



**Advancing the exploration of engaged creative-placemaking
amongst universities and communities for social cohesion in
South Africa**

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Abstract

This article frames a discussion on how South African universities and communities can co-create university spaces that facilitate repairing the country’s dented social, economic and political infrastructure through creative-placemaking. The first section discusses historical issues which have a material bearing on how universities can and should frame community engagement in South Africa. It pays close attention to how post-apartheid nation building is hindered by the remnants from the past and is dislocated to both the present and the future. The article also brings into question the type and role of leadership, both in universities and communities. The final section of the article presents a framework for engaged creative-placemaking delineating the antecedents that are needed for the university and the community to successfully work together in achieving a just society through creative-placemaking. Improving place liveability through creative-placemaking has the potential to stimulate local economies and leads to cultural diversity, civic engagement and increased innovation.

For Peer Review

1. Introduction

South Africa's socio-economic fabric is torn by the violence bedevilling the nation. Most difficult is that the post-apartheid era appears to be a replica of the nation's conflicted apartheid past persisting in South African communities and universities. Present day transformational challenges are worsened by the stagnating economy and political intolerance as well as competition for resources. Ordinary citizens seem to have mortgaged their agency to politicians and abdicated their duty towards making their lives better. As a result, South Africa is becoming a welfare state, as shown by the fact that "a quarter of South Africans rely on social grants" (Fanta, Berkowitz, Khumalo et al, 2017:1).

Amidst the confusion precipitated by violence and injustices, one of the challenges being grappled with is to retain humanity as the dream of the rainbow nation is fast fading (Buqa, 2015:7). There is an urgent need for South African communities to work towards building and strengthening a just and cohesive society. Bank, Ndinda and Hart (2018:1) believe that "The crisis of post-apartheid South Africa is centrally a crisis of placemaking. It is about the failure to undo apartheid place-making trajectories and the associated spatial, social and economic consequences of these, which reproduce poverty and inequality". Suffice it to say the post-apartheid South Africa is failing to inspire and create a place reflective of the aspirations of the majority of the citizens.

The country needs both economic and social transformation (Shefer, Strebel, Ngabaza et al. 2018) which potentially can be facilitated via engaged creative-placemaking. While the term engaged creative-placemaking is original to this research, the practice is not. Widely, the practice is just called placemaking the adjective 'engaged' is meant to make it clear that the proposal here is ideally led by engaged scholarship stakeholders. The significance of both the arts and community engagement to liveability and community wellbeing is clear (Saayman and Saayman, 2006; Gregory, 2016; Verseput, 2017), yet opacity surrounding

the nexus of the two practices and conditions for creative-placemaking presents a major weakness to effective policy and planning.

This proposal is premised on understanding that arts-informed spatial imagining can “shape the social, physical, cultural and economic identity of a community, spurring economic development, creating stronger social cohesion and revitalizing disinvested communities” (Rapson, 2013:2). Comparatively, in African communities, arts activities play a utilitarian role, paralleling the social infrastructure influencing organisations, individuals and communities to define community life (Johnston, 1973; Impey and Nausbaum, 1996; Opara, 2006). There is also mounting expectation for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in South Africa to take responsibility and act as “justice-makers” in an unjust society, thereby contributing to the enlargement of the public sphere and to becoming a “space of emancipation, subtracted from the state” (Keet, 2014:860). As a result, the role of academia in fashioning solutions to society’s most pressing problems, imagining and shaping a better future is gaining increased traction in South Africa (Preece, 2017; Mthembu and Bawa, 2018).

University-community engagement provides academia and society with an opportunity to pursue change which leans towards social justice and acknowledges the pluri-versatility of knowledges, thus banding intellectually committed grassroots scholarship with theoretical explorations (Motala and Salim 2015: 1). Academics are expected to, contribute, and some are already contributing, towards addressing the challenges the country faces, such as inequality, social exclusion, poverty and unemployment, through innovative and people-centred initiatives (Bender, 2008; Hall, 2010; Preece, 2013). Society and students are however not oblivious to the universities’ deficiencies. The student-led fees must fall protest is testament that society is questioning the university’s relevance and calling for the decolonisation of their curriculum. This study therefore challenges current thinking in terms of how to enhance social justice through engaged creative-placemaking. Our challenge to understanding both the conceptualisation of engaged creative-placemaking and the pursuit of social cohesion is primarily based on delineating the antecedents that are needed for the university and the community to successfully work together in achieving a just society through creative-placemaking. As a result, this article attempts to address the following question: 1) what is the contribution of engaged scholarship in inspiring and forming the conditions and pursuit of positive change through creative-placemaking?

