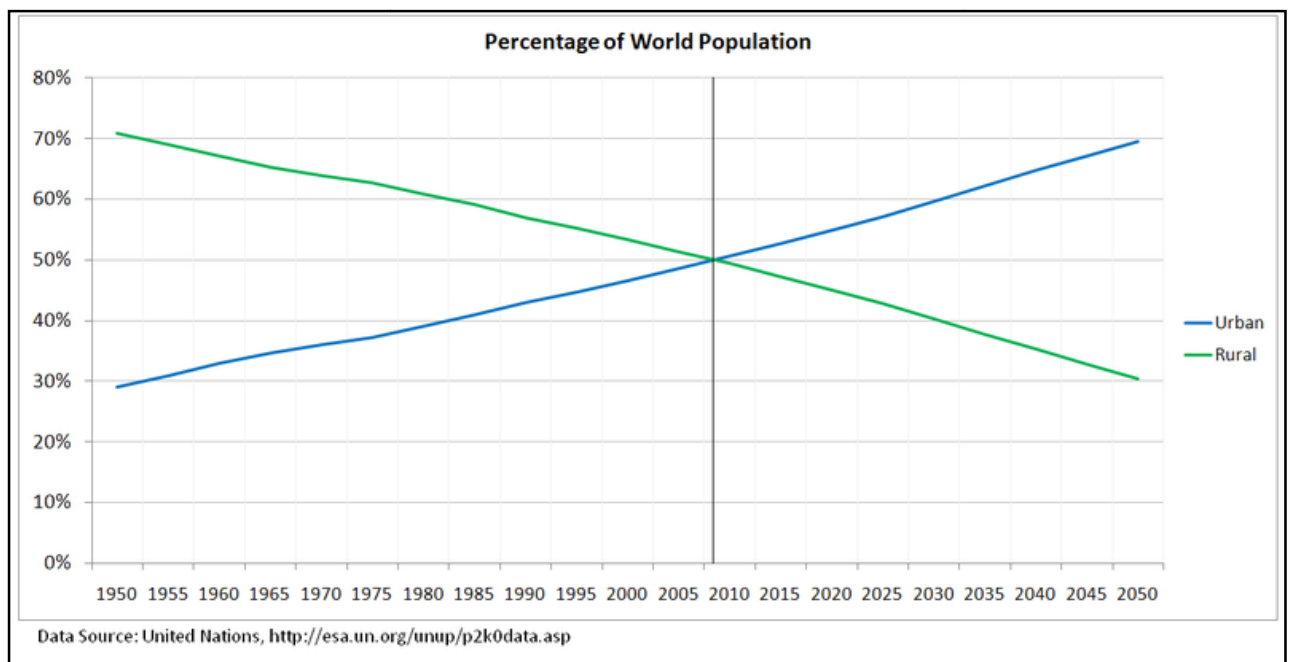


Figure 4-1 Rise and decline of urban versus rural population in the world (Source: Carnevale et al., 2007)

Inder and Cornwell (2004:14) indicate that South Africa is one of the world's most rural-urban migrated regions. This contributes to the high level of urbanisation after the 1994 election. After the election, freedom of movement was contemplated and people started migrating to cities in search of work and safer environments (Inder & Cornwell, 2004:16).

According to Yari (2011: 5) and Küsel (2009:4) living in cities or towns permits individuals and families to take advantage of the opportunities, diversity and marketplace competition. People move into cities to seek economic opportunities and social acceptance (Acoily, 1999:129). A major contributing factor is known as "rural flight". Cities are known to be places where money, services and wealth are centralised (Acoily, 1999:131). It is where fortunes are made and where social mobility is possible. Businesses, which generate jobs and capital, are usually located in urban areas (Hendrix, 2009:5). Whether the source is trade or tourism, it is also through the cities that foreign money flows into a country. It is easy for someone with a low income or no income to migrate to a city for better living conditions (Hendrix, 2009:5). Two phenomena strengthen rural–urban migration patterns, namely urbanisation and the natural growth in cities, each of these has its own contribution to urban decay.

- **Urbanisation**

For the first time in history the majority of people in the world are living in towns or cities, as shown by the World Population report (Carnevale et al., 2007:3). This is referred to as the "Urban Millennium" or "tipping point" (Carnevale et al., 2007:4). Urbanisation is a worldwide phenomenon, and according to World Population Highlights (Carnevale et al., 2007:2) by 2030, nearly two thirds of the world's population will live in urban areas. The density of urban centres is on the increase as a result of this phenomenon. Acoily (1999:115) states that Africa has one of the highest urbanisation rates in the world, for instance Johannesburg is considered the heartland of Gauteng, accounting for 60% of the province's GDP. There is an influx of 800 000 people into the city centre on a daily basis. Figure 4-2 shows that Africa has been identified as one of the four most urbanising regions in the world.

