

Curating (im)mobility: Peri-urban agency in the Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum [short version: Curating im(mobility)]

1) Curating migrant labour

Mobility can be both empowering and oppressive, depending on how it is performed, governed and directed. How possibilities of movement affect an individual or a community depends on factors such as race, gender, class and ability. Often, intersectional inequalities are cemented and reinforced through different mobility regimes at play (Shamir, 2005). Questions of privilege and marginalisation are integral to understanding the possible corridors of movement available to a person or community, or closed off to them. In South Africa, the historical legacies of colonialism and the apartheid regime continue to be embedded in a neoliberal post-apartheid system, despite the latter's ambitions to be more progressive and equal to all citizens. In that context, the massacre that took place in the context of the Marikana mine near Rustenburg in 2012, when the South African security forces shot 34 miners who had been on strike, is a tragic illustration of a system marked by deep inequalities.

To explore (im)mobility as a continuum rather than a rupture, the article offers an interpretation of the migrant labour system from the perspective of a museum. Here, museum narratives are read as taking the past as their reference points, whilst anchoring the grievances and claims in the contemporary political situation. In that sense, the article considers memory as a phenomenon of the present rather than the past (cf. Boswell & O'Kane, 2001, p.362; Brown, 2013), as well as a one of spatial and temporal continuity. The contemporary mnemonic re-interpretation of history gives insights