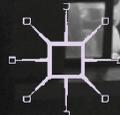
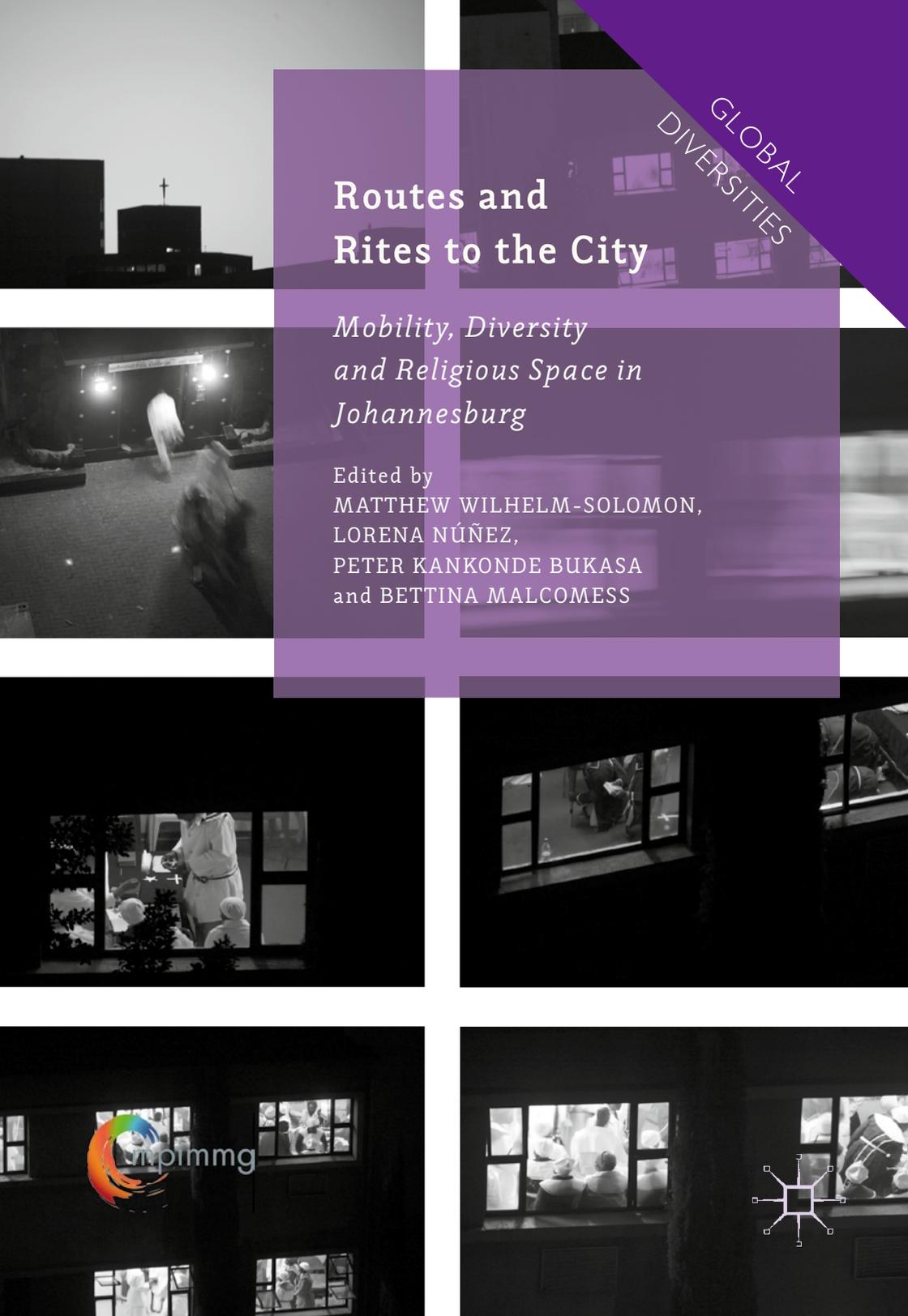