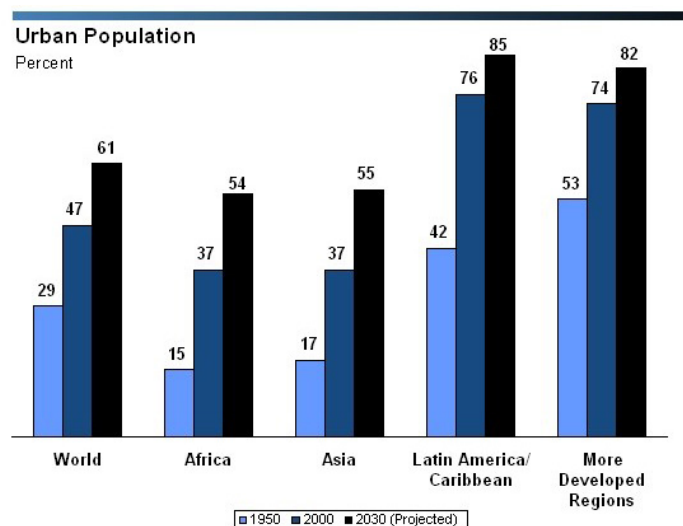


Figure 4-2 Urbanisation trends (Source: Carnevale et al. 2007)

Home (1982:78) and Küsel (2009:5) further state that urbanisation results naturally from individual and corporate efforts to reduce time and expense in commuting and transportation for

jobs, education, housing and for social awareness and community. High urbanisation occurs as people start to populate near the inner city, and slums and informal settlements form (Acoily, 1999:121). This is also seen as a third world tendency (Acoily, 1999:121). As the influx of people into slums and informal settlements rises, the infrastructure is not capable of handling this pressure and this finally contributes to urban decay (Acoily, 1999:121).

- **Urban growth**

Natural growth or urban growth can be described as the natural increase of the population through birth. Countries in Africa usually have a high natural birth rate contributing to urbanisation (Küsel, 2009:2). According to Acoily (1999:124) urban growth describes towns and cities that are expanding to cover a greater area of land. This creates the phenomenon of urban sprawl, which ultimately contributes to an expanding urban environment in which businesses move away from city centres, eventually resulting in decayed centres (Acoily, 1999:143). This is not only true for metropolitan cities as the bulk of urban population growth is predicted to occur in smaller cities and towns of less than 500 000 inhabitants (Carnevale et al., 2007:10).

4.2.2.1.2 People flow as contribution to urban decay

People flow as a concept relates to the phenomenon of masses of people moving around within or around buildings in an organised, comfortable and safe way (Posel, 2003:4). Urbanisation is the key “mega trend” needed for managing the flow of individuals in and around the central business district (Hendrix, 2009:5). As people flow in and around the city, certain areas start to decay as a “mega trend” determines the area that investors invest in (Tibrewala, 2009:20). A “mega trend” describes a phenomenon that significantly changes the structure of society (Tibrewala, 2009:20). Urban renewal is the product of people flowing and moving around urban structures as Küsel (2009:5) suggests. In this concept one can start to observe the people centred approach.

4.2.2.2 Political factors as contribution to urban decay

According to Maylam (1995:20) there is an internationally recognised need to study urban decay within the historical context of Apartheid. Due to the Apartheid history (Yari, 2011:5) and despite efforts taken by the government over the last decade, Apartheid townships are still suffering from huge public service backlogs, further triggering the need for urban renewal in general (Küsel, 2009:2).

The segregation of races relocation of groups of people during Apartheid caused an influx of low income, disadvantaged people into the city centre, creating slums and high a density of low-income groups. According to Maylam (1995:21) and Okaba and Nte (2008:5) this kind of situation breeds numerous social problems. Relocation is not only part of South Africa’s history of Apartheid. In Diepkloof, Johannesburg, the government recently relocated approximately 8000-

9000 families due to an urban renewal programme to available land that is 40% too small and of which the urban development boundary prohibits any larger development (Planact, 2007). This caused Diepkloof to change into a slum of informal housing, contributing to urban decay and ultimately social decline in the area. According to Yari (2011:5) and Küsel (2009:5) political and social factors in South Africa cannot be separated, as for example in this case.

4.2.2.3 Social factors as contribution to urban decay

Internationally, inner-city crime has been a well-documented area of urban studies. Dirsuweit (2002) states that crime has become a national obsession within our urban centres, along with political and social transformation. Still, in South African urban discourse, crime studies and inner-city crime studies *per se* have been scant (Hoogendoorn & Marais, 2008:3). According to Hoogendoorn and Marais (2008:14) and Allen (2002) it is “common knowledge” that crime is a major problem in South Africa. Crime was found to be the largest reason for urban decay in a recent study done in Bloemfontein by Hoogendoorn and Marais (2008:3).

The past two decades have seen a growing realisation on the part of policy makers, policy agents, and researchers that understanding the context of crime – the ‘where’ and ‘when’ of a criminal event – comprises the key to understanding how crime can be managed and prevented (Hoogendoorn & Marais, 2008:18). According to Landman and Liebermann (2005:1) crime can be linked to the places where it is committed. An analysis of where criminal acts occur shows that many incidents are not spontaneous or opportunistic, but that certain places are selected by offenders because they lend themselves to criminal activity. When planning for safer communities one should understand the communities (Lehrer, 2000:4), as well as the social aspects of a community and the different perspectives of individuals (Hoogendoorn & Marais, 2008:18). Crime prevention strategies are helpful strategies in urban planning to address urban decay indirectly (Hoogendoorn & Marais, 2008:12).

The above-mentioned discussion suggests that an urban environment can lend itself to criminal activity as a result of the physical attributes of the area (Landman & Liebermann, 2005:1). With this said one needs to start looking at ways to use urban renewal in addressing this social problem. Kruger and Landman (2003:1) state that according to general consensus the environment could be planned and designed to reduce certain types of crime (Landman & Liebermann, 2005:1). As urban decay has various causes, one should understand how social aspects of urban decay possibly link to the spatial role of urban renewal.

Now that urban decay and its causes and links are understood as motivation for urban renewal, urban renewal can be explored as means to address urban decay.

