



Exploring Integrative Multidisciplinary (IMD) research in 21st century regional history: The case of the Bekkersdal community in the West Rand mining region of South Africa, 1945-2013

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Regional Studies Association Global Conference

Fortaleza, Brazil

28 April 2014



*Outline

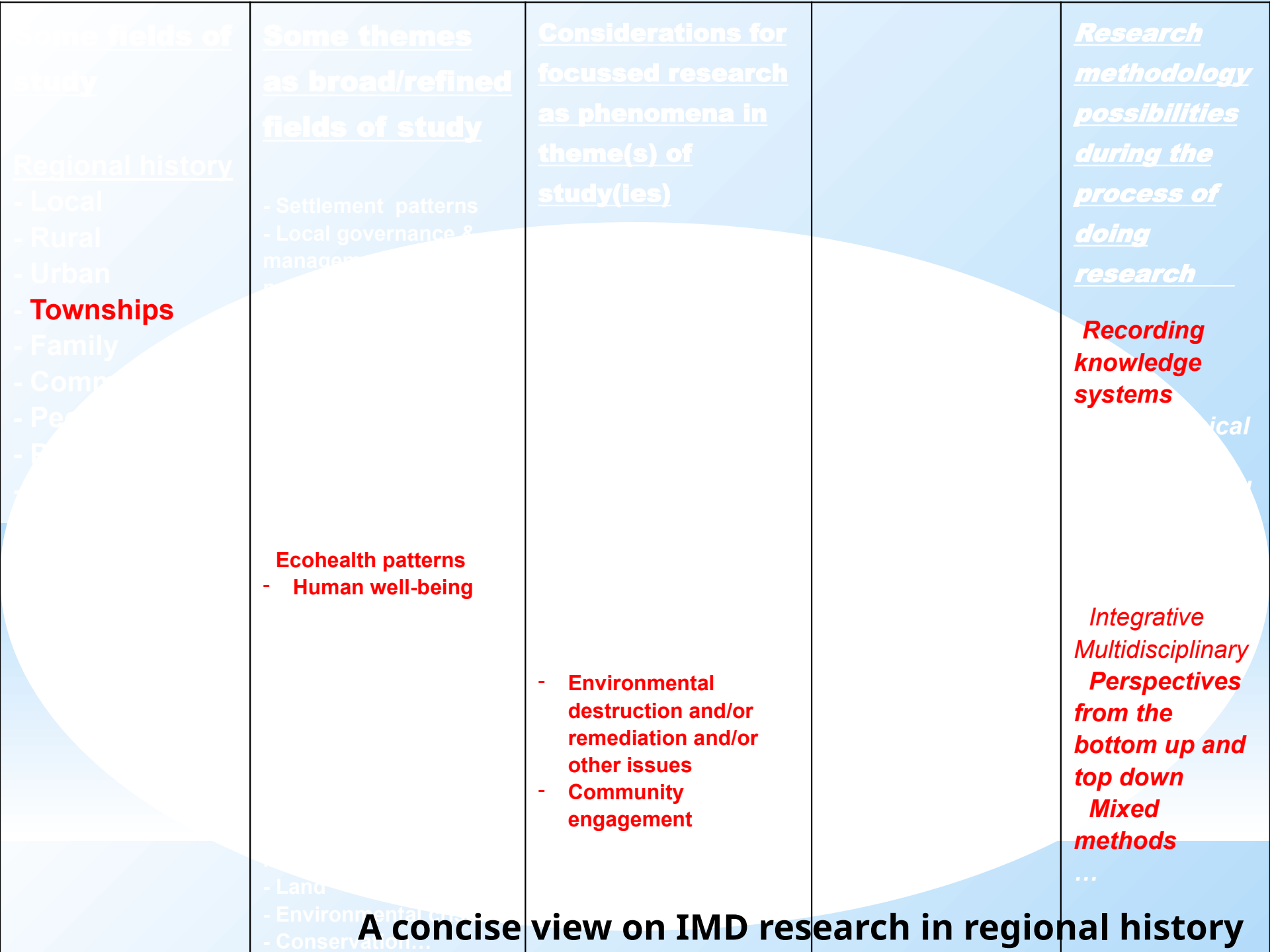
- * A concise view on **regional history studies** in **IMD** research;
- * A current **IMD research** project in **Bekkersdal**: as community in a "post-mining" context and a typical vulnerable place;
- * Thoughts about the **value of being informed on the history of the Bekkersdal region** to progress towards doing constructive IMD research on (for example) the area's **ecohealth and wellbeing status**.