GLOBAL
DIVERSITIES

Routes and Rites to the City

*Mobility, Diversity
and Religious Space in
Johannesburg*

Edited by
MATTHEW WILHELM-SOLOMON,
LORENA NÚÑEZ,
PETER KANKONDE BUKASA
and BETTINA MALCOMESS



Global Diversities

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Editors

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Johannesburg

palgrave
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1

Routes and Rites to the City: Introduction

Matthew Wilhelm-Solomon, Lorena Núñez,
Peter Kankonde, and Bettina Malcomess

Overview

This book is an exploration of the ways religion and diverse forms of mobility have shaped post-apartheid Johannesburg. By mobility, we refer

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From top left: St Mary's the Less Anglican Church, Rosettenville Synagogue, Rosettenville Catholic Church, Pure Fire Miracles Ministries International, Watchman Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement, Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (Rosettenville Branch). Photographs by: Bettina Malcomess and Shogan Naidoo. 2014–2015

to not only transnational and intra-national migration but also movements of commodities, ideas and forms, the traffic of objects, sounds and colours within the city. By taking this approach, we aim to re-theorize religion and urban super-diversity (Vertovec 2007, 2015a, b): here super-diversity is viewed not simply in terms of the plurality of religious, ethnic, national and racial groups, but conceived in terms of the multiple *movements and enclosures* through which religion produces and permeates urban space. The relationship between religion, mobility and urbanization involves both temporal and spatial diversity and the shifting borders of spatial production, belonging and exclusion. This is a constant process of territorialization and de-territorialization of physical, aesthetic and symbolic forms of the city. We argue here that while religion allows for a sense of belonging and capacitates movement, freedom and aspiration in the city, it is also complicit in establishing new forms of enclosure, moral order and spatial and gendered control.

In reading the city through the intersecting phenomena of religion and mobility, we aim to provide a reading of post-apartheid Johannesburg that has been widely neglected in the literature on the city, as well as engaging with and advancing global debates around religion, urbanization and diversity. Here we focus on Johannesburg in its singularity not only as a

recently “post-apartheid” city, with particular configurations of situated histories, but also as a case study of a city of the Global South or “near-South” (Simone 2014)—post-colonial cities characterized by extreme disparities and proximity both to capitalist urban development and to extreme instability. After the end of apartheid in 1994, Johannesburg remains a city characterized by high levels of social inequality, a post-colonial legacy, defined by highly diverse forms of mobility, social identity, economic strategies and collaborations. This approach is not in any way to deny the persistence of apartheid-era racial and class inequality in the city, nor the continual processes of marginalization and dispossession through post-apartheid capitalism: rather our aim is to trace how religious forms and mobilities produce and saturate the circulation of capital and labour, and the spatiality of the post-apartheid city. These are imbricated in intersecting forms of social and moral order, exchange, belonging and exclusion in the urban context. Hence, this volume explores the intricate cartography of religion in Johannesburg, covering a great diversity of practices and spaces. Here we draw on perspectives from religious history, anthropology, urbanism, aesthetics, critical theory, sociology and theology. Adding to the flourishing body of theory on religion, migration and urbanism, we show how the transnational dimensions of migration and religion are continually being territorialized and de-territorialized, and also the ways these processes operate *within* the city.

Whereas most recent volumes addressing religion, migration and urbanization (discussed below) have adopted a transnational comparative perspective, our approach focuses on a single city: Johannesburg. While this is a multi-authored volume, it was developed through a series of dialogues and collaborations hosted by the African Centre for Migration and Society (ACMS) at the University of the Witwatersrand though including a diversity of scholars from different universities and insitutions, and funded by Max Planck’s Super-Diversity South Africa project. The process involved a transnational group of authors involving South Africans, Zimbabweans, a Congolese, two Scandinavians, a Chilean and a North American. However, the project was developed and situated within a University of the Global South and located within the site of study. Several of the authors collaborated with one another on research, and even those who have sole authored their pieces attended a series of conversations and workshops discussing material in progress—hence there are themes and arguments which recur

across chapters, illuminating diverse dimensions of the city. In this sense, this volume is closer to what Susan Reynolds Whyte (2014) calls a “polygraph” rather than a typical edited collection. We argue that a case study of a single city viewed through multiple and transnational perspectives allows us to view the forms of mobility and diversity operating within and beyond the city. In this introduction, we will provide a broad background to the city of Johannesburg and situate this book’s theoretical and empirical engagements.

