Food System Transformation in the Absence of Food System Planning: The Case of Supermarket and Shopping Mall Retail Expansion in Cape Town, South Africa

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The South African, and wider African, food system is undergoing a rapid transformation, with an associated transformation in nutrition. Both transformations are most advanced in cities where the food system is increasingly characterized by the presence of supermarkets and fast food outlets in malls selling highly processed foods. While local government has no clear formal mandate to address the food system, this paper argues that it is playing a profound role in reshaping the food system through non-food related planning and policy decisions designed to achieve urban development objectives. This paper uses a case study of the changing food system in Cape Town, South Africa, as an entry point to examine the urban planning agenda that is inadvertently generating a food system that undermines food security. The paper therefore presents a 20-year geography of supermarket expansion in the city and a discussion on the impact of developer-led urban development in the form of the shopping mall on the food system. The paper argues that the absence of concerted food system planning has negatively impacted food and nutrition security. It concludes by suggesting that new opportunities for more inclusive urban food systems planning are being afforded by UN-Habitat's New Urban Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals.

The past decade has witnessed a rapid increase in interest in food systems planning in North America and Europe. This trend has been largely neglected in Africa until quite recently. Apart from the work on food systems planning, there is an extensive literature considering the expansion of supermarkets in the global south. However, this literature does not consider the role of planning in shaping the extent or characteristics of this expansion.

The New Urban Agenda (UN-Habitat, 2016) explicitly calls for food systems planning to be part of future urban planning and urban governance. This potentially provides new impetus for spatial planning to focus on the urban food system. It appears, however, that the framing of the food system within the New Urban Agenda neglects the widespread and rapid transformation of African urban food systems, characterized by the expansion of the formal food retail sector.

This paper contends that the existing literature has failed to engage the urban drivers of food systems change in Africa, and has not adequately considered the impact of supermarket expansion on food security and the right to food. This paper therefore presents a 20-year geography of supermarket expansion in Cape Town and provides an account of the key stakeholders in this expansion and their motivations. Through this, the paper seeks to explain the food system transformation in the absence of food system planning, linking this transformation to a set of wider urban development imperatives. It argues that urban food systems change cannot be understood independently of the mega-trends shaping African cities. Failure to situate the food system transformation in this context will lead to the undermining of efforts to achieve food and nutrition security and food justice in African cities.

Two Literature Gaps

This section briefly reviews the literature on the African urban food system policy environment and supermarket expansion to highlight the gap regarding the nature of supermarket-led food system change in urban Africa.

The dominant urban food planning agenda in Africa has neglected the formal food retail sector as an object of governance or planning. There have been three phases of research and policy interest in urban food in Africa. Initially the concern was to ensure an adequate and cheap supply of food to urban populations in order to maintain stability. This led to the development of marketing boards to ensure constant subsidized supplies of basic foods to urban populations (Smale and Jayne, 2003). National food systems were therefore directed to meet urban needs. Structural adjustment brought about the second phase of urban food system governance. These policies rolled back state control of the food system, eliminated subsidies and reoriented production towards export, all of which had significant urban food security impacts (Riddell, 1997). The resulting food insecurity ushered in a new interest in the promotion of urban agriculture and calls for local government to stop criminalizing urban farmers. Maxwell has argued that the promotion of urban agriculture should be understood as the outcome of the 'shifting of responsibility for bearing the costs of economic adjustment from the state or other employers to the poor themselves' (Maxwell, 1998, p. 46). The state therefore stepped back from direct intervention in the food system outside of urban agriculture. The final phase has been the recent emergence of the City Region Food Systems approach, as advocated by the FAO (UN Food and Agriculture Organization), RUAF (Resource Centres on Urban Agriculture and Food Security) *inter alia*, which seeks to 'reinforce urban-rural linkages for more inclusive, efficient and resilient activities of small scale agriculture within a local food system' (Santini, 2015). This framework does not engage the formal retail sector in any significant way. In framing governance at the city region scale, it does not pay attention to the role of urban planning in shaping the food system. Following this lead, the New Urban Agenda calls for the integration of food and nutrition security into urban and territorial planning. However, this planning focuses on rural–urban linkages, production and sustainability rather than physical planning aspects of urban food systems (UN-Habitat, 2016, Para. 123).