IMD-research based on a combination of integrative-like models, as developed by theorists like Basarab Nicolescu, Ken Wilber, Julie Klein and Gertrude Hirsch-Hadorn. The integrative disciplinary nature of regional history as observed by traditional practitioners like Finberg & Skipp are not ignored.

*IMD research and regional history

Regional history research in essence features the COVERING OF A PARTICULAR FIELD in a region or area, debating a PARTICULAR PHENOMENON within this AREA or SPACE, and describing these in an area's development in a very SPECIFIC TIME FRAME

The "real" world



Some fields of study

Regional history

- Local
- Rural
- Urban
- **Townships**
- Family
- Comm
- Per
- E

Some themes as broad/refined fields of study

- Settlement patterns
- Local governance & management

- Ecohealth patterns**
- **Human well-being**

- Land
- Environmental
- Conservation...

Considerations for focussed research as phenomena in theme(s) of study(ies)

- **Environmental destruction and/or remediation and/or other issues**
- **Community engagement**

Research methodology possibilities during the process of doing research

Recording knowledge systems

Integrative Multidisciplinary Perspectives from the bottom up and top down Mixed methods

...

A concise view on IMD research in regional history

A suggested research approach to Integrative Multidisciplinary (IMD) research for progressing from the Disciplinary (D) to the Interdisciplinary (ID) and the Transdisciplinary (TD) phases

Exploration Phase
2011

- Brainstorming;
- Visiting the broader municipal area;
- Structuring & restructuring & ... restructuring!;
- Ecohealth Forum;
- Personal research

D

Phase one research:

Baseline research in research project/
project field;
* Own research question/set of
research objectives and preliminary
reporting to the project team when
required.



ID

Phase two research (to follow after phase 1):

- * Clustered disciplines in groups sharing related research foci or/and methodologies on a specific/more project research objective(s);
- * Add further value to existing research results by doing additional research in the clustered groups that may be required;
- * Second phase reporting with the input of all the clustered groupings. A project advisory team of 5-6 members leading the process.

TD

Phase three research

- * Combine the clustered group reports of the Phase two research by a process of discussion of all clustered project research questions;
- * All groups/disciplines participate in Phase three as well as external (non-educational) professional expertise invited for inputs and for making observations;
- * The inputs of all participants involved are recognized in the report and in other formats of research dissemination.



***UNDERSTANDI
NG**

INTEGRATIVE

MULTIDISCIPLI

NARY (IMD)

NRF-PROJECT FOCUS IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Exploring integrative multidisciplinary-focussed research on the health and well-being status of mining communities: The case of Bekkersdal, Westonia

*** Primary Research Question:**

To explore the possibility of doing integrative research on the health and well-being status of mining communities;

***Secondary research questions by approx. 10 disciplines (22 researchers in clusters or/and separate) to accomplish the project theme, departing from the disciplinary known, growing gradually into the dispersed and more challenging but accomplishing/rewarding world of**

*** Bekkersdal Project: Broad (eco)health and wellbeing reflection required by the team.**



ECOHEALTH AS THEME IN

INTEGRATIVE

MULTIDISCIPLINARY (IMD) RESEARCH

- NRF-Research on the mining community Bekkersdal (2013-2015)

BROAD ECOHEALTH & WELLBEING FOCUS:

- To determine the ecohealth & wellbeing status of people in Bekkersdal in:
 - their built environment (eg. services, housing, service delivery, local management, security, etc.);
 - their immediate/natural environment (eg. environmental capacity, issues and concerns);
 - their well-being environment (eg. financial, physical, social, emotional; psychological etc).