Diversity, Dispossession and Religion in Johannesburg

The city of Johannesburg was born in 1886 as a mining encampment, after the discovery of gold-bearing quartz.¹ From a piece of *uitvalgrond* or abandoned land in the middle of eight farms, public diggings were declared—an explosive moment giving rise over the century that followed to one of Africa’s largest metropolises. From all over the country and world, prospectors gathered in Johannesburg. While white prospectors competed over digs and fortunes, particularly with the onset of deep-level mining, continued processes of colonial dispossession ensured that there was cheap black labour to exploit: mining compounds were created. Johannesburg, initially under the control of the Afrikaner leader Paul Kruger became a key site in the inter-colonial war between the British and the Afrikaners, into which many black Africans were conscripted. In the early twentieth century, the demand for cheap labour led to migrant labour coming in, not only from all over the region but also from India and China.

The city from its outset was characterized by biblical references as “the new Babylon” and “new Nineveh”—defined as it was by illicit markets in liquor, crime and sex work, as well as the equally shadowy and speculative nature of gold prospecting (Van Onselen 2001, 3). Compelled by a sense of moral dissolution and decay, religious groups and institutions established

¹For an overview of the history of Johannesburg and its origins, see Beavon (2004) and Van Onselen (2001).

themselves in the city. While mainline churches—Catholic, Presbyterian and Anglican along with Jewish synagogues—were established in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, emergent religious forms linked to migrant labour were also a feature of the city’s earliest history. In particular, Christian Zionism was a form adopted from an American evangelical movement, the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church (CCAC) founded in Chicago in 1896, eventually establishing a Zion City, and drawing its following from marginalized urban populations. In 1904, proselytizers from Zion City came to Johannesburg to grant membership to a group of black South Africans. The Zionist movement spread across the country, being adapted and innovated into various urban and rural local forms, the largest of these being the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) established in 1925, with its headquarters Zion City Moria in Limpopo province (Comaroff 1985; Sundkler 1961; West 1975).

What is clear here is that a super-diversity of ethnic, national, racial and religious groups was a feature of Johannesburg from its early decades—but this diversity was highly stratified and characterized by exploitation and repeated dispossession. As Chipkin (1993, 195) notes with regard to the early migration into Johannesburg: “the growing tide of migration that took countrymen into the industrial towns of South Africa cannot be divorced from large-scale dispossession.” The history of Johannesburg in colonial and apartheid times was also one of intense dispossession. The first mass evictions in Johannesburg, as Keith Beavon (2004) has documented, were in 1904 and involved burning down the houses of an Indian community in the city, justified by the threat of bubonic plague. The 1923 Natives (Urban Areas) Act aimed to regulate black migration and residency in Johannesburg and laid the basis for apartheid-era urban segregation throughout the 1920s and 1930s, with mass evictions of black residents from the inner city to the urban peripheries. After 1948, apartheid-era legislation was to solidify the racial division of South Africa and its cities, and black workers had to live in townships like Soweto on the urban peripheries (Tomlison et al. 2003). The 1950s saw the mass removals of black communities in Sophiatown in the northwest of the city. While the period from the 1970s to 1980s saw continued evictions from inner-city areas, these slowed in the 1980s due to anti-eviction activism and legislation leading to increased multi-

racial residence in inner-city areas (Beavon 2004; Marx and Rubin 2008; Winkler 2013). In the latter years of apartheid, while the government attempted to stop racial mixing and exclude black populations, civil society activism in Johannesburg managed to partially prevent evictions from the city (Winkler 2013). During the 1990s and 2000s, however, there was heightened mobility of white capital and residents from inner-city Johannesburg to previously whites-only suburbs, resulting in increased dereliction of inner-city infrastructures (Chipkin 2008; Zack et al. 2010). The post-apartheid city was to be reshaped substantially, not just by the breakdown of racially structured influx control but also by new patterns of migration. However, the role of religion in these changes has been substantially ignored—it is to this end that this volume aims to contribute.