The literature on supermarket expansion, spearheaded by Reardon's research team, has viewed the process as being driven by changes in consumer demand and supply-side determinants (Reardon *et al*., 2004). Urban change is acknowledged on the demand side, including factors such as the rapid urbanization of developing countries, the increased presence of women in the labour force and improved household storage capacity (Reardon *et al*., 2001). However, Reardon and colleagues have been surprisingly silent on urban supply-side issues, such as improved urban infrastructure, despite the centring of this expansion in urban areas. The research highlights issues such as increased retail foreign direct investment, institutional and regulatory reforms, and the modernization of supermarket procurement systems as enabling factors (Reardon *et al*., 2007). There is no mention of the drivers of urban development as factors in the expansion of supermarkets. There is a small body of literature on the expansion of supermarkets in South Africa. Following the Reardon team's lead, this work identifies increased demand through the rapid growth of the black post-apartheid middle class in township areas (Ligthelm, 2008). However, unlike the international literature, there is a consideration of urban conditions that facilitate the expansion of supermarkets, noting improvements in infrastructure in many townships that have made the presence of large retail businesses more feasible (Tustin and Strydom, 2006, p. 56).

This paper therefore seeks to document the expansion of supermarkets in Cape Town, South Africa in order to highlight the rapid food system change underway in South African cities. Given the absence of a municipal food system or food security mandate, this paper seeks to understand how and why local government and external actors have pursued shopping malls and supermarkets as tools for local economic development, and considers the food security and justice consequences of these planning decisions.

Food Security and the Cape Town Food System

Food insecurity in urban South Africa is a critical development challenge. The 2008 African Food Security Network (AFSUN) food insecurity survey of just over 1,000 households in three low-income areas of Cape Town found 80 per cent of sampled households to be moderately or severely food insecure, according to the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (Battersby, 2012).

According to this survey, almost all sampled households (99.3 per cent) had purchased food at a supermarket at some point in the previous year. However, just 26.8 per cent went to supermarkets once a week or more. Daily or weekly purchases were more commonly procured from small shops/restaurants/take always (mainly 'spazas stores' – small general dealers usually operating from a house) or from informal markets/street food vendors (61.5 per cent and 55.1 per cent, respectively) (Battersby, 2012). Both the AFSUN survey and research conducted by Cooke in a single neighbourhood found that food sourcing strategies are stratified by food insecurity, with food insecure households being more dependent on the informal food retail sector (Battersby, 2012; Cooke, 2012). The informal sector is more closely aligned than the supermarkets to the economic realities of poor households. While supermarkets appear to be providing cheaper food, their unit sizes are often too large for the poor to afford. Informal sector retailers will 'bulk break' and sell products in small quantities, which although more expensive per unit are more affordable to the urban poor. Additionally, they also operate on a system of credit, making it possible to 'buy' food without cash in times of shortage. Table 1 provides an overview of the advantages and disadvantages for consumers of different types of food retail. This suggests that there are food security benefits associated with maintaining a diverse food retail environment (Battersby *et al*., 2017).

There are concerns that the current expansion of supermarkets is undermining retail diversity. The South African Competition Commission is currently undertaking a Retail Market Inquiry with the first area of focus being 'The impact of the expansion, diversification and consolidation of national supermarket chains on small and independent retailers in townships, peri-urban and rural areas and the informal economy' (Department of Economic Development, 2015, p. 6).

In addition to their food security benefits, the informal food retail sector and the processing, waste management and other food system components associated with it are major sources of employment and livelihoods. The informal sector accounts for 16.4 per cent of South Africa's total employment, and food is a major component of the informal sector. In 2014 an estimated 67 per cent of street traders were selling food (Skinner and Haysom, 2016, p. 3).

Table 1. Comparison of different forms of food retail.