For the purposes of completeness, the authors will refer to historical issues which have a material bearing on achieving social justice in South Africa. This background is also called in as an aid to frame the need for universities to engage in community engagement and for local authorities to achieve sustainable development through genuinely engaging communities in integrated development planning. The

background to the study, which will briefly outline the South African social, economic and political environment and its fit for creative-placemaking, is set out below.

2. South Africa: an injured nation

South Africa, like most parts of the world, is at present challenged by the sad realities of aggression and violence. The country sits in a precarious situation where some of the social ills are not products of the present circumstances. the apartheid government created and legalised a hierarchal society of inequity. The Gini co-efficient in South Africa shows that the levels of inequality are grossly high, ranging from 0.660 to 0.696 (Bhorat, 2015). The wealthiest 20% of the country's population consumes approximately 65% of total expenditure, while those occupying lower rungs of the economy consume less than 3% (World Bank, 2018).

A culture of violence emanating from the apartheid past persists to date (Hall, 2015:73). What makes violence in South Africa a curious case to research is that it is widespread, yet South Africans appear inured to the horror for the most part. Simpson (1993:10) argues that violence in South Africa has come to be regarded as an appropriate means of resolving social, political and even domestic conflict. The media is filled daily with reportage on tragedies showing how much of a disintegrated community South Africa has become (Jacobs, 2014). Desai (2018:2) observes that separate group areas persist in South Africa, though they have no legal basis. The previous Zuma and Mbeki administrations have been accused of being incompetent and ineffective in dealing with the violence in communities (Hall, 2015:72-73). These challenges are symptomatic of a society which needs social cohesion, hence the urgent need for intervention.

Currently, there is a rise in Black racists who are often thought of as venting out the frustrations of the apartheid regime (Matolino, 2013:53). Closely related to this, some white people feel that policies such as affirmative action and broad-based black economic empowerment are racist as they seek to exclude white people from benefitting from job and business opportunities (Herman 2008: 6; Goga, n.d.). There are instances where rich powerful black people are oppressing other black people through abusing tax monies (Martin and Solomon, 2016). The Black elite are involved in shady deals, stripping the government of resources under the guise of fighting white monopoly capital. Desai (2018:13) observes that "the immiseration of the African poor is [opportunistically] blamed on Whites and Indians who dominate the economy", consequently leading to further social disintegration. However, there is a counter argument that Black people cannot be racist due to their historical position as an inferior race (San Juan, 2002; McKaiser, 2015).

There are growing incidences of both tribalism and xenophobia (Baloyi, 2018; Claassen, 2017). While the mentioned case of black on black hate can easily be classified as corruption, there are some instances where the hate is believed to be in part a product of an injured national psyche. According to Mangena (2018:) “Black leaders, who were themselves brutalised by the racist system, are not immune to the internalisation of the brutalisation of the black body. That might begin to explain, at least in part, why black leaders would continue to brutalise their own people”. As a result, Black people have to some extent become inured to the suffering of a black body due to apartheid, carrying the past into the present.

South Africa experiences recurrent spats of xenophobic violence. Present day challenges are worsened by the stagnating economy, political intolerance, as well as the unprecedented competition for resources. Frequently, foreigners are accused and attacked for compounding the burden facing the country (Oyelana, 2016). These xenophobic tendencies, which often target Black foreigners, are not predicated on a simplistic and an otherwise easy to cure hate for foreign nationals. The violence and social disintegration snaring the nation “are a product of systemic historical inequalities and injustices with roots buttressed in a racialized system” (Mutero and Dzomba, 2018, :1). Xenophobia discourages the long-term integration of international migrants and acts as a barrier to an otherwise economically beneficial population movement. Xenophobia is happening parallel to many Higher Education Institutions encouraging foreign students to register at their institutions.