4.3 Urban renewal

4.3.1 The origin of urban renewal

Urban renewal's modern incarnation began in the late 19th century in especially African nations and experienced an intense phase in the late 1940's under the rubric of reconstruction after the Second World War (Stouten, 2005:3). The process of urban renewal has had a major impact on many urban landscapes, and has played an important role in the history and demographics of cities around the world by enhancing awareness for social needs (Stouten, 2005:3). According to authors such as Healy et al. (1992:132) and Tsenkova (2002:11) urban renewal is one of the most important strategies to address inner city decline and deprivation throughout the world. However, to find a single definition for urban renewal is hardly possible because the focus of urban renewal reflects constant change over time (Stouten, 2005:7). This changing nature of urban renewal forms the focus of the following section.

4.3.2 Urban renewal theories

4.3.2.1 Urban renewal expressed as physical product

Carmon (1999:154) suggests that the focus on urban renewal as a physical product is an out-dated view (Zhang & Fang, 2004:288). It started a debate on whether it is sustainable to impose a physical product onto an existing social atmosphere. Lately, the consideration of the social impact of certain events caused developers to identify a series of “no's” when it comes to urban renewal projects, such as to massive demolition, displacement and mega-structures for poor populations (Carmon, 1999:154).

According to Zhang and Fang (2004:294) the inner city has been turned into an engine for the local communities. The physical design has come to play a great role in economic activity, but had a devastating impact on communities. Most planners find the physical aspect of urban renewal easy since the focus on the “people factor” is relatively new (Tsenkova, 2002:15). Tsenkova (2002:15) announces the birth of a new era with this consideration of the “people factor” in which urban renewal carries the responsibility of understanding people.

4.3.2.1.1 The design tradition as foundation

A physical product was previously the focus of urban renewal. It aimed to provide a product for the people in an area, hoping it would influence the social behaviour of the area (Tsenkova, 2002:15). Carmon (1999:152) and Tsenkova (2002:21) call this environmental determinism. According to Carmon (1999:141) the design elements of urban renewal was the main focus and this was the product of a tradition. The tradition in urban renewal was to create an upgraded urban environment (Carmon, 1999:145). Social problems were seen as something that could

destroy the esthetical value (Tsenkova, 2002:25). Urban renewal was seen as the possible revival of a specific social area (Voges, 2011:6).

4.3.2.1.2 Planning approaches to urban renewal as physical product: The Linear model

The linear model is a top-down approach, popular in modernistic urban planning in which the planner or designer is seen as the expert in the urban renewal process (Aleshire, 1970). According to Panteleev (1992:26) this model approaches urban renewal from a technocratic approach to planning. This approach implies that the urban planners and the government are in control of the decision making process (Panteleev, 1992:26). The planning is done, announced to the community and then defended until it is implemented.

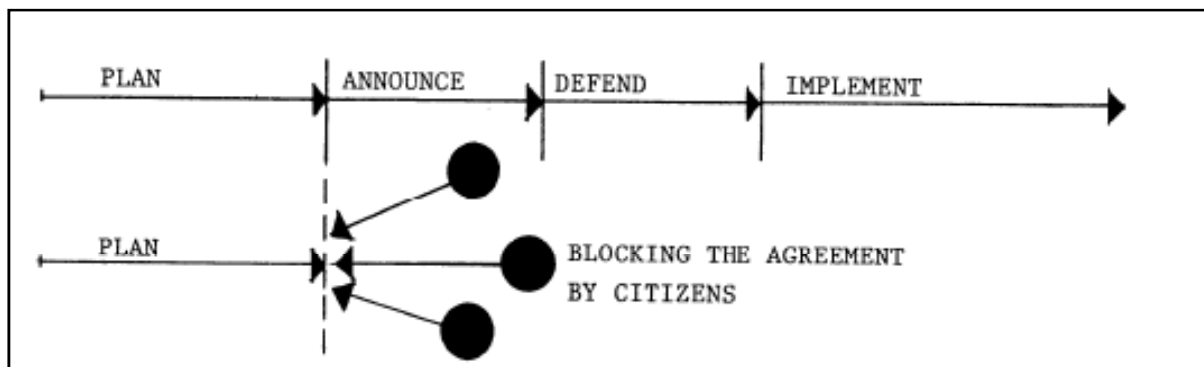


Figure 4-3 The Linear planning approach (Source: Panteleev, 1992)

Alleshire (1970:2) and Panteleev (1992:24) consider this model as based on the following points:

- Keeping the plan secret from the opposition;
- Limitation of the time of organising;
- Providing multiple supporters of the official version;
- Limitation of information dissemination;
- Creation of several obviously unacceptable options.

The practice of traditional planning shows that there is time-efficiency in the first three stages, but the actual implementation is time-consuming and usually not complete. In terms of social effect, the planning process is unsuccessful. According to Panteleev (1992:26) and Jones (1979:5) it contains in its very nature the following flaws: (1) There is little time for the citizens to react and this causes uncertainty, (2) the restricted information contributes to the atmosphere of distrust and uncertainty and (3) the narrowed options mean that there are no viable or realistic options for citizens to choose from, causing distrust. Panteleev (1992:27) refers to opposition among citizens as a natural reaction. Within this approach contact with any social aspect or system only occurs during the stage of the model when the plan is defended, as illustrated in Figure 4-3.