	Advantages	*Disadvantages*
Supermarkets	1. Lower prices per unit 2. Higher safety standards 3. Large range of foods	1. Unit sizes unaffordable for poorest 2. Inconvenient locations 3. Limited opening hours 4. No credit offered
Spazas	1. Affordable unit sizes for the poor 2. Sale of food on credit 3. Long opening hours 4. Convenient locations	1. More expensive than supermarkets per unit weight 2. Perceived low quality of food 3. Limited range of foods
Fresh Produce Vendors	1. Convenient location for daily purchase 2. Produce restocked daily 3. Often cheaper than supermarkets	1. Limited shelf life of produce due to lack of cold chain
Meat Vendors and Livestock Vendors	1. Cultural preferences 2. Range of cuts of meat, including 'fifth quarter' 3. Argued to taste better (live chicken)	1. Food safety

Source: Battersby *et al*., 2017, reproduced with permission

Research Approach and Methods

This paper is based on a timeseries analysis of the expansion of supermarkets in Cape Town from 1994 to 2012. In order to generate the maps presented, spatial data and store opening dates were collected for the major supermarket retailers in Cape Town, namely Shoprite, Pick n Pay, Woolworths, Spar, Fruit and Veg City, OK and Game. With the exception of Spar, these are all local South African companies. These retailers dominate formal food retail in the city and operate a variety of store types to accommodate different consumers.

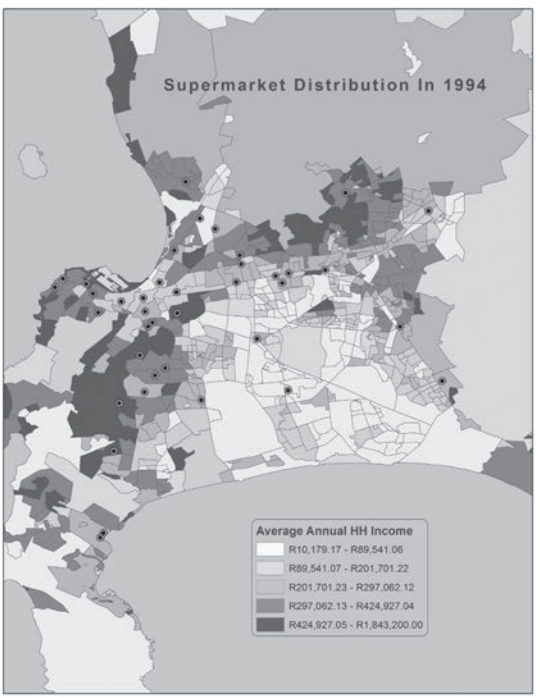
In order to generate the maps, the head offices of the supermarkets were approached to obtain store opening dates, but none of the companies were able to provide these data. Supermarket addresses were located within historical telephone directories held at the National Library of South Africa. These addresses were cross-referenced and were then inputted manually using Google Maps' street view tool to confirm their location. The store locations were overlaid on income category data from Census 2011 to give an overview of the relative location of supermarkets in wealthier and poorer areas of Cape Town. Within the maps, the wealthier areas of the city are in darker tones, and the poorer in lighter ones.

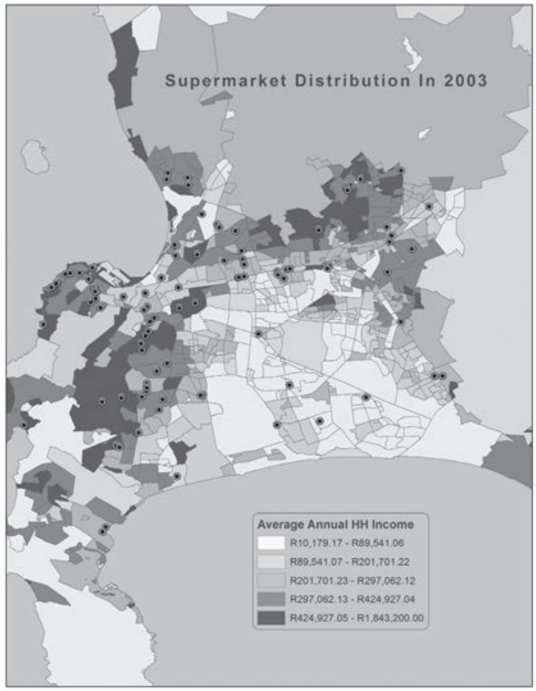
The Expansion of Supermarkets in Cape Town