The preceding discussion profiled a set of important questions, challenges, options and imperatives facing South Africa on the eve of the silver jubilee. Moving forward from the diagnosis, the authors focus on the prognosis. The crisis requires that all residents of South Africa assume active citizenship, citizens “who consciously think about themselves and the roles that they play in public life” (Mathews, 2013, :1). The edict that “South Africa belongs to all who live in it...” has to be given life if South Africa is to progress as a nation.

The problems that the nation is facing by no means require one group or hierarchised bureaucratic effort. Currently, people develop and exercise a weird form of leadership which leads to contrived agency (Reinelt, 2010). A select few individuals identify problems and propose solutions on behalf of the entire population. In addition, a very small percentage of the privileged few have exhibited craft literacy, creating well-oiled machines and efficient systems. Unfortunately, most government departments, universities and public and private institutions are led by people who generally lack both craft literacy and craft competency. Craft literacy here means the innovative ability to come up with models and schemata that speak to existential realities and lived realities as a people. Craft competency speaks to the ability to adopt best practices from elsewhere and re-designing them for one’s own environment. It is quite evident that South Africa has

disastrous leadership in many public enterprises. The country requires creative and inclusive leadership which stimulates active citizenship to “face head-on the complex and pressing challenges confronting business and society in a problem-driven, solution-oriented and collaborative manner” (Gordon Institute of Business Leadership, 2017:1).

In the past, South African universities followed separatist apartheid policies. While these policies have been abolished, the apartheid tendencies still persist. There are stark dissimilarities between historically Black universities and the privileged former White universities which have led to protests and ongoing debates on decolonising the universities. Attention has been given to how the curriculum at universities disenfranchises previously disadvantaged members of the community in particular and the whole student community in general through its curriculum borders. Amin (2016 :294) posits that the content taught at university is “decontextualised, ahistorical and perhaps, irrelevant preparation for post institutional intents”. While, the authors agree with this observation, they also think that the physical and social infrastructure at universities is community averse. As a result, it creates students and lecturers who half-heartedly commit to contributing towards changing the world. Soudien (2012:8) notes that “a conclusion to which one is forced to come is that the academy has side-stepped the issues placed in front of them and looked in the other direction”. As a result, university campuses in South Africa are fast turning into havens for crime. This is particularly the case with the so-called Black universities, that experience violent protests at the beginning of almost every semester. The authors are held to a strong belief that besides the usually challenges such as affordability and accommodation the university’s physical and by extension social infrastructure remains exotic to the experiences of the student. There is an urgent need to disobey and disrupt both the curriculum borders and the imposing physical infrastructure in ways that enhance place liveability, creativity, innovation and the generation of new knowledge.

3. Making a case for social cohesion through engaged creative-placemaking

Using lenses from creative-placemaking theorists and Lefebvre’s Theory of Production of Space, this study investigates some of the conditions and factors that may influence social cohesion, social transformation and place liveability through creative-placemaking. Creative-placemaking is an evolving field of practice that intentionally leverages the power of the arts, culture and creativity to serve a community’s interest while driving a broader agenda for change, growth and transformation (Webb, 2014). According to Hoy (2017: vi), “Creative-placemaking offers a way to build empathy for one another through arts and culture. In order to do so, we need to infuse the practice of Creative-placemaking with processes that are inclusive and culturally responsive”. Creative-placemaking can potentially foster bridging social capital amongst people who do not share a common language, culture or norms (Hoy, 2017:vi).

Creative-placemaking ensures that the development of a locale is not just focused on the building of exquisite upmarket infrastructure. Instead, development through creative-placemaking champions community interests, place liveability and economic growth. Creative-placemaking looks at the cityscape as more than concrete walls, but rather as living organisms which are malleable to human needs (Lefebvre, 1974). It appears therefore that, creative-placemaking in South Africa has the potential to work towards achieving a just society for every citizen as it avails a platform where the personal, political and contextual meet. Hence, the motive of this discussion is to enhance the liveability of a place through first improving people’s understanding of creative-placemaking, the forms it takes and how best it can be undertaken.