Re-reading Post-apartheid Johannesburg

An indication of the lack of attention to religion in the study of the post-apartheid city is in the fact that the introduction of the Harrison et al.'s (2014) expansive edited volume *Changing Space, Changing City: Johannesburg After Apartheid*, in an exhaustive overview of the literature on the city, makes little mention of religion. Their volume does, however, contribute to redressing this absence, containing Winkler's contribution on Hillbrow arguing that "credoscapes" formed by faith-based organizations of different denominations have been important in creating "nodes of hope, order and stability amid perceived chaos and decay" (Winkler 2014, 492), a narrative piece by Kuljian (2014) on migration and the Central Methodist Church and two pieces on the dynamism of Islam in Johannesburg (Dinath et al. 2014; Sadouni 2014) and drawing attention to the contemporary and historical dynamism of Islam in Johannesburg. *Routes and Rites* traverses some of the same spaces, though it is, however, the first volume to offer an explicit focus on religion in Johannesburg and a sustained engagement with its implications for theorizing urban spaces, mobilities and materialities—looking not only at issues of belonging and exclusion but also at the super-diverse forms and processes through which religion is enmeshed in urban life.

Much of the literature on post-apartheid Johannesburg has primarily been concerned with racial and class segregation, criminality and security, the expansion of private sector regeneration is shaping urban space or its architectural heritage and public memorials (see inter alia, Beall et al. 2002; Tomlison et al. 2003; Murray 2008, 2011). A primary debate on the post-apartheid city has been of the effects of the expansion of neoliberal instrumentality and marketization on managing urban regeneration, and the ways in which these have re-inscribed class divisions, albeit with some limited de-racialization. Religion in the city is mostly considered an epiphenomenon or in a functionalist sense as a lost refuge for the marginalized, a “sanctuary in a heartless world” (Murray 2011, 171), but it is not accorded real force in shaping and reading the post-apartheid city.

A second body of theory has been primarily concerned with emergent lines of migration, affiliation, alliance and cultural form. The reshaping of the city through patterns of migration, both within South Africa and from across its borders, has led to a plurality of new social identities, alliances and engagements and evasions of the state and police (Hornberger 2011; Nuttall and Mbembe 2008; Simone 2008; Vearey 2010; Wanjiku Kihato 2014; Landau 2009; Landau and Freemantle 2010). Notably, Mbembe and Nuttall’s (2008) *Johannesburg: The Elusive Metropolis* has given attention to the *Afropolitan* form of Johannesburg—its emergent forms of consumption, migration and cultural production. Malcomess and Kreutzfeldt (2013), inspired by the work of Walter Benjamin, trace the historical evolution of the city, its passages, waterways and *uitvalgrond* (surplus ground), along with its archives, as a way of reading the interplay between aesthetic and material forms, and the inscriptions of memory and dispossession onto these. However, they acknowledge that the religious and spiritual dimensions of the city are not reflected in their work, and it is in part from this absence that this project departs.

In particular, it has been through studies of migration, or migrant spaces, that religion has re-entered urban theory. For instance, Landau (2009, 197) has argued that “religion is one of a number of strategies for negotiating inclusion and belonging while transcending ethnic, national and transnational paradigms” and “by using strategies of partial inclusion and claiming rights, the religious practices of international migrants find ways to meld a normative social order, and to claim rights and transience”

(Landau 2014, 301). Tanja Winkler's (2013, 2014) study of Hillbrow, one of the most diverse areas of the country, and a primary residential area for non-national migrants, has given attention to the significance of faith-based organization in the inner city and the role these could play in urban regeneration policies, while being significantly excluded by state and private sector-driven policies. In particular, the xenophobic violence of May 2008 which began in the township of Alexandra, but spread throughout the inner city leaving thousands displaced, has provoked a major re-evaluation of our understanding of the city and post-apartheid South Africa more generally (Landau et al., 2011 for an account of this violence). Nationwide, it led to over 60 deaths and more than 100 000 displaced. It began in the township of Alexandra on the outskirts of Johannesburg, but spread into the inner-city, and nationwide. Religious groups played a major role in response to this crisis, and this in turn drew attention towards the role of religion in the city (Bompani 2013; Sadouni 2013; Kuljian 2013; Hankela 2014; Hartman-Pickerill, this volume). A volume *Healing and Change in the City of Gold* edited by Palmary, Hamber and Núñez (2015), and also developed at the ACMS, addresses the issue of religion in Johannesburg but primarily from a social-psychological rather than urbanist perspective. Hence *Routes & Rites* is the first full volume that aims to rethink post-apartheid diversity in the city of Johannesburg through the lens of urbanism and religion.