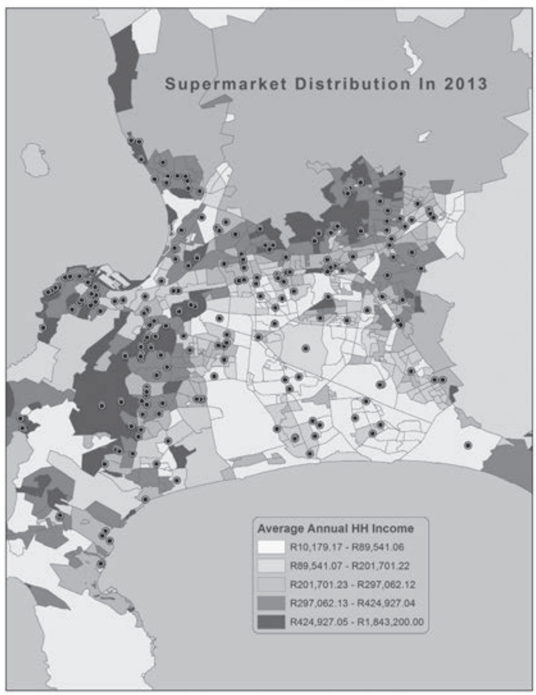
Supermarkets have become an increasingly important component of the South African food retail sector. Having accounted for 50–60 per cent of all food retail sales in 2003 (Weatherspoon and Reardon, 2003, p. 337), by 2010 the supermarket sector accounted for 68 per cent of all food (Planting, 2010). The supermarket sector in South Africa is currently estimated to account for 75 per cent of all grocery sales (with the remainder largely accounted for by the informal sector) (Agyenim-Boateng *et al.*, 2015). This expansion continues in South Africa and Africa, with Shoprite Holdings recently announcing that they will open 116 new stores in South Africa within the next calendar year (Tshandu, 2017). In Pick n Pay's 2016 Annual Report, the company reported 175 new stores (including those outside of South Africa), bringing the company's total store count to 1410 (Pick n Pay, 2016*a*).

The data generated on supermarket expansion in Cape Town, represented here in figures 1–3, illustrate that there has been a rapid expansion of supermarkets in Cape Town between 1994 and 2012. This has been characterized by two key trends. The first is their expansion into lower-income areas of the city, the phenomenon that will be the primary focus of this paper. The second is the concentration of retail in existing middle-income markets, in the form of the expansion of smaller standalone outlets. In recent years most of the major retailers have entered into partnerships with specific petrol companies and established small stores at petrol stations (Deloitte, 2015). These petrol station stores are not represented in figures 1–3.

The number of supermarkets in Cape Town increased 2.6 fold, from 89 in 1994 to 235 in 2012. Cape Town's population increased from







Figures 1–3. Location of supermarkets in Cape Town, 1994, 2003, 2013.

2,563,095 in the 1996 Census to 3,740,026 in the 2011 Census (a 1.5 fold increase). This population increase has been concentrated in predominantly poor, black neighbourhoods. The black population of Cape Town increased by 124 per cent between 1996 and 2011, while the white population increased by just 7.8 per cent (City of Cape Town, 2012). While the greatest increase in the number of supermarkets is in lower-income areas, the distribution of supermarkets remains profoundly unequal. Battersby and Peyton found that the highest-income areas have almost eight times as many supermarkets per household than the lowest-income areas (Battersby and Peyton, 2014, p. 158).

Interrogating the Drivers and Consequences of Supermarket Expansion

The data presented above invite interrogation of the reasons for this rapid expansion of supermarkets in Cape Town, South Africa, and Africa more broadly, beyond the supply and demand drivers identified by Reardon's team. While these factors do play a role, this paper argues (informed by Pothukuchi, 2000 quoted in Roberts, 2001) that there are fundamental urban planning decisions, and non-decisions, that have accelerated this expansion of supermarkets and related food systems transformation. In order to understand this, it is essential to acknowledge the connection between the expansion of supermarkets and the expansion of the shopping mall in South Africa and Africa, and to interrogate the vision of African urbanism encapsulated in these twinned expansions.