Research objectives in regional history as participating in IMD-research

As focussed tasks in this context of space (Bekkersdal) and time (1945-2013) and with ecohealth and wellbeing as broad theme my task are to:

- **record and historically analyse information and published research** that should reveal the health history or/and well-being status of the Bekkersdal community/area before and since 1945;
- record oral and written information (the latter in popular and scientific writing) on the responses/impressions of the Bekkersdal community members regarding a coping with their status of living and their experience of the natural

Current areas of research in the NRF-Community Engagement Study on ecohealth and wellbeing in mining communities: BEKKERSDAL as case study



SPATIAL ORIENTATION, STUDY AREA

GAUTENG province



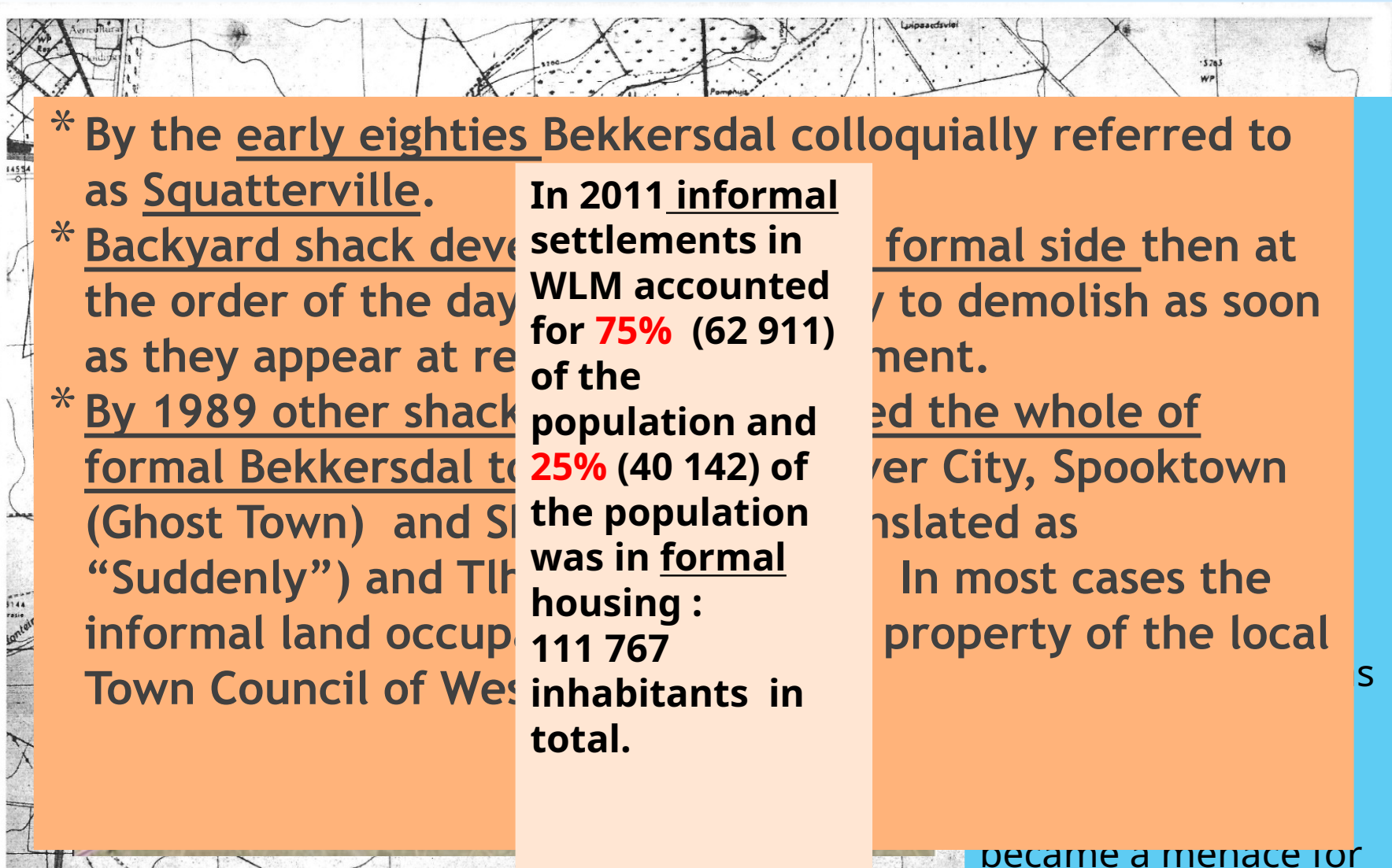
Westonaria, Bekkersdal



GAUTENG PROVINCE

A current **IMD research** project in **Bekkersdal**: as community in a "post-mining" context and a