4.3.2.2 Critique on urban renewal as physical product

Critics have seen proponents of the linear model as economic engines and reform mechanisms for control of urban environments. Jane Jacobs argues that urban renewal from that point of departure does not respect the need of most city-dwellers and states her discomfort with renewing existing neighbourhoods (Hospers, 2006:729). This concept can enhance existing communities, but in some cases also it can result in the demolition of neighbourhoods and culture groups, which has a negative effect on the social urban front (Fasenfest, 1984:8 & Stouten, 2005:1).

- **Demolition of culture groups**

Fasenfest (1984:12) and Stouten (2005:4) criticise urban renewal for separating and displacing cultural groups and population groups. Some renewal projects use an area for renewal that displaces lower income groups, which disturbs the unique cultural aspects of the area. Fasenfest (1984:13) states that a major problem with urban renewal programs is relocation and slum clearances. He calls it the demolition of culture groups due to the relocation and displacement, and he identifies the following problems that arise from it:

- Relocation has negative psychological effects on those forced to move;
- Slums are simply displaced to less central areas of the city;
- Low income families generally have to pay more for lower quality housing and the supply of low income housing actually decreases because of urban renewal.

- **Negative community reaction**

A series of negative reactions to urban renewal brought the concept back to the drawing board for reassessment. Theoreticians searched for a new understanding of urban renewal and re-evaluated the method of performing urban regeneration projects (Fasenfest, 1984:6). According to Fasenfest (1984:6) renewal projects and development has been used interchangeably, utilizing public administrators to bypass or confront community reaction to renewal projects that do not take local interests into account, even when these are voiced. This creates negativity in the community so that community members refrain from giving their full support to the process (Donnison & Middleton, 1987:121).

The revival of urban poor areas by inserting a wealthier class or attracting investments could also redevelop urban social spaces (Donnison & Middleton, 1987:120). The concept of urban sociology in urban renewal is thus not a new idea, but one that draws from the late 1980's. Healy et al. (1992:6) explain that urban policies since the 1980's emphasise economic regeneration in urban redevelopment policies and not those of social regeneration.

The one verifiable critique is that urban renewal had a lack of public input or participation in the past. The understanding of the social- and cultural sphere of the area contributes to a better planned project. Various authors (Forrester, 1969:8; Hendrix, 2009:9. & Lee & Chan, 2010:4) concur that human nature is the focal point in town planning. The lack of social regeneration in urban policy when it comes to urban renewal therefore still seems challenging, but relevant (Fanefest, 1984:19). Lee and Chan (2010:32) suggest that a one-sided approach to urban renewal challenges the sustainability of such a project. Sustainability is becoming the focus in all disciplines such as urban planning. Stouten (2005:4) suggests that this focus should start with urban renewal programmes.

4.3.2.2.1 Urban renewal expressed as a social process

Tsenkova (2002:11) states that during the last forty years urban renewal was addressed by utilising economic and planning policies geared for physical renewal with an economic focus, but with little understanding of social revival. The social sustainability of these urban renewal attempts are questioned as social behaviour was disregarded in urban renewal initiatives. This is probably why authors such as Stouten (2005:7) suggest the building or rebuilding of a social city as primary goal in urban renewal. According to Stouten (2008:8) and Voges (2011:6) urban renewal is an organised and spontaneous process of various urban factors (physical, social and economic factors) coming together to restore the previous and intended use of urban areas. The process may be time-consuming and sometimes take years (Voges, 2011:11). According to Carmon (1999:146) urban renewal is a process for long-term social benefits. Many of the new programs identified involve local residents in the decision making process (Carmon, 1999:146). This started the debate on urban renewal as a process and not a product (Zhang & Fang, 2004:288).

According to Lee and Chan (2010:257) the social wellbeing of a city or an urban environment is very important, which means that there is need for promoting the importance of social elements in the process of urban renewal. Furthermore, citizens are much better off when renewal projects enhance the social wellbeing of all local citizens as this promotes sustainability (Lee & Chan, 2010:259). This emphasis is not a new idea in urban design and urban planning as the social sphere of urban renewal has become typical of the post-modern view (Hendrix, 2009:3).

The European Union (2005:3) declared that most cities have an urban development plan in areas showing signs of physical decay, and more importantly, social deprivation (European Union, 2005). Africa or South Africa is not much different in urban development plans. However, the execution of these plans is more difficult because of the cultural diversity that creates more sensitive social environments than in first world countries (Lee & Chan, 2010:256). Therefore, seeing urban renewal as a social process in a socially sensitive country is considered positive

(European Union, 2005). Healy et al. (1992:7) point out that this view of urban renewal can be described as a “post-modernist” way of handling urban renewal.

When taking a capitalist view of the poor South African economy (Mhone, 1996:13), there are many disposable incomes and large numbers of people with cultural differences seeking diverse activities and experiences. This creates a large number of perspectives to include in planning for the future (Healy et al., 1992:7). Within these diverse groups, pressure groups start to form that defend and promote particular social, cultural and environmental facilities and qualities (Healy et al., 1992:7). Healy et al. (1992:8) describe pressure groups as groups of social awareness that contribute to the planning process. This phenomenon produces a demand for diversity of locales in cities. Deeper issues such as respect for gender, colour and ethnicity reinforce the demand for diversity (Healy et al., 1992:7). One cannot ignore that the social understanding of an area affects the physical environment. Therefore, an understanding of urban renewal as a more social process may contribute to more sustainable urban renewal within our growing cities worldwide (Tsenkova, 2002:11).