Supermarkets in South Africa generally are not standalone stores, but more commonly act as anchor tenants of shopping malls, which then typically include at least two fast food outlets. The majority of new shopping malls in Cape Town have Shoprite as the anchor tenant and a Hungry Lion, a fast food store that is a Shoprite subsidiary, and another fast food outlet, usually KFC or King Pie. The arrival of these food outlets is precipitating a shift in diets. Between 1994 and 2012 there was a more than 50 per cent increase in consumption of soft drinks, sauces, dressings and condiments, and sweet and savoury snacks (Ronquest-Ross *et al*., 2015, p. 9). Nationally, the proportion of the population who had purchased fast food within the past four weeks increased from 66 per cent in 2009 to 80 per cent in 2015 (Maharaj, 2016). The impact of the expansion of supermarkets on the food system should therefore be considered as part of a wider set of food system changes brought about by the emergence of the shopping mall.

The 'mallification' of the South African retail environment has happened rapidly. In 1970, 207,000 m^2 of land was being used for retail, by 2002 retail accounted for 5,572,846 m^2, increasing to 18,418,073 m^2 by 2010 (Gauteng Province, 2012). The number of shopping centres increased from 1,053 in 2007 to 1,942 in 2015 (Prinsloo, 2016, p. 3). Based on official population estimates, this represents a drop in the number of people per shopping centre from 45,489 in 2007 to 28,321 in 2015 (StatsSA, 2007 and 2015). South Africa currently has the fifth highest number of shopping centres of any country in the world (ICSC Country Fact Sheet 2015 in Prinsloo, 2016).

While particularly prevalent in South Africa, there is also rapid mall expansion in other African cities. These malls follow the typical tenancy patterns evident in South Africa, with a supermarket (often a South African supermarket) and fast food retailers. This model is argued to be popular with the supermarket developers, as it limits the costs and infrastructural challenges associated with developing their own standalone stores (Chutel, 2016).

Planning Drivers of Supermarket and Mall Expansion

Current food system transformation in African cities is taking place in the absence of food systems planning and is the outcome of planning decisions being made to achieve other urban objectives. This section therefore examines the key actors in the planning process that is resulting in the rapid expansion of the supermarket and shopping mall.

Local government leads and controls the process of mall development, but has no explicit food security or food system mandate in South Africa, or in Africa more widely (Battersby, 2015). Food security therefore does not feature in spatial planning. However, development of new supermarkets and new malls requires planning permission. Spatial planning in South Africa is directed by spatial development frameworks, which are meant to align with municipal integrated development plans and integrated zoning schemes which provide an overall framework for development according to the agreed strategic vision for the city. The Planning and Building Development Management department regulates land use to align with the city's spatial development framework. It ensures that land use is according to the City's zoning scheme, and approves plans for new developments. Developers are able to apply for rezoning when submitting a proposal for planning permission. This process may include an environmental impact assessment, a transport impact assessment and a heritage impact assessment, depending on the site. In the case of sites where only limited likely impacts are identified after an initial scoping exercise, only an environmental, traffic or heritage 'statement' is required in relation to the development application. Due to the nature of existing land use in townships, the likely environmental, transport and heritage impacts are often judged to be low, therefore avoiding the need for full assessments.

Many new malls are located on land already zoned for mixed business, as a result there is no legal requirement for a public participation process. However, if rezoning is required, a process of public participation is undertaken in which objections can be made to the City. This public participation includes notices in the media, notices of representatives, notices to an organ of the state and public meetings. Following this, planning approval and a building permit is granted or refused, and the mall is developed, or not.

However, while planning decisions technically lie with planning departments, it is clear that a number of other actors play critical roles in shaping the urban retail landscape. These include developers, financiers and investors, market researchers, property management companies and leasing companies, retailers and suppliers, and neighbouring land users (Adatia, 2010, pp. 10–11). It is essential to understand the agendas of these actors and their inter-connections if the expansion of supermarkets and malls is to be understood.