In the volume, we have chosen to take a broader perspective and to focus on spatiality and mobility, rather than only on migration. Johannesburg has often been framed as a city of migrants with a "long history of local and international migration" (COJ 2013). The 2000s in particular elicited a radical shift in migratory patterns in South Africa and Johannesburg, particularly due to the political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe, which led to South Africa becoming one of the largest recipients of asylum seekers in the world in the first decade of the millennium; although in recent years, with the civil conflict in Syria and the so-called Migrant Crisis in Europe, this has changed. At present, it has almost 300,000 asylum seekers and refugees,² though certainly many more undocumented migrants. Though census data may not reflect the actual dynamics of migration, given the high numbers of undocumented migrants in the city, they do reflect some of the changing dynamics of migration. In 2001, 97.1 % of

²<http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e485aa6.html>

the residents of Johannesburg were born in South Africa, while in 2011 this decreased to 84.6%. The majority of non-nationals in 2011 came from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region (7.5 %), with 0.7 % coming from the rest of Africa, 0.5 % of the UK and Europe and 0.5 % from Asia. This reflects overall an increase of 9.8 % in international migration in the decade from 2001 to 2010. However, we cannot only view migration as a trans-border phenomena: 48 % of the residents of Johannesburg were born outside of the province of Gauteng in 2011, compared to 2001 in which only 7.4 % were born.

This reflects that migration to the city is predominantly from within South Africa and not cross-border migration. Hence, the most radical shifts in the city cannot be thought of as a result of trans-border migration. Nonetheless, in the inner-city areas the diversity of groupings is evident and well documented in ethnographic studies, reflected also in this volume. We do not, however, draw a clear distinction between national and non-national migrants; our concern here is with the diversity of processes of emplacement, rather than with a taxonomic categorization of migrants. Inasmuch as the apartheid regime aimed at rendering black populations “temporary sojourners” in the city, this effectively aimed to territorialize belonging in “ancestral homelands”: however, in the post-apartheid era, borders between insiders and outsiders, citizen and non-citizen continue to structure and constrain mobility (Burchardt 2013; Nyamnjoh 2006). Hence, we must consider the “migrant” a particular effect of territorializing bureaucratic and military regimes (both the apartheid state and the contemporary asylum and deportation regime). Hence, while we give much attention to processes of human mobility, we do not aim to re-impose borders between citizens and migrants. Furthermore, in recent studies of mobility and globalization in Africa, mobility has been treated in terms of not just the mobility of people but also “resources, ideas, finances and objects” (Langwick et al. 2012, 8). An analysis of mobility hence provides a broader and more encompassing lens than an analysis of “migration” and also allows the focus to encompass broader assemblages of people, spaces and things. Here we follow this idea again not only with the attentiveness to transnational forms of mobility but also in terms of attempts at class mobility and the ways in which religion shapes forms of economic and social aspiration.

A final point to make here is that the absence of religion in contemporary studies of Johannesburg is striking, particularly given the rich historiographic and ethnographic study of religion in South Africa and Southern Africa (see *inter alia*, Comaroff 1985; Comaroff and Comaroff 1991, 2009; Chidester 2012; Sundkler 1961; Gunner 2004; Ngubane 1977; West 1975). These studies among others have traced how religious orders, rituals and mobilities have shaped Southern African history, indelibly inscribed within both the colonial past and post-colonial present. However, the impact of these studies on reading the post-apartheid city has often been elided. A central concern in this volume is that contemporary forms of religious diversity must be understood from an historical perspective. As such, we view the urban as a dense constellation of spatial and temporal forms of diversity. In developing this volume, in addition to contributing to re-theorization of diversity, we also aim to contribute to the emerging and vital study of urbanisms in Africa and the Global or “near-” South (Pieterse 2011; Simone 2014).