4.3.2.2.2 Social reform as foundational

Tsenkova (2002:21) states that urban renewal strategies have been changing the past 40 years to a socially driven practise. The social reform has been studied by various authors such as Donnison and Middleton (1987:12) and can be observed in the process of urban renewal. As urban renewal projects are seen as something aimed at benefitting people, urban renewal should be activated by people.

4.3.2.2.3 Planning approaches to urban renewal as social process: The conflict resolution approach

In the conflict resolution model, it is the local government who defines the process and controls the information flow. Therefore it is the government structure that controls the process and sets the rules, as seen in figure 4-5.

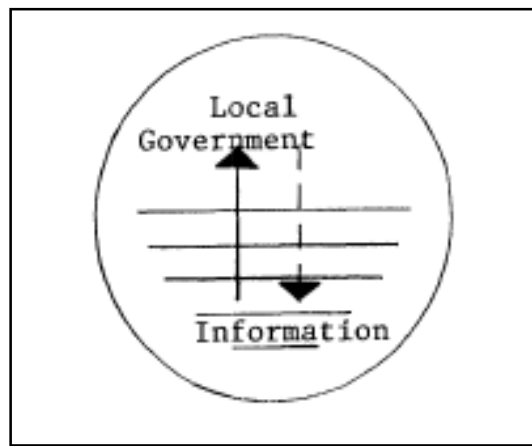


Figure 4-4 Conflict resolution approach (Source: Panteleev, 1992)

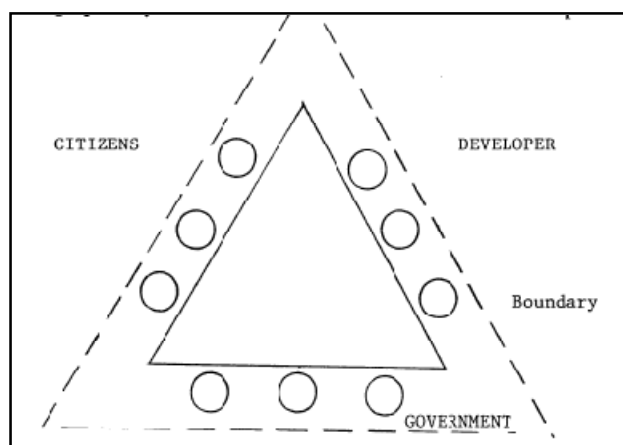


Figure 4-5 Traditional conflict resolution process (Source: Panteleev, 1992)

There is a two way information flow, and citizen participation is inclusive. Therefore, according to authors such as Jones (1979:5) and Panteleev (1992:28), the involvement of the citizens enhances the process and makes it work. Figure 4-6 provides a graphic presentation of the traditional conflict resolution process. All three stakeholders sit together to discuss the information and to try to resolve the issues by using a citizen participation method (Panteleev, 1992:29). This approach has some close correlations to the linear planning process. Although making more room for participation in urban renewal, it is still only informative in nature and therefore regarded as a “top-down” approach (Panteleev, 1992:28).

4.3.2.2.4 Urban renewal as a participatory process

Hendrix (2009:4) emphasises that the social dimension should not be underestimated in urban renewal. The participation of citizens or the community as a whole is one of the key ways to gain information during the urban renewal processes (Panteleev, 1992:4). According to Panteleev (1992:25) the purpose of citizen participation is to influence government decisions that affect citizens' lives and to improve governmental efficiency on all levels. These citizens as a social system offer a way to mobilise resources that residents have themselves such as

knowledge, information, creativity, commitment, energy and ownership. Presently these factors play a major role in urban renewal programs (Hendrix, 2009:4).

In a strictly regulated profession such as the South African urban planning community, there is not much space for social sciences in urbanism (Panteleev, 1992:4). Panteleev (1992:4) further states that the main focus obviously lies with the physical aspects of urban renewal, but the social aspects often stand in the shadow. However, since social laws work despite our will, in reality the architects and urban planners encounter the real nature of their profession when they are confronted with the relationships among people and different social groups and the interaction of diverse and multiple interests (Hendrix, 2009:4). For some, the incompatibility and contradiction between the true nature of the profession and the way it is exercised, leads to frustration (Panteleev, 1992:4).

Panteleev (1992:29) and Jones (1972:5) suggest that this model is collaborative (co-productive) process. It is based on the following principles that Panteleev (1992:29) describes:

- Participation in the process is inclusive (every person who wants to participate);
- Stakeholders are involved at the earliest stage;
- Participants take part in “real” and important decision making processes (Citizens are not restricted to mere consultancy);
- The process is educational for the general public and participants. The different perspectives included in the process lead to the formation of new “joint” knowledge.

Panteleev (1992:29) and Jones (1972:7) suggest that a major characteristic of the collaborative process is that decisions are reached by consensus. The model accepts a diversity of multiple interests and the different knowledge of participants from the citizenry (Shaw & Robinson, 2009:131). As a result the process usually leads to the exploration and testing of multiple ideas and concepts. The initial planning process enhances the idea that it is important to spend time on the creation of ideas and concepts (Panteleev, 1992:29). The generation of ideas based on different perspectives and knowledge leads to viable and rich solutions that enhance a sustainable process in urban renewal and planning (Shaw & Robinson, 2009:131). Finally, the process of reaching an agreement between all involved parties, and reaching a consensus with multiple levels of participation is important. According to Panteleev (1992:29) this is key to the success of the method. Participation is inherent from the very start to the very end of the process. Aleshire (1970:8) and Panteleev (1992:63) agree that in a democracy these ideas could be the mechanism used to enhance our social atmospheres, it could therefore be described as: proof of real democracy and at the same time it is “socialism at a local level”. In its best form, citizen participation leads to a sound and stable community life at the local level (Panteleev, 1992:63). Due to the constant study in the field, Shaw and Robinson (Shaw &

Robinson, 2009:140) noticed that there is a well-established consensus that local communities need to be involved in the process of regeneration and we now know much more about the different approaches and methods. The acceptance of the involvement of the community in the planning process led to more study regarding the different role-players in the decision making process (Shaw & Robinson, 2009:140).