Local Government

The mall is viewed by local government as a means of achieving social, political and economic development objectives, as is evident in this statement by the Mayor of Cape Town at the opening of a shopping mall in a low-income neighbourhood:

> I would like to say a special thank you to MSP Developments not only for building this shopping centre but for all their other beautiful developments in the City – we appreciate your efforts and work to make the City of Cape Town an inclusive city. The first thing that struck me when I walked into Avonwood Square was the quality of the building. You could take this building and put it in Constantia or the Cape Town CBD. We appreciate what you are doing, bringing all of these shops to the market – to the people. They have normally had to pay a taxi to get to the nearest big shopping centre, now this is within walking distance. The creation of over 300 job opportunities with this initiative will affect five to seven people in each of their households. Bringing national labels into a centre right here in Avonwood is also commendable. (de Lille 2012 quoted in van der Berg 2012)

All decisions in the City of Cape Town have to indicate how they will work towards the achievement of at least one of the City's strategic focus areas: Opportunity City; Safe City; Caring City; Inclusive City; and, Well-Run City (City of Cape Town, 2016). The Mayor's speech directly invokes the notions of inclusion, and apartheid redress, bringing types of retail to low-income areas that were previously only accessible to the elite. Embedded is the invocation of the good city predicated on a modernized and formalized retail sector. It is implicit that the Western model is the only viable expression of cityness. As Miraftab describes it, urban planning in Africa remains based on 'the assumption that every plan and policy must insist on modernization' (Miraftab, 2009, p. 44).

The Mayor's speech also invokes the notion of Opportunity City, highlighting the number of jobs to be created by the mall. In discussing mall developments in Cape Town, a municipal planner noted that within the current political landscape 'all development is good development as long as your development will promote job creation' (quoted in Pulker, 2016, p. 88). Planning decisions about retail space are fundamentally shaped by a vision of a good city, characterized by a modern, formal urban system. The supermarket is the embodiment of this imagined system, and the transformation of the food system is not questioned.

While local government is keen to encourage investment to promote local economic development and job creation, and to modernize and overcome historic exclusion, it also has an interest in attracting malls as the fiscal impact of such development in terms of rates and taxes has been argued to be significant (Adatia, 2010, p. 11). Although there are clear infrastructure costs for municipalities associated with the development of malls, these costs are justified on the basis that they support longer-term local economic development.

The question is, 'how did the shopping mall and the supermarket come to occupy this particular niche in planning and city visioning?' The shopping mall is a highly visible symbol of investment and status. However, this signification is not solely the product of local government. The developers themselves identify local economic development and job creation as two of their deliverables (Wolf, 2015). Likewise, in their response to the current Competition Enquiry into the grocery sector, Pick n Pay (2016*b*) argue against the notion that they prevent, distort, or restrict competition when they enter low-income areas; instead they say that their presence enhances employment and that the 'modern food retail sector' is one of the few major growth sectors in South Africa. They suggest that their presence is complementary to the informal sector retailers and that evidence for public costs, such as decline in the number of spaza retailers and associated employment, local capital circulation and provision of goods and services, is inconclusive (Pick n Pay, 2016*b*, p. 3). In order to understand the current expansion of supermarkets and shopping malls it is essential to understand the ways in which developers, retailers and other stakeholders interact with local government in order to shape urban trajectories.

Because of local government's willingness to engage the private sector to achieve urban development objectives, it has been argued that in South Africa, spatial planning has ceased to be strategic and has shifted to having an emphasis on 'planning as facilitation [which] implicitly accepts a market-driven approach, but attempts to shape the market through physical plans' (Harrison *et al*., 2008, p. 157). In work commissioned by the National Treasury it was noted that:

> the local municipality needs to be committed to fulfilling its responsibilities, for example in terms of approval of development rights (zoning, environmental impact assessments, land availability agreements), provision and maintenance of infrastructure… It is important that the municipality has the capacity to do such work efficiently as delay during the development process can add significantly to the developer's costs. (Adatia, 2010, p. 13)

In other words, the role of local government is to facilitate the development process. In Cape Town at the time of writing there is considerable disquiet about the City's current 'red carpet' approach to development. In February 2017 the Development Action Group hosted a meeting in which findings from interviews with community groups about eighteen controversial development proposals across the city were presented. People complained that the City was 'riding roughshod' over public opposition, that public participation had become a 'tick-box' exercise, and that the City was ignoring principles contained in its own Spatial Development Framework and Urban Edge Policy (Gosling, 2017).