* Bekkersdal a concise spatial settlement history

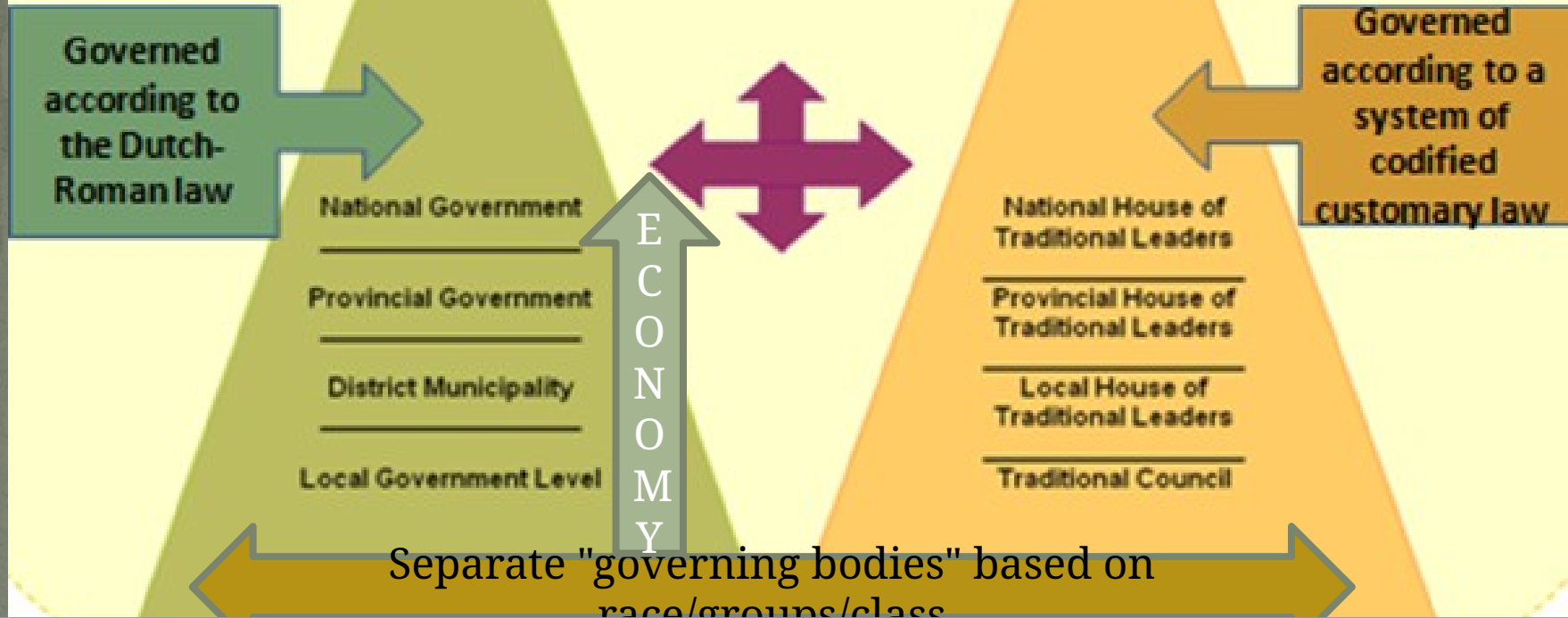


- * By the early eighties Bekkersdal colloquially referred to as Squatterville.
 - * Backyard shack development the order of the day as they appear at re
 - * By 1989 other shack formal Bekkersdal to (Ghost Town) and S “Suddenly”) and Tlh informal land occup Town Council of Wes
- In 2011 informal settlements in WLM accounted for **75%** (62 911) of the population and **25%** (40 142) of the population was in formal housing : 111 767 inhabitants in total.
- formal side then at / to demolish as soon ment.
ed the whole of ver City, Spooktown nslated as
In most cases the property of the local

ment 1942: *Avoid... founding more black spots as what is absolutely necessary* governments close-by

The broader context of what was happening in Bekkersdal is/was embedded in the **BRITISH COLONIAL MODEL OF INDIRECT RULE** in SA

Economy, political and social thoughts/doings dominated by the one in power. The oppressed divert to several forms of nationalism to obtain/express power/freedom



The trend appears to be that the indigenous Afrikaner sentiment NP government followed the Indirect Rule systems of modernization, and so the ANC-government after 1994

<p>Bekkersdal ← → Its Colonial and Apartheid relatedness</p> <p>Regional history features:</p>	<p>Its Colonial and Apartheid relatedness</p>
<p>British colonial activity allowed for British and other foreign companies to invest in gold mining in South Africa.</p>	<p>System of <u>Indirect Rule governance distorted local governance practises</u> because of <u>different governing and legal systems</u> applying to different groups of people.</p>
<p>Hectares of land was obtained by foreign investors. For Bekkersdal land was made available in 1945 by Western Areas Limited and Randfontein Estates Gold Mine. <u>Further expansion and developments were difficult in Apartheid times and still afterwards.</u></p>	<p>Land occupation in Bekkersdal, within the spirit of thinking of the time, regarded as <u>temporary</u>. <u>Future town planning and development therefore was limited to the bare basics</u> within a limited local gov. budget.</p>