According to Lefebvre’s (1974) Theory of the Production of Space, cities are living organisms and are a result of everyday life circumstances of people that cannot be reduced to physical concrete or geometry. He further asserts that city spaces should be perceived as a “...continuum midway between small-scale individual practices and large-scale social processes and institutions” (Lefebvre, 1968:108). Implied is that places play a utilitarian role that goes beyond providing just a concretised habitat. Lefebvre (1974) adds that urban spaces are elusive and “...may be qualified in various ways: [they] may be directional, situational or relational because [they are] essentially qualitative, fluid and dynamic” (p.42). The making and growth of a city or any place for that matter, is rooted in the culture and identity of a people (Zeybek, 2018). Both the growth of cities and creative-placemaking do not follow rigid confines, regardless of the existence of city by-laws.

The prevailing economic, political and social conditions determine how people use spaces to make places. According to Jackson (2018:2), creative-placemaking “helps to elevate, shape and sometimes transform the physical, social, cultural and economic qualities of neighbourhoods”. The making of the place is lived and it benefits the living. Zeybek (2018:72) opines that “In the contexts of the city, people are in communion with each other and with the city itself, with the values of the city and with those who produce them. All of this can be shortly called the sociality of the city”. The point being emphasized here is that the whole purpose of developing places goes beyond providing a habitat and the aesthetic, but it feeds to the entire needs of a people, especially empathetic behaviours which allow common happiness and sublime living.

4. Foundations of Engaged Creative-Placemaking

Before the authors engage on the antecedents of creative-placemaking it is necessary to define, community, safety, arts and place in order to be aware of what needs to be built, nurtured and safeguarded. Treskon, Esthappan, Okeke et al (2018:2) are of the view that community safety can be defined as the idea that communities and their residents can be safe from the risk of harm, injury or loss of property. The arts in its

broadest sense includes all activities that shape the creative economy as it is defined in South Africa by Snowball (2017). This broad definition of the arts is not limited to public performances, installations and exhibitions, rather it is all embracing and futuristic, involving the use of technologies. Treskon, Esthappan, Okeke et al (2018:2) posit that the term is used broadly to include not only generally recognized forms such as murals, music, sculpture, and dance, but also other creative work, from promoting entrepreneurship to creatively engaging stakeholders and using space in novel ways.

Treskon, Esthappan, Okeke et al (2018:3) add that “we need to consider the concept of community in both its hyper-local and more expansive senses. To the extent that these interventions attempt to address systems change, we need to think about how neighbourhood trends are shaped by broader societal forces”. Implied here is that creative-placemaking is not a simplistic beautification of place. It is an effort which requires us to have a nuanced understanding of the past, present and future. To that end, the sustainability and effectiveness of creative-placemaking rests on how much is invested in research that delights the day and predicts the future.

4.1 Setting the scene for Creative-placemaking

To accelerate the momentum of creative-placemaking, ensure equitable outcomes and move closer to the day when a robust emphasis on arts, culture and community-engaged design is inherent in planning and development, it is incumbent for all involved to pause, take stock and consider what progress requires. Differently put, one needs to start by asking oneself the following questions “What went wrong? Where do we modify and how?”. Creative-placemaking leads to a healthy interaction of individuals, communities and institutions which has great potential to lead to positive development on the social, economic and political front. Currently, the three are not always in harmony. There are pockets of evidence of disengagement between individuals and the community, the community, its institutions and the individuals making up the community. To that end, the pursuit of social justice in South Africa has to be buttressed by a very robust set of people to people relations. Deliberate efforts should be made to follow endogenous and participatory methods of development and communication. The universities together with able members from community, should collaboratively engage in building capacity to conceptualize successful management processes that can be applied in different situations, and an ability to understand and fastidiously apply models developed by someone other than oneself for the benefit of community and economic growth (Moyo, 1988).

Universities have a moral obligation to make campuses safe for all of its stakeholders. Relevant policies and programmes with adequate resource allocations must be made available. A culture of social cohesiveness, collaborations and partnerships is also required. Broadly, the steps to follow when setting up

a creative-placemaking project at a university includes identifying partners, stakeholders, the physical space and curriculum development. It is important for the university to discuss and make a list of potential stakeholders catering for individuals and various interest groups in society. Equally important is to identify the physical space where the creative-placemaking initiatives will be implemented, as well as to have discussion and clarity on the activities that will be conducted and their envisaged deliverables. Ideally, the pursuit of social justice through creative-placemaking and engaged scholarship should follow the “Habermasian discursive democracy explained by Keet (2014:851) as ‘a self-organizing community of free and equal citizens, coordinating their collective affairs through their common reason”.