External Actors

While spatial planners technically control the planning and development process to meet urban development goals, they are often simply responsive to development applications. It is therefore essential to understand what motivates the external actors involved in mall development, and how they connect to local government.

Developers are attracted to low-income areas in part because these areas are not 'overly regulated, particularly from a town-planning point of view' (Adatia, 2010, p. 6). However, they are often only willing to invest if the local government has committed to undertaking 'catalytic projects' such as improved public transport networks and streetscaping (SACN, 2009, p. 43). Their motivation is to access land unencumbered by physical or legal restraints at a low enough price to make development feasible (Urban LandMark, 2011, p. 23). Major retailers often work closely with developers and are keen to locate in township areas in order to capture social grant money (Steyn, 2012). In South Africa, there are currently over 17 million recipients of social grants. The social grant system pays out over R150 billion per annum in cash to qualifying individuals (Mawson, 2017).

Another key set of actors shaping the South African retail environment are the Investors and Financiers (usually banks). For these actors the development of malls in lower-income areas is attractive for a number of reasons. Firstly, property is generally viewed as a relatively low-risk investment. Secondly, given the rising black middle class, often still resident in townships, there is acknowledged great investment potential in township areas (Viruly, 2007, p. 2). Thirdly, investors are increasingly finding that the rates of return on investment in small local neighbourhood shopping malls, the kind most common in township areas, are higher than those in the larger, regional shopping malls, usually located in wealthier areas (Myers, 2013, p. 114).

Once the mall has been built, running of the centre is then often handed over to a property management company. In South Africa there is significant public investment in shopping malls. For example, Pareto (www.pareto.co.za), one of the largest retail property companies that focuses on acquiring and holding shopping centres, is 76 per cent owned by the South African Government Employees Pension Fund. Property is a key component of government fund investment portfolios through the Public Investment Corporation, and retail property is viewed as a sector offering particularly good returns on investment (PIC, 2015). There is therefore considerable public sector investment in mall development. None of the external stakeholders identified thus far have an interest in the food system implications of the investment in mall development. They simply view malls as a good return on investment.

Finally, neighbouring land users, including residents and local businesses are meant to be role players in the development of new shopping malls, through provisions in the planning process for public consultation (Adatia, 2010, pp. 10–11). However, this public participation process is often flawed with powerful civic groups or individuals with vested interest in the developments dominating the participatory processes (Teppo and Houssay-Holzschuch, 2013). Additionally, public participation is not required if development complies with the zoning and corresponding land-use rights within that zone. This has been the case with a number of mall developments across Cape Town.

Within Cape Town, and Africa more broadly, there is a belief in the need for public–private partnerships, formal or informal, as a means to meet development objectives. Large private sector actors are increasingly creating city visions and funding new developments shaped by an economic growth agenda (UN-Habitat, 2016). Within this, the private sector players are progressively viewed as partners in development by the state.

These public–private partnerships, used as tools to achieve urban development goals, have been critiqued as Trojan Horses of neoliberal development (Miraftab, 2004), suggesting that they advance the interest of the private sector but do little for the poor (Provost, 2014). They are predicated on the assumption that not only is the emerging African urban middle class ripe for consumer-focused development, but also that beneficial development outcomes will trickle down to the urban poor (McEwan *et al*., 2015, p. 235). The South African (and African) case of mall expansion suggests an urban development agenda driven less by planning principles of inclusive growth than by the confluence of the economic interests of real estate developers, private finance and investors.

The current food system transformation in African cities is taking place in the absence of food systems planning, and is the outcome of planning decisions being made to achieve other urban objectives. The expansion of malls and supermarkets must be understood in the context of four interconnected ideas currently shaping African cities, namely: the vision of the 'modern' city; the imperative of economic growth; the notion of the rising middle class as the investment frontier; and the belief in public private partnerships as a means to achieve development objectives.