<p>By virtue of Act 25 of 1945 the colonial mentality of the time was exposed of “allowing” limited to controlled land occupation by black people, <u>especially close to industrial development in so-called “white” demarcated areas.</u></p>	<p>Primary family ties <u>distorted</u> due to a mining environment in the colonial and apartheid past complimenting male workers: <u>By 2013: 61.153 males and 50 616 females.</u> Inferiority, acculturation, frustration, educational backlog, moral</p>

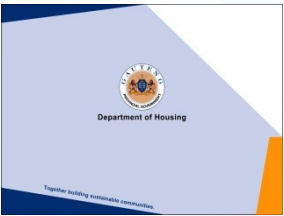
- * **New housing initiatives** in the Westonaria Borwa Housing Development and Mohlakeng Extension 11 as well as the Thusanang housing development were **to reduce the housing shortage**, as it was done before 1994 elsewhere in Bekkersdal...the pace however to slow for the growing number of residents;
- * Though the **educational levels** of the community in general has improved since early times, Westonaria's Grade 12 performance in **2011 turned out to be the lowest in the West Rand Local Municipality** in which it functions (namely a 20.6% completion of Grade 12)
- * **The new 1994 democratic government** improved the service delivery divide, and invested, with the assistance of foreign donors and the public sector, billions of Rand into the area – **Flagship programmes & BURP**. Some residents by 1998 received title deeds for their property;
- * An apparent lack in moral obligation to pay for services rendered (water, electricity, levies and property rates)

HISTORY BEKKERSDAL

***Profile of the broader Westonia
in which Bekkersdal is situated:**

- **Municipal Area: 545km² (quite central to other development)**
- **Total property stands//erven: 10 379**
- **Farm portions: 507**
- **Agricultural holdings; 904**
- **Industrial Stands: 63 (of which 30**

*** LOCAL GOVERNANCE & ECONOMIC PLANNING
HISTORY BEKKERSDAL
were developed and 43 vacant,
which at the time still left room**



A R2.1 billion presidential project mainly managed from provincial level, locals not experiencing sufficient participatory involvement.