4.2 Collaborative leadership

Implemented under the rubric of university-community engagement, creative-placemaking promises to offer insight into context specific sources of exclusion, emptiness, voicelessness and conditions for inclusion, agency and community. This will also help to establish a rich network of expertise that will benefit the variety of stakeholders (including academics and policymakers) involved. The pursuit of engaged place-making also serves the decolonialisation project through affirming indigenous voices in the making of place structure, its culture and knowledge. Netshandama and Mahlomaholo (2010:1) argue that “Community engagement as a transformative tool and process in higher education provides a space for inclusive dialectical process of knowledge development between societies that were somewhat diametrically, opposed societies whose understanding of what knowledge is has yet to be co-validated”. Potentially, engaged creative-placemaking will shift the historically skewed relationship between our people, our knowledges and our realities.

South Africa currently experiences very deep cynicism, a persistent anomie of civic disengagement and polarised partisan politics threatening to curtail the project of democracy and nation building. Essentially, there is a crisis of a leadership which does not inspire civility. Hence an urgent need to stimulate active citizenship through connecting individuals with their environment and social systems, celebrating diversity and ideation. Considering that creative-placemaking is fairly new and university-community engagement has not found much favour amongst academics, the approach being suggested requires disruptive change agents. Arnold and Hamilton (2004:1) argue that “disruptive innovations begin as lower quality and less desirable versions of existing products and services”. Implied here is that while creative-placemaking practice is relatively new and known to a few in South Africa, the urge is to catch on to the opportunity. More and more people, institutions and communities will join in as the practice improves and gains traction. Disruptive innovation is a process fraught with barriers from generating ideas to putting those ideas into action.

The politics of leadership is what distinguishes human beings from other species. Engaged scholarship is inherently political as it affects the general public, questions the status quo and seeks transformation. In a conversation with Moyo, Magaisa (2018) urges “academics and researchers to be vocal and to participate in public debates as academics and researchers, not only to provide practical solutions to practical problems but also to keep partisan politicians in check”. Academics stand in a better position to lead and motivate citizens into taking active and progressive roles in advancing sublime societal living. They are privileged to be in spaces where ideation is facilitated and celebrated. Consequently, they can be a conduit for collaborative work since they are accessible to all people from all economic rungs and social strata: the rich, the poor, Whites, Blacks, Coloureds and Indians to name a few of the divisions.

Engaged scholarship provides a window for academics to work collaboratively with communities. However, for the collaborations to be substantial, they should be conceived as “purposeful relationships in which all parties strategically choose to cooperate in order to achieve shared and overlapping objectives” (Rubin, 2009, :xv). A collaborative leader manages relationships not to dictate his or her own aspirations to a community. Academics also face challenges that impede their work in general and university community engagement specifically. According to Jakovljevic (2018:110), “in spite of possessing creative knowledge, skills and a desire to produce original ideas and initiatives, academics are constrained with work overload, insufficient modelling of innovative behaviour and inadequate funding supports”. Existential challenges present academics an opportunity to show and provide effective transformative leadership which “...is about enabling others to achieve purpose in the face of uncertainty” (Ganz, 2013,:2). Effective leadership must offset challenges primarily through recognising and enabling individual and communal agency. As leaders, academics must acknowledge and act on their civic duty through university community engagement, albeit cumbersome and resource consuming.

The merits of engaged scholarship are its democratizing capacity and prospect of disclosing tacit modes of knowledge production (Keet, 2014). If framed through Ganz’s ideas of emancipatory leadership, engaged scholarship can unearth individual competencies, multiple knowledges and group benefits through collaborative engagement. The challenge is for academics’ input to be creative and responsive to the existential and lived realities of people in order to inspire a raft of political and social changes. Kondlo (2011:125) argues that “the talks in political corridors about participatory democracy need to be supported by innovative initiatives to invent spaces of public participation outside formal procedures of government and the ruling party”. It is critical for key stakeholder leaders to call for effective collaborations and learning.