Food System and Food Security Implications

What might the expansion of supermarkets and malls mean for food security and food justice? Reardon and Minten (2011) have argued that supermarkets might prove to be an 'urban food security boon' because of their capacity to lower food prices, bringing fresher, cheaper, safer food to the poor. However, evidence in South Africa challenges this. Low-income consumers are not able to take advantage of these supposed benefits. There are additional concerns that the supermarkets and associated fast food retailers are making highly processed foods more accessible, precipitating a shift in diets. Researchers have found that the arrival of malls and supermarkets undermines local businesses. A study in Shosunguve, a township in Gauteng Province, found that 75 per cent of informal businesses located less than 1 km from the mall reported a decline in their profits, but only 36.8 per cent of those between 4 and 5 km from the centre experienced a drop in profitability (Ligthelm, 2008). The African Cooperative for Hawkers and Informal Businesses has stated that about 150 informal retail stores in Soweto alone have been forced out of business, partly because of the entry of large retail chains into the township (Bisseker, 2006).

Wealthier residents who are able to take advantage of the low-prices afforded by supermarkets through bulk buying shift their food sourcing strategies, thus reducing the profit margins of the smaller traders and making their businesses unviable. However, these local businesses, in the form of informal traders, play a vital role in food security by selling food in affordable unit sizes that allow frequent purchase to overcome storage and refrigeration limitations, and by issuing credit to assist household food security in times of scarcity (Battersby *et al*., 2017). The loss of these businesses will have a negative impact on urban food security. There are further concerns about increased access to highly-processed, nutritionally poor foods (Popkin *et al*., 2012, p. 6). The expansion of supermarkets and malls may paradoxically reduce food and nutrition security. Failure by planners to understand the benefits afforded to food insecure consumers by informal sector retailers and the ways in which poverty limits access to apparently cheaper supermarket food will lead to the continued privileging of the supermarket sector, marginalization of the informal sector, and undermining of food security.

Conclusion

This paper may seem to present a dismal tale of the erosion of food security through the convergence of political and economic power towards a set of urban development objectives that frame social and spatial justice in terms of the actualization of the consumer-citizen (McEwan *et al*., 2015). However, I would like to suggest that this analysis provides a set of ways to consider new forms of engagement with local government about food systems planning. It is essential to acknowledge the dynamics of power within the food and urban systems in order to understand what is driving the current trajectories and why efforts to shift the food system that do not acknowledge these dynamics may struggle to gain traction.

What is compelling is the way in which private sector actors have been able to influence planning by invoking the City's own objectives, apparently helping municipalities deliver on what is in their spatial development frameworks and integrated development plans. The opportunity therefore exists for food systems researchers and activists to influence planners in the same way, by indicating the ways that a more inclusive food system could address multiple development objectives of local government. Denoon-Stevens (2016) has demonstrated how more inclusive retail models are possible within Cape Town's existing planning legislation and Battersby (2015) has shown, that despite a lack of direct mandate to address food insecurity, municipalities already have the power to address food insecurity within their existing mandates. Practically, this can include provision of trading spaces near to shopping malls, or near public transport precincts. The Provincial Government of the Western Cape, where Cape Town is located, has released a new Food Security Strategy that includes Food Sensitive Planning as one of its six pillars. This seeks to:

> ensure that the Provincial Spatial Development Framework (PSDF) takes food security into account in order to influence municipal spatial development frameworks; include and adapt the principles of food sensitive planning and design into the model zoning scheme bylaw; develop food sensitive planning and design guidelines for provincial land use management; and, include food sensitivity principles into current municipal assessment criteria. (Provincial Government of the Western Cape, 2016)

Food system planning and the food and nutrition security consequences of urban planning have not been a concern for African planners. However, new opportunities afford themselves in the wake of the New Urban Agenda and the ratification of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Governments are starting to look towards the development of National Urban Policies and it is possible that the recent moves to decentralization and devolution may place the onus on food insecurity on local government. This is a critical moment for researchers to articulate how the current food system trajectories are undermining the achievement of food security, and how a just and equitable food system can have significant non-food security benefits which contribute to the achievement of various SDG targets, most notably those in SDG 11 and 3. While this may sound naïve, it is clear that the food system plays a major role in the economic, social and environmental life of cities, and if proactively managed can address issues of justice, poverty and health. Ultimately, planning for food security can provide new entry points for municipalities to meet their economic, social, environmental, health and other objectives, without extending beyond their existing mandates.

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