***BURP-"For future years to come"**

BURP- delivery difficulties in 2006-2007 in the Transit Camp, north of Spooktown due to dolomite instability and sinkhole exposures





WESTONARIA
LOCAL MUNICIPALITY
PLAASLIKE MUNISIPALITEIT
UMASIPALA

☒ 19
WESTONARIA 1780
Web Address: westonaria.gov.za

☎ (011) 278-3000
☎ (011) 753-4176
E-Mail:

Our Ref./Ons Verw./Inamba Yethu 16/5/1

Your Ref./U Verw./Inamba Yakho

Enquiries/Navrae/Imibuzo C. C. Pelsler

16 May 2007

Urban Renewal Agency
Department of Housing
Private Bag X 79
Marshalltown
Johannesburg, 2107

Attention: Ms. Tshepiso Moloji

**BEKKERSDAL RENEWAL PROJECT: PETITION BY
BEKKERSDAL CONCERNED RESIDENTS**

Enclosed herewith please find a copy of the petition dated 9 May 2007 which was handed over to the Executive Mayor of Westonaria Local Municipality by the Bekkersdal Concerned Residents Committee for your urgent attention.

Kindly keep my municipality informed of the actions that the Department of Housing is to take in order to address the issues raised by the said Committee.

Bekkersdal a forgotten

Sowetan, 25 September 2013, p. 14.

township-in-waiting

Reporter VUSI XABA and photographer VELI NHLAPO visit Bekkersdal, where a R1bn development meant to revive the township has yielded little, leaving a disgruntled community

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THE RENEWAL PROJECT 'THAT NEVER HAPPENED'

Reports by Vusi Xaba

RESIDENTS of Bekkersdal on the West Rand are up in arms following the failure of a development project worth more than R1-billion aimed at giving the township, which is in a squalid state, a facelift.

The Bekkersdal Renewal Project (BRP) was launched in 2004 as a service delivery initiative meant to improve the lives of residents through projects such as building of houses, street lighting and cleaning of sew-

address the decay of many townships left by the apartheid system.

In Bekkersdal, the project started in 2005.

It was spearheaded by the Gauteng department of local government and housing, and was to be handed over to the Westonaria local municipality after seven years, though some projects could be managed locally.

However, Westonaria municipal manager Thabo Ndlovu said the project which was initially budgeted at R1.2-billion 'has instead raised

Residents

want to

know

where the

fund's went

housing planning and research R15.432 million, housing development R2 379.433 million and property management R91.490 million. In her budget speech earlier this

November 2007, p.

A typical letter from the Municipality to the Department during the BURP second five year phase (), after crises with a heavily overflowing sewer manholes in Bekkersdal informal:

...The Municipality has undertaken countless unfunded mandates, thanks to the poor workmanship on the BRP [BURP]. It was noted that we're experiencing serious financial challenges, but the Department still expect us to assist. The community is up and arms and expects us (the Municipality) to account on appalling conditions they're expected to endure on a daily basis due to the unfinished work left behind by contractors. How do we account on a project that is run by the Province? The irony of this matter is that we're a government closest to the community and they see government as one government to them, the councillors should account to them on all developments within their constituencies. We strongly recommend that, the department and its professional team hand over, the project in

DELIVERY DESTRUCTIONS AND VANDALSINNG IN BEKKERSDAL, 2013

bdlive.co.za

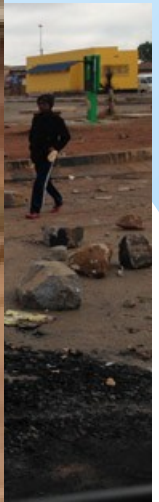
Waste disposal of the open canal around the informal settlement



24 Oct 2013
report

sab

lol.co



Richard Poplak, "Hannibal elector: How Bekkersdal became a symbol of everything that's wrong with South Africa", Daily Maverick, 18 March 2014



***POLITICAL BEKKERSDAL: ITS
ECOHEALTH & WELLBEING
RELATEDNESS**

Bekkersdal in the 21st Century



"Uptown" Bekkersdal, an area historically known to be "Black Consciousness" territory (especially the Azanian People's organisation and the Pan Africanist Congress).