4.3 A collectively defined social cohesion

Numerous conceptual definitions of social cohesion and what a just society implies have been averred by academics from various disciplines. While the conceptual debates are fascinating and important and are certainly worth having, one should not let the quest for just and cohesive societies become unfairly paralyzed by verbosity and mere sonorities. Therefore, to avoid getting lost in a definitional maze, this paper works on the premise that at the bare minimum, a just and cohesive society is defined by the voice of the collective as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996.

According to the Constitution of South Africa is a sovereign nation founded on values which include human dignity and equality, non-racialism and non-sexism. The Bill of Rights provides a menu of non-negotiable rights that further solidify the sanctity of human dignity, safety and respect of individual freedoms (Constitution of South Africa 1996). To that end, the study acknowledges that the Constitution has the potential to lead towards achieving social cohesion, it is neutral, and its observance should not be scuttled by any individual’s personal beliefs.

Most conflicts in South Africa are a result of a lack of compromise, greed, power hunger and the inability to find each other through processes which include, but are not limited to dialogue (Desai 2015). It is important to understand how the social fabric of societies in conflict can be transformed from a state characterised by the challenges of intolerance, discrimination and insecurity, to one of civility, reciprocity and cohesion. In order to do that, one first has to understand that violence and any other form of social injustice is a culture which is socially constructed. Conversely, non-violent and just societies can become a reality if people intentionally work towards creating such environments. Lynch and McGoldrick (2005:18) argue that conflict is omnipresent and manifests even during non-violent campaigns. Clearly, conflict and contestation are second nature to human beings. There are chances of conflict wherever people gather, by design or by default. Blackhard and Gibson (2002) noted that opportunities emerge when leaders learn how to capitalize on conflict through creative engagement with dissent and poly-voices.

The existence of conflict implies that there is need for either conflict resolution, management, transformation or all (Lederach, 2005). The focus on building relationships comes from an understanding that a fragmented society is an impediment to peace and development and that when a society is closely knit, there is widely-shared progress (Saunders, 2001). In addition, Miall (2004:4) argues that “Relationships affect the whole fabric of interaction within the society in which conflict takes place”. As a result, this study advocates that the basis of the peacebuilding work that is to be done in South Africa should be premised on relationships, starting from person to person, families and institutions. Creative-

placemaking is accessible to everyone as people or communities have the power to produce and reproduce culture for the benefit of their society.

Efforts towards social cohesion should not be exogenous and projectized. Rather, they should be led and owned by the everyday people. Common to all individuals and communities is that by nature, human beings are not passive imbibers of cultural knowledge. People internalise schemata, or cultural models which have an influence on their decision-making and behaviour (Scupin, 2012:43). As communities live and produce culture, differences in expressions and preferences are bound to happen. Issues of contestation and control always come into play whenever culture bearers or opinion leaders, and the subaltern differ in imagining their worldview.

For engaged creative-placemaking to succeed, the Constitution has to find expression in the initiatives one undertakes. According to Mubangizi (2015:497), the enjoyment of human rights and by extension the respect of the next person is dependant on one's awareness of their rights and how to enforce them. Currently, "the levels of human rights awareness in South Africa is unfortunately inadequate" (ibid). On instances that people do not agree on interpretation we should nurture a culture of dialogue, and tolerance of multiple perspectives. Higher education institutions have a role to play in articulating the Constitution in languages and media accessible to all citizens, especially those who are not formally educated. The street law program has already set a precedent worthy scaling. According McQuoid-Mason (1999:10), "Street Law is a preventative legal education programme which provides students with an understanding of how the legal system works, and how it may be utilized to safeguard the interests of people on the street". The street is used here to refer to lay people who are not necessarily in law school.

Art as a boundary object has the capacity to encourage people to see many faces of one reality (Shank and Schirch, 2008:11). Art by its very nature is ambivalent, as it can mean different things from one person to the other and it can also cause differing reactions. Speaking on music Denora (2016: XII) posits that "Music has the great advantage of affording ambiguity while simultaneously stirring up. To borrow a term from Science and Technology studies, music can function as a "boundary object," meaning different things to different people and yet, for all practical purposes being talked about as if those meanings are unified and shared". As a beginning and certainly not a desired end, the South African community needs to begin talking reflexively about the Constitution, their rights and the accompanying responsibilities.