- **Role players in urban renewal**

Major actors in the field of urban renewal can be by and large divided into two groups, namely governmental and non-governmental actors. Panteleev (1992:24) and Hendrix (2009:14) point out that governmental actors are different for different cities. The non-governmental actors in the urban renewal game also vary in place and time (Shaw & Robinson, 2009:140). Most important are the neighbourhood groups (citizen groups) (Thomas, 1984:140). Some of them are formed with the specific purpose of playing a part in urban renewal (Panteleev, 1992:24). Non-governmental actors may include members of occupational groups such as bankers, real estate agents, developers, builders or architects (Ahmad, 2010:71).

Many of these groups are strategically positioned to influence the nature of the renewal program (Ahmad, 2010:71). A third type of non-governmental actor includes citywide groups involved in urban renewal because of their ideological orientation or because some particular project affects their interests (Panteleev, 1992:24). Ron Thomas (1984:120) and Ahmad et al. (2010:71) identify a magnitude of role players (table 4.1). The following table presents a list of actors or role players within the urban renewal decision making process:

Table 4-1 Influential role players within the urban renewal process

Public Sector	Private Sector	Urban Institutions
Mayor	Developers	Neighbourhood Organisations
City	Corporations	Public Interest Groups
City Manager	Local Business	Development Corporations
Commissions	Economic Consultants	Preservation Groups
Boards	Engineering Consultants	Community Organisations
City Agencies	Planning Consultants	Design Centres
City Departments	Urban Design Consultants	Arts Organisations
Councils of Government	Architects	Service Organisations
State Agencies	Landscape Architects	Foundations
Federal Programs	Interior Designers	Universities
	Communication Consultants	Environmental Organisations

(Source: Adapted from Thomas, 1984 and Ahmad, 2010)

All these actors influence the shaping of cities in a different way, either directly or indirectly. (Ahmad, 2010:71). They (Ahmad, 2010:71) interact (or do not interact) with the process of planning and implementation in different ways. Based on the role that the three different groups play in the process of planning, one can differentiate between traditional (technocratic) and participatory planning (Panteleev, 1992:25).

Urban planning and regeneration is a basic city function that covers all issues of complex urban life. Panteleev (1992:25) states that urban renewal is undoubtedly one of the most complicated and complex arenas for urban planners in the twenty-first century.

4.3.2.3 Urban renewal as an integrated process

Urban renewal as an integrated process refers to both physical and social elements in the urban renewal process, instead of just one of the two. Tsenkova (2002:6) defines urban renewal as the rehabilitation of city areas by renovating or replacing dilapidated buildings with new housing, public buildings, parks and roadways as examples, working together with the community to identify their needs and to implement it. Sustainable urban renewal has been identified as an integrated process (Tsenkova, 2006:3). Shutkin (2000:3) suggests that the integration of the three basic focus points of urban renewal is of great importance. These three are (1) social focus, (2) economic focus and (3) physical focus (Tsenkova, 2006:3). There is a global trend to adopt the sustainability concept in new development and redevelopment practices (Shutkin, 2000. & Chan and Lee, 2006). To ensure that such concepts can be effectively incorporated in real practices, urban renewal has to take into account the economic, physical and social dimensions (Shutkin, 2000:13). Therefore, as Shutkin (2000) suggests, the focus should shift from a social perspective to a social, physical and economic perspective, creating a sustainable urban renewal project. As part of the integrated approach Carmon (1999:149) suggests that stakeholders (investors etc.) along with the governmental institutions should be leading role players, building the foundation for community participation.

Urban renewal objectives in the last decade seem to include a much wider array of aspects (including social behaviour) than the previous physically orientated approaches. Grenger (2001) provides the following criteria that should be taken into account in an attempt to create a more integrated process in urban renewal:

- Restructuring and re-planning certain urban areas with the community leading discussions;
- Designing more effective and environmentally-friendly road networks and public transport in line with a community development plan;
- Rationalising land uses with regard to the influence on the community;
- Redeveloping dilapidated buildings into renewed modern standards;

- Rehabilitation of buildings in need of revival;
- Preserving historical, cultural and architectural interest;
- Enhancing local characteristics of the area by using the local community in the process;
- Preserving the social networks, dynamics and interaction of the local community;
- Providing more open space and community based spaces;
- Enhancing the area with attractive landscapes and urban design with the local community as the designers.

(Grenger, 2001)

Over time urban renewal evolved towards policies that focus more on renovation than rebuilding. Local governments now contribute to incentives offered by small and big businesses in order to help these policies and projects from the ground. Therefore one could easily observe the paradigm shift from a governmental perspective to various other stakeholders taking the lead and the ownership in rebuilding the urban environment (Lee & Chan, 2010:251).

According to the above discussion urban renewal can be considered as an integrated process that includes various role-players and dimensions that work together for a sustainable urban renewal project. Although the ideal is to include physical, social, economic and ecological considerations, it is social aspects that ultimately drive the process (Shutkin, 2000) and therefore this study defines urban renewal as a social process. Although the social process is of great importance, the physical is the platform for social interaction. With this said, a set of design criteria will now be studied in order to enhance the social process (Shutkin, 2000).