Rites and Rights: Engaging the Religious Turn in Urban Studies

The chapters in this volume are shaped by encounters with two diverse streams of theory: first, religious sociology and anthropology stemming from Weber and Durkheim, and encompassing the rich tradition of religious studies in Southern Africa, and, second, recent trends in urban theory particularly informed by urban geography and the work of Lefebvre (1991, 2000), along with recent work in assemblage theory, particularly informed by the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari 2004, among others. As a point of departure, let us begin with Durkheim’s conception of “rite.” He argues that “rites can be distinguished from other human practices—for example, moral practices—only by the special nature of the object ... The special nature of that object is expressed in the belief” (Durkheim, 2008, 40). Durkheim classifies the object of religious rites in his well-known distinction between the sacred and the profane, and the rite requires a sacred object. Durkheim writes that the “sacred and the profane are always and everywhere conceived by the

human intellect as separate genera, as two worlds with nothing in common” (Durkheim, 2008, 42). Almost all the chapters of this volume show, however, that the relations between the sacred and the profane are fluid and unstable: rites are not simply structured by belief; rather rituals and material practices involve the constant reworking of categories and objects of belief. Rites or rituals are generative, creative, unstable and innovated (Appadurai 2013, 192). Rites produce their objects and are shaped by them, rather than the materiality of rites being ordered through an abstract belief. The chapters in this volume show that the objects and spaces of rites not only are shaped and produced by transnational and urban movements but also are themselves mobile. Religious rites are enfolded into the movement of trans-border migration, traffic, commodity circuits, security enclosures and so on.

From here, we enter the domain of urban theory: how then do we understand the spaces and objects of rites, and what is the relation of rites to rights? The connection is more than simply that these are homophones: at stake is the production and transformation of urban space.

As Lefebvre in his well-known essay writes that the “right to the city” can only be formulated “as a transformed and right to urban life” (Lefebvre 2000, 158)—of which, he notes, “only the working class can become the agent, the social carrier or support of the realisation.” Lefebvre (1991) views space as socially produced and relational, encompassing lines of movement, and not as an abstract container. David Harvey (2012, 23), Lefebvre’s most prominent contemporary exponent, has reformulated Lefebvre’s vision by arguing that “the right to the city is, therefore, far more than a right of individual or group access to the resources that the city embodies: it is a right to change and reinvent the city more after our heart’s desires. It is, moreover, a collective rather than individual right, since reinventing the city inevitably depends on the exercise of collective power over the process of urbanization.” Harvey frames this collective struggle, as Lefebvre does, in Marxist terms of global working-class struggle.

Our emphasis on rites rather than explicitly formulated “rights” is not that we deny that urban regeneration schemes continue to dispossess and dislocate precariously placed residents in Johannesburg and globally (see Wilhelm-Solomon 2016) nor that the struggles for the rights in the city can be collective and transformative. Rather, such a perspective seems

to bracket out the lives of many who seek personal mobility and self-transformation through other forms, notably spirituality or religion, and that claims to urban space are often made through religious rites and appropriations of space, not collective rights-based movements. In fact, with the exception of the Central Methodist Mission (Hankela, this volume), few religious organizations in this study have actively mobilized for socio-economic and legal rights through formal civic, political and legal mobilizations. The relation of rites to rights is hence formed through social and material practice within the urban fabric.

Lefebvre's work has had a profound impact on thinking about the relation between religion and spatiality, and provides a basis for the reflections of several contributors to this volume, as it has inspired other studies theorizing the religious shaping of urban forms. The recent volume *Rescripting Religion in the City: Migration and Religious Identity in the Modern Metropolis* addresses this convergence most explicitly. The focus of this collection is "on the ways in which religious constructions of identity and the ways of imagining the world have engaged with the contingencies and pluralism of migrational life" (Garnett and Harris 2013, 2). The editors draw attention to the complex relationship between space and place and draw particularly on a Lefebvrian notion of space to highlight the historical, sensorial and affective relationship to religious spaces in the city.