4.4 Tolerance of Ambiguity

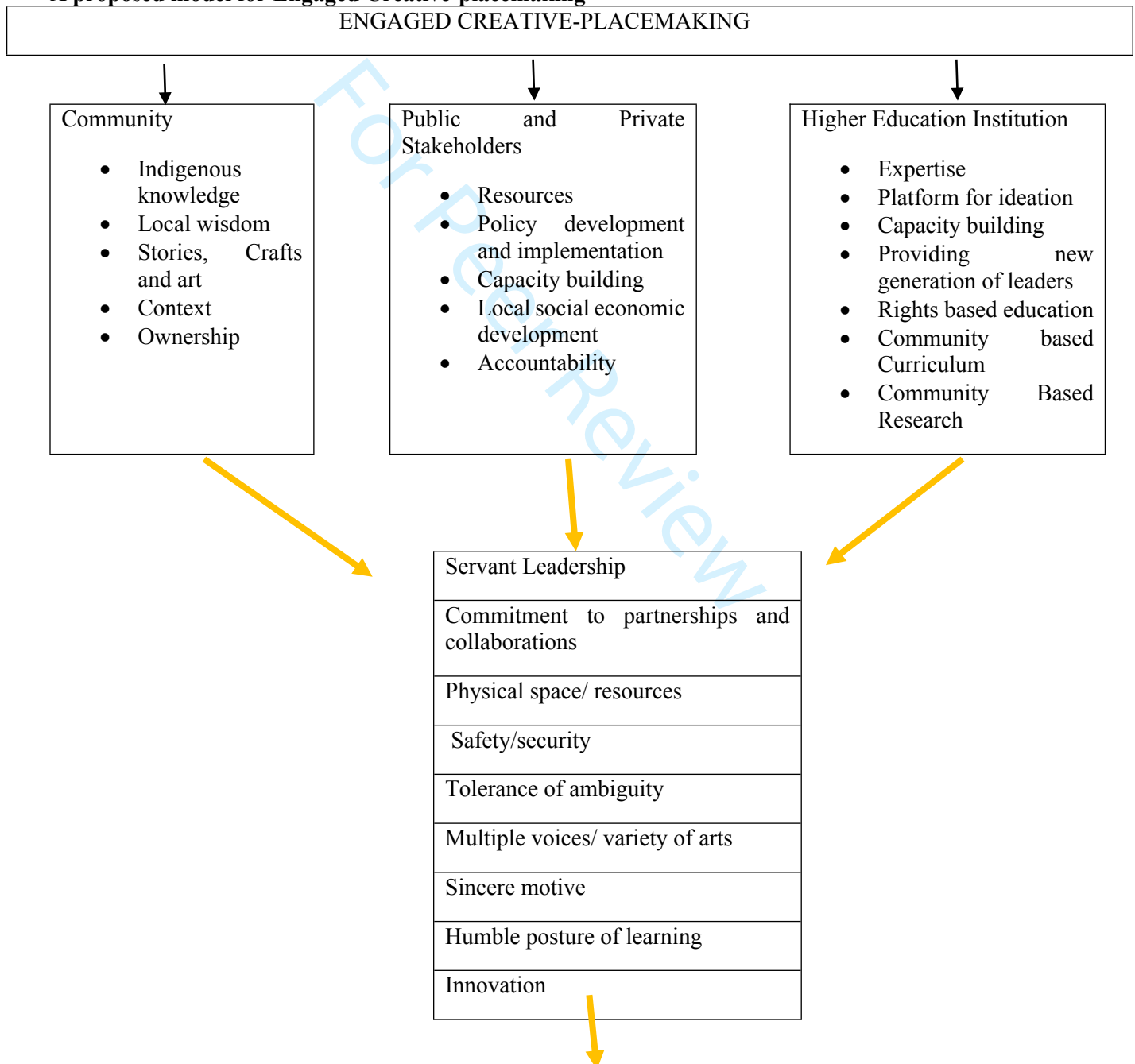
Citizens' resilience in the face of adversity is indicative of a people with a tolerance of ambiguity, a citizenry that can build a better nation if a conducive environment is provided. Dugan (2013:2) posits that ambiguity tolerance entails "Staying in uncertainty or staying with question, despite the discomfort of not knowing the

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answer, or not knowing where we are headed. It requires relinquishing control, even though a solution is not always guaranteed”. This tolerance of ambiguity is indicative of agency in the citizenry. It therefore can be a pedestal through which society can harvest both hope and action towards creating a better South Africa even without the assistance of political powers.