N

Access tar road

Transfer camp (1993)
Some residents recently removed to Mohlakeng x11, Randfontein

COOK MINE

SKIERLIK

X-Section (IFP) 1993

SPOOK TOWN
Ca 1984

SILVER CITY

DONALDSON DAM
in Wonderfontein Spruit

WINNIE/HOLOMISA
Ca 1993

NON-FORMALISED PART OF BEKKERSDAL

Cement canal

Possible Park by WLM

MANDELAVILLE
1990

Local Business Support centre

Taxi rank

WINNIE/HOLOMISA
Ca 1993

TAMBO
Ca 1993

TAMBO
1993

West Clinic
Hostel (1964)

Industrial Area
FORMALISED PART OF BEKKERSDAL

Z-Section [Ghana] 1997

WINNIE/HOLOMISA

Cement canal

Small Recycling Depot

Access tar road

S



Library



Filling Station

East Clinic



Primary Schools

100 m
200 m

RESEARCH PROJECT in the meantime STARTS, January 2013









The Business Hub in formal Bekkersdal





* Some findings of the **IMD baseline questionnaire** fieldwork in 2013 on the Ecohealth and Wellbeing status of Informal Bekkersdal: **sample 520**; 14 sections; 61 questions - duration to complete: 90 min



* **The value of being informed on the land and the service delivery history of Bekkersdal to progress towards doing IMD research on for example the area's ecohealth and wellbeing status**

FINDINGS - GROUPS

Social groups/networks

Participation in social groups

	8%	91.8%
	7.6%	92%
	14.7%	84.9%
	5%	94.8%
	13.1%	86.9%
	10.7%	89.3%
	6.2%	93.8%
	9.7%	89.7%
	37.2%	62.8%
	6%	93.4%
	4.6%	95.2%
	8.5%	91.3%
	10.1%	89.5%

Participation, and associated cohesion, seemingly very low

Prof Freek Cronjé & team Benchmarking Sociology

FINDINGS - INSTITUTIONS

Family

Happiness of your family

	57.5%

Family

What contributes to your family's happiness?

- To have work (n=79 – 15.7%)
- To be with family (n=56 – 11.1%)
- To have a house (n=55 – 10.9%)
- Sticking together (n=47 – 9.3%)
- Having money (n=30 - 6%)

What hinders your family's happiness?

- Being unemployed (n=107 – 21.3%)
- Crime (n=69 – 13.7%)
- Corruption (n=63 – 12.5%)
- Not having a house (n=46 – 9.1%)
- Not having electricity (n=38 – 7.6%)

Being Educated?

FINDINGS - NORMATIVE BEHAVIOUR

Support (receive and/or give)

Support received, given and/or contribute to

	59.4%	10.3%	29.4%
	75.1%	5.6%	19.1%
	49.5%	9.1%	41.2%
	41.4%	15.1%	42.5%
	7.4%	7.8%	84.9%
	32.6%	17.9%	46.9%
	31.6%	29.6%	38.2%
	38.6%	28.6%	30.6%
	38%	12.7%	48.3%
	37.2%	13.7%	48.7%
Receive rather than give...	23.1%	11.7%	64.6%
Outside agents give support... 'Poverty trap' mode...	29.1%	23.1%	47.3%