Another emergent theme in urban religious studies is the engagement with the work of Deleuze and Guattari and assemblage theory more widely (see MacFarlane 2011; Farias 2011; Simone 2014), and the complex relationship between territorialization and space. The collection *Global Prayers* by the Metrozones Project provides a transnational and trans-disciplinary approach to understanding the ways in which "the urban and the religious reciprocally interact, mutually interlace, producing, defining and transforming each other" (Lanz 2013, 26). The work is oriented around three theoretical manoeuvres: first, drawing on the concept of 'worlding' (see Ong 2011) which involves the localized appropriation and reworking of globalized commodity circuits, imaginations and flows of signs and value. Second, they draw on the Deleuzian concept of the assemblage focusing on the dense interconnections between multiple forms, both material and spiritual. Their third theoretical manoeuvre is

the inclusion of multiple methodologies and modes of research, such as artistic practice, in interrogating the relation between religious and aesthetic forms of the city.

The collection *Topographies of Faith* (edited by Becci et al. 2013) explores the ways in which religion and urbanity “are transformed together by current social processes” and pose the questions of how “the spatial organization of cities and spatializations of religious communities, practices and aspirations” are related to one another (Burchardt and Becci 2013, 13). They argue that social relations can be spatialized through two primary processes: first, drawing on Berking (2006, cited in Burchardt and Becci 2013, 13), the demarcated and territorialized borders of political authority, and in particular the nation state; and second, drawing on Castells (1996, cited in Burchardt and Becci 2013, 13), a de-territorialized form that exceeds the boundaries of national borders and enclosures and that form around global flows. They argue that “the deterritorialisation of religion is primarily made visible through the ways in which transnational migration both uncouples and reconfigures place and territory from religious identity and community,” showing how “the entanglements of religion and nationalism on the one hand, and global denominationalism on the other are two crucial horizons through which religion is folded into urban modernity and must be interpreted” (Burchardt and Becci 2013, 14–15).

Another key domain of debate has been regarding the role of the “sacred” in the city in light of critiques of Durkheim. The volume *The Sacred in the City* (eds Gomez and Van Herck, 2013) poses questions about the problem of the sacred and the magical in the modern metropolis. It deals with the sacred as a political, aesthetic, cultural and architectonic category for understanding modernity and modernization. The sacred is treated as circumscribed to the religious sphere and instrumental in forming identities of the urban multi-cultural dwellers. The sacred is also treated as an aesthetic experience, which helps to understand non-rational and non-intentional social binding, as a form of primary sociality. Another key example of the exploration of the sacred in the urban is the work of De Boeck (2013, 529) who explores the ways “in which urban cultures and infrastructures mediate diverse practices, discourses and affects in the various domains of the sacred.” With refer-

ence to Kinshasa, he introduces the term “Polis-Sacred” to indicate that “sacred and the polis have become intricately intertwined” (ibid., 537). An emergent theme in this work, as in others within the religious turn in urban theory, is the unstable relation between sacral and secular space (see Lanz 2013), along with the blurring of distinctions between sacred objects and commodities.

What is distinctive in our approach in this volume within this current religious turn in urbanist research is that it takes the case study of a single city rather than providing a transnational comparative dimension. We believe that, more than just a matter of scale, this approach reveals the dense spatial and territorial inscriptions at play *within* a particular city. We argue that this provides a route into re-theorizing the relation of religion to urban diversity.

Rethinking Religious Diversity in Johannesburg

“Super-diversity” in Vertovec’s (2007, a, b) formulation is intended to account for the proliferation of multiple categories and subdivisions of groups in the contemporary metropolis—based on religion, ethnicity, history of migration, race and so on. This formulation also accounts for the layering of multiple historical forms of migration and diversity. While we are influenced by this approach, we aim to re-theorize an understanding of this layered temporal and spatial diversity in relation to urban space, as well as viewing diversity in terms of the multiple *processes* by which religion and mobility shape the urban. In South Africa, according to Blom Hansen (quoted in Vertovec 2015b, 14) “Urban dwellers ... have developed a kind of agility and ability to live simultaneously in many different spheres”—here we give attention to the ways in which rites and religion are enfolded into the very plurality and proximity of these spheres.