Wee, Lim and Lee (1994:37) argue that entrepreneurs have a higher tolerance of ambiguity than the general population. Entrepreneurs exist in a highly volatile environment with less job security and permanence than the population in general Wee, Lim and Lee (1994:37). While the whole community cannot be entrepreneurs, and without absolving the government of its duties to work towards building a functioning economy, academics and positive deviants from the community’s high tolerance of ambiguity should inform the community that optimism is key to building peaceful societies. Sridhar (2014:7) argues that optimism is an important value which enhances the transformative power of the arts, as well strengthening communities mutual dependence. Engaged creative-placemaking provides a platform through which different stakeholders from the community, local authorities and the university community can work collaboratively and dialogue on their difference, to create a community where citizens can summon the sum of their abilities to activities that uplift their individual beings and consequently the community. Below provided is a diagrammatic representation of the model for creative-placemaking showing who the partners are, their qualities and the intended outcomes.

A proposed model for Engaged Creative-placemaking



Individual well-being, Respect, Reciprocity, Co-existence
Resilient societies, communities and government

The model presented above is an attempt to lay a foundation for excellence in engaged creative-placemaking. The authors believe that getting right, the initial steps and processes for engaged creative-placemaking are crucial to controlling the process and achieving and sustaining the desired goal. To begin with, an engaged creative-placemaking project should make all attempts to be genuinely inclusive. Therefore, it is desirable to have communities, universities and public and private stakeholders as equal partners. All capitals, be it financial capital, social capital, cultural capital and human capital, should be equally valued for the achievement of shared and overlapping objectives. It is critical that during the stakeholder identification stage for partners to be transparent about their interests and desired options for sharing the social and financial dividends. These partners should work from their points of strength, bringing to the creative-placemaking project the different skills and resources that they have.

The model also suggests that engaged creative-placemaking agents should be committed to partnerships, collaborations and servant leadership. Power play and differences in financial muscle between collaborators should not lead to a covert imposition of ideas and strategies. For example, universities, private and public institutions should know and respect that communities are aware of what they want and what they want to spend their time on. In order to have transformational engaged creative-placemaking, stakeholders should exhibit certain virtues and temperament which allows the necessary trust and respect to be built. An abundance of trust and respect leads to a festival of ideas and springing of innovation. Ways to build trust include setting a stage for poly-voices, having a sincere motive and having a humble posture of learning. The quality of engaged creative-placemaking depends on both material resources and excellence in communication. The process of executing and the end goal of an engaged creative-placemaking project is to realise resilient communities in which everyone achieves their version of excellence without disturbing the peace of the environment and the next person.

5. Conclusion

Engaged creative-placemaking is by no means a magic bullet, but it can in many ways advance efforts to building cohesive societies. While artistic creativity is at times impulsive, creativity in social cohesion should be thought of as referring less to spontaneity, but innovating around real challenges, scampering

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3 efforts towards sublime societal living. It is important that as one does that, one understands the contextual
4 social determinants of peace and causal pathways to social cohesion in the communities. As a result,
5 redressing the mess requires non-simplistic and holistic approaches where cohesion and a shared national
6 vision are integral. There is a need for all who live in South Africa to expose and the resist indigenization
7 of oppression, kleptocracy and a docile vile citizenry.
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12 The complex nature of the social cohesion program demands a clear understanding of intervention programs
13 and contexts. There is need to enhance both craft literacy and craft competency. One way of doing this
14 through engaged creative-placemaking is understanding the interconnectedness of economic, cultural and
15 social determinants of place liveability to have an evidence base for the feasibility of actions. The
16 conceptualisation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of engaged creative-placemaking projects,
17 just like every other project working towards achieving social cohesion needs to include the perspective
18 and experiences of every community stakeholder for it to be communally owned, relevant and sustainable.
19 Communities, universities and government have critical roles to play in creative-placemaking in order to
20 achieve the Constitutional mandates of South Africa.
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