4.4 Design criteria to support urban renewal as sustainable social process

Stouten (2005:3) says that sustainability can be measured by the capacity to endure. Sustainability involves improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting systems (Prugh & Assadourian, 2003:111). As the social, economic and environmental awareness shifted in urban planning, social sustainability started to become more prominent (Lee & Chan, 2010:258). Prugh and Assadourian (2003:121) state the importance of social sustainability when they say: "Only the prospect of a truly social sustainability offers the universal possibility of human fulfilment (Prugh & Assadourian, 2003:111).

Stouten (2005:2) refers to sustainable urban renewal as important when it comes to redevelopment. According to Stouten (2005:2) cities change over time and, because this process is inevitable, the operation of the political, economic and social systems constantly generates new demands and new opportunities for improvement and progress. Lee and Chan (2010:258) started to study the impact of social sustainability on urban renewal. Social

sustainability is the fair interaction of social behaviour with minimum conflict with the environmental and economic aspects (Prugh & Assadourian, 2003:111). Lee and Chan (2010:258) give criteria on how to design an urban environment with social sustainability in mind.

Figure 4-6 was taken from Lee and Chan (2010:258) and includes their design criteria for social sustainable urban renewal. The model in figure 4-6 is made up of a hierarchy consisting of goal level, objectives level and design criteria level. The goal level shows the ultimate goal of the model, which attempts to generate the most sustainable urban renewal design for a renewed area. These three objectives levels comprise three aspects, namely economic sustainability, environmental sustainability and most important for the focus of this study, social sustainability (Lee & Chan, 2010:285). Since this study focuses on social sustainability, only the highlighted points of Figure 4-6 will be studied in depth.

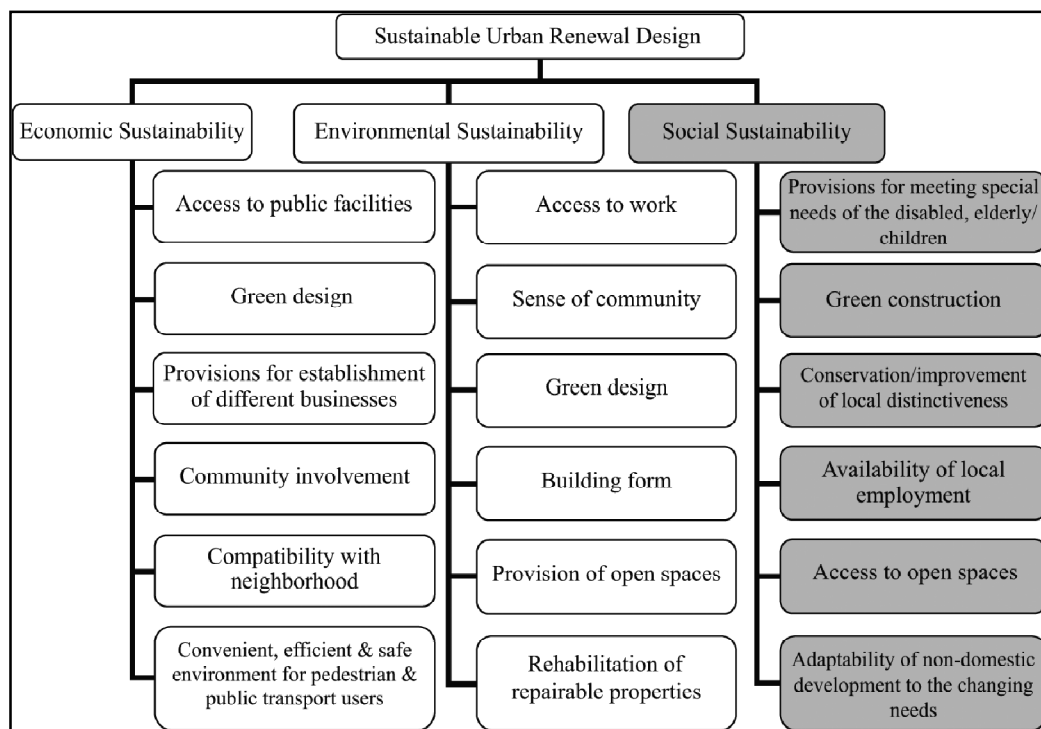


Figure 4-6 Sustainable urban renewal design (Source: Lee & Chan, 2010)

A total of six criteria are set by the authors to enhance social sustainability. This consists of provision for children, the elderly and/or the disabled, green construction, conservation of local distinctiveness, availability of local development, access to open spaces and the adaptability of non-domestic development to changing of needs. All of these design criteria are linked to the concept of social sustainability (Lee & Chan, 2010:285).

4.4.1. Provision for meeting special needs of the disabled, elderly or children

According to Stouten (2005:3) the provision of different types of amenities is vital to a society. The physical infrastructure and public facilities promote social wellbeing as they improve the quality of life. They also enhance the concept of civil pride and reduce social inequality, especially when it comes to addressing the needs of the different groups of people. Public facilities should cater for the basic needs of different groups of citizens. According to Lee and Chan (2010:259) there should be special provisions to ensure that the interest of vulnerable groups such as the disabled or elderly within a community are considered. Table 4.2 shows examples from past projects completed in South Africa. Ramps can be observed for the disabled, parks for children and safer pedestrian walkways to ensure social well-being.