Vertovec (2015b) proposes a triadic model of understanding the relation of diversity to complex social environment in terms of “configurations—representations—encounters.” Configurations refer to the

“structural conditions within which people carry out their lives” (Vertovec 2015b, 15). Representations refer to the cognitive, discursive and symbolic forms shaping social power relations; and, finally, “encounters” refer to the domain of “human interactions.” In our perspective, these formulations are powerful, but lack a theorization of spatiality and mobility, that is the ways in which these triadic forms become territorialized, connect with one another and are reworked in particular settings. We argue here that diversity is not something that only takes place within urban spaces and territories; rather, its forms are part of the very processes through which urban spaces are produced and formed. A case study of a single city testifies to the very plurality of ways in which flows of people and objects become entangled in religious rites and forms, and in doing so become implicated in the city’s spatial and temporal formation. In developing this position in relation to religion, it is important to briefly account for how religious diversity has been framed in social science literature.

Religious diversity or pluralism generally conveys the idea that there exists today an astonishingly diverse range of religious beliefs and practices in many societies around the world (King 2008). Scholars mainly use, depending on their disciplinary perspective, the concept of religious diversity to refer to either positions or attitudes regarding the issues of the truth claims of one religion vis-à-vis others, or the plurality of religious offerings, or again the sociological effects of religious diversification in a given society (Wilde et al. 2010; Miller 2002). Sociologists of religion have mainly debated the effects of religious diversification on the salience of religion in people’s lives and their religious participation. Hence, religious diversity has been discussed mainly as demographic reality.

Historically, religious plurality has been perceived to have a negative impact on religious beliefs and activity (Hume 1762, cited in Eswaran 2011). The first classical theory against religious diversity was proposed that it would lead to conflict and public disorder and reduce the authority of religious claims by infusing doubt about the truth of those claims (Hume 1762, cited in Eswaran 2011; Stark 1995, 431). The second classical theory assumed modernism’s secularization effect on industrialized societies. Eminent scholars such as Emile Durkheim, Max Weber and Peter Berger (in his early work) all argued that increased industrialization and religious pluralism in most western societies accounted

for a perceived diminishing religiosity (Berger 1967; Van Tubergen and Sindradóttir 2011; Eswaran 2011). These academic discussions of the “old” pluralism saw the existence of a wide variety of Christian denominations as evidence of a pluralistic society (Machacek 2003, 146). The argument that over time modern and industrialized societies would experience the withering and disappearance of religion has long been taken to be self-evident. However, these theses have been firmly rebutted in recent scholarship on religion in the city as discussed above (Burchardt and Becci 2013; Becker et al. 2013).

While the above discussion is concerned mainly with inter-congregational religious pluralism at a societal level, a variant literature has instead spawned considerable work focusing on intra-congregational or individual-level belief diversity within denominations and within congregations understood to be the primary cause of religious diversity (See Gill 2003; Stark and Finke 2000; Olson 1999; Stark and Bainbridge 1985). This literature shows that there is diversity, for example, between main-lines and liberal denominations, while there is comparatively less diversity of belief in conservative denominations (Poloma 1989 and Yamane 2007, cited in Reimer 2011). Even within orthodoxy, for example, there is a degree of variety between congregations in the same denomination (Reimer 2011).

Recent work in urban studies has developed the themes of diversity in relation to the urban. In particular cities in the Global South, exhibit what Ajay Ghandi (2013, 191, 204) calls, with reference to Old Delhi, “radical heterogeneity” where we witness a complex play between “demarcation and border crossing.” While ethnic or religious lines may be established in discourse or at times of violence, these are frequently transgressed in daily life. Burchardt and Becci (2013) call attention to both the horizontal diversity between groups and the importance of the “pragmatic historicity” of the religious diversity involving “demarcating pasts, confronting presents and envisioning futures.” Kihato et al. (2010, 3) develop the notion of urban diversity as involving “ethnic, racial, national, religious, gender, class and sexual differences, which are at once sources of creativity and innovation but also of conflict and contradictions.” These theorizations point to the multiplicity and fluidity of diversity in contemporary urban spaces, and the fact that they are a source of