FINDINGS - CULTURE

Hobbies/Recreational Activities

Participation in hobbies and recreational activities

	29.4%	70.2%
	4.6%	94.8%
	8%	91.8%
	3%	96.8%
	8.9%	91.1%
	11.5%	88.3%
	33.6%	66.4%
	4.8%	95%
	14.9%	84.9%
	6.6%	92.8%
	11.3%	88.3%
	3%	96.6%
	8%	91.1%
	55.7%	43.5%
	41%	57.9%

Participation generally low

Correlates positively with social interaction and cohesion

Functionality of local Government

The local municipality as service provider:

- Poor service (n=179 – 35.5%)**
- Bad (n=51 – 10.1%)**
- Nepotism (n=45 – 8.9%)**
- Don't keep promises (n=30 – 6%)**
- Failing us (n=27 – 5.4%)**

Awareness of the local municipality and assistance:

- Yes, but they don't do anything (n=142 – 28.2%)**
- Yes, but they are corrupt (n=36 – 7.2%)**
- Yes (n=28 – 5.6%)**
- Yes they have assisted (n=24 – 4.8%)**
- Yes, but there is nepotism (n=23 – 4.6%)**

Effect of environmental problems/risks (n=501)

Problem/Risk	Very bad	Not so bad	No problem
Dusty	90.8%	7.4%	1.8%
Dangerous fumes	49.8%	27.6%	22.6%
Underground mining	41.5%	34.3%	24.2%
Dolomite underlain area	38.0%	31.9%	30.1%
Sinkholes	41.2%	32.7%	26.1%
Acid underground water	21.5%	28.3%	50.2%
Donaldson dam	43.8%	20.8%	35.4%
Litter polluting area	87.1%	9.4%	3.4%
Area is noisy	88.6%	10.6%	0.8%
Polluted soil	62.8%	27.4%	9.8%
Access to clean drinking water	25.5%	29.7%	44.9%
Open canal	35.9%	30.1%	33.9%
Lack of recreational facilities	63.7%	22.8%	13.6%

Community's impressions on some environmental risks, as historically perceived, different

Dr E de Crom, Environmental conservation

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Economic
Cultural
Way of governance
Way of living
Racial//Class
Religion
Leadership
Social

Growing towards a democracy



ROOTED way of...things...impacting on groups/individual world/life view

Role of a distorted view/impression of why life is as it is in Bekkersdal informal settlement in 2013

...There is no location is bad like Bekkersdal here in Gauteng. And Bekkersdal is and old location. But nothing has changed, They just promised us a better life, but there is no better life at all. Instead there is an apartheid against Black people. What I see here is a disaster I don't know how to explain. Only God know [sic]...

Fieldworker Noluthando
Ngukiza, Dec 2013.

* [Richard Poplak -journalist] *asked him [a Patrick] if Bekkersdal's residents have a solution for Bekkersdal: The situation here has become a performance for which no awards will be given. The anger destroys the town, the destruction is photographed, the photographs define the country, and the politicians vow to fix the rot.*

[Poplak continues]: *But what we all seem to be missing is that Bekkersdal represents a complete meltdown that reaches back into centuries of exploitation, and to "fix" it means fixing ourselves, remodelling not only our political culture, but our role as citizens in this country*

*** Richard Poplak, " Hannibal elector: How Bekkersdal became a symbol of everything that's wrong with South Africa", *Daily Maverick*, 18 March 2014.**

Conclusion for now

- * The Bekkersdal region's development, within the country's colonial history of management according to an Indirect Rule system, should not be ignored in favour of racist apartheid only. Especially when trying to understand distorted land divisions, local planning systems and economic as well as educational and housing disparities, leading to skew township settlements, developments and growing poverty stricken communities in barely developed informal areas;
- * It took, in South Africa's history, more than 360 years to change people's ecohealth and wellbeing world, apparently creating an entrapped mentality of low esteem which resulted for example the people of Bekkersdal to express signs of a poverty "entrappedness";
- * A refreshed approach towards systems conducive for a healthy local democracy appears to be limited;
- * Perhaps a firm emphasis on education and skills development, with more constructive efforts to create and provide permanent employment opportunities in the "post-

THANK YOU