Table 4-2 Application of provision for special needs in existing projects

Application of provision for special needs in existing projects		
		
Cosmo City	Cosmo City	Nelson Mandela Bay

(Source: Read, 2010 and Voges, 2011)

4.4.2 Green Construction

In addition to economic and environmental values, green construction also has positive impacts on the community. Green construction allows a more effective and efficient use of natural resources, which means that non-renewable resources can be preserved for future use (Lee & Chan, 2010:258). Though not an essential part of this study, it is worth mentioning the concept. Green construction conserves the identity of the natural environment and of the area. The following examples display the way in which the Nelson Mandela Bay development agency (Voges, 2011:12) and the Cosmo city project (Read, 2010:10) ensured natural green construction. One can observe how natural products such as rocks and boulders are used in the design process.

Table 4-3 Application of green construction

Application of green construction		
		
Cosmo City	Cosmo City	Nelson Mandela Bay

(Source: Read, 2010 and Voges, 2011)

4.4.3 Adaptability of non-domestic development to the changing needs.

As time passes the political environment and the economy of a city or town changes, something that is quite evident in South Africa (Lee & Chan, 2010:260). The technological levels and demands of citizens change. Buildings or facilities within an urban environment that do not cater for changing needs may become obsolete and old-fashioned even though their service lives have not yet expired.

Yari (2011:2) points out that buildings and their facilities should avoid premature replacement and should therefore be highly adaptable. Lee and Chan (2010:260) declare that adaptability to change is vital to social development and social awareness. Therefore when the urban renewal design creates and takes advantages of a flexible design, changing needs can be transformed into unexpected opportunities (Lee & Chan, 2010:285). Table 4-5 shows an example of the successful implementation of multi-use of areas. The mixed use of economic and social activity is very prominent and has been reported as very successful (Voges, 2011:41).

Table 4-4 Application of local distinctiveness

Application of green construction	
	
Nelson Mandela Bay	Nelson Mandela Bay

(Source: Read, 2010 and Voges, 2011)

4.4.4 Access to open spaces.

Open spaces provide spacious zones in crowded urban areas for social gathering and interaction. The study area of this research is the CBD taxi rank in Potchefstroom. The need for open spaces is quite obvious. Open spaces with greenery in particular are recognized as a major contributor to social wellbeing because they effectively improve the physical health of the residents and reduce human stress (Lee & Chan, 2010:285).

According to Voges (2011:2) the concept of these open space contributions as Lee and Chan (2010:260) describes it is great, but the concept should be studied critically as some social contributions should be considered that might prove this concept less than ideal. When the citizens get into a habit of going to these places, they can make new friends with other residents or meet old friends so that their inter-personal relationship can improve (Lee & Chan, 2010:285). Social interaction is of great importance as part of the concept of access to open spaces, which makes the focus of this study even more important than previously anticipated.

The focus of this study is to understand how the concept of social systems constitutes an integral part in the concept of urban renewal. At this point of the discussion the shortage on social focus is clear, even within a model formulated for sustainable social urban renewal (Lee & Chan, 2010:285).

Table 4-5 Access to open spaces.

Application of green construction		
		
Cosmo City	Nelson Mandela Bay	Nelson Mandela Bay

(Source: Read, 2010 and Voges, 2011)

As sustainability starts to become a more prominent word, the urban renewal process starts to ask the question of whether re-development is sustainable. As previously stated by Lee and Chan (2010:259), one cannot separate the different layers of urban renewal sustainability (Lee & Chan, 2010:285). As social urban renewal has been left out of urban renewal processes, the need is becoming more and more prominent within the changing atmosphere of urban planning to understand social urban renewal as a key factor in the process.

4.5 Conclusion

The main focus of this chapter is social urban renewal and as part of this focus it offered an investigation into the global trends. This contributes to an understanding of urban renewal within the context of social sustainability and expresses the need for studying the social aspects of an area for optimum planning and design.

Urban renewal is described in this chapter as the physical and social rehabilitation of a decayed or dilapidated area. Following the formulation of this definition, the focus zoomed in to social urban renewal. The chapter first considered the international perspective. Grenger's (2001:1) paper for instance shows that the social aspects of an area should be considered one of the most important factors within the urban renewal and design field. Some of the criticism that was studied in the chapter includes things such as that the historical and cultural aspects within planning methods have always been neglected (Lee & Chan, 2010:2145). This strengthens the argument that the social aspects of an area should be considered part of the planning process.

The study moved from an international perspective to urban decay in Africa. It is easy to observe the problem within African cities, specifically Southern Africa. The reasons for urban decay can be described as multi-fold, as most of the problems identified by authors such as Okaba and Nte (2008:12) are social and economic conditions combined with a city's urban planning decisions. The effect of urbanisation cannot be ignored and are considered along with Apartheid policies the main reasons for a great influx and flow of people into our city centres. Hoogendoorn and Marais (2008:12) studied the influence of crime and racism within the urban centre as one of the main reasons for the lack of investment by stakeholders.

Panteleev (1992:26) identified various urban renewal models that can be implemented on a local government level. Most of these models only include public participation by certain social groups, but not the understanding between them. With regard to people on the ground level Ron Thomas (1984:120) identifies various influential role players within the urban renewal process. These role players should be studied in order to understand the social interaction between certain groups to enhance the argument of social awareness within the urban renewal process. Therefore urban renewal can be described as a social process. "The city has something to offer to everyone, since it is created by everyone" This quote from Jane Jacobs (Hospers, 2006:225) is so much in line with the process of urban renewal as socially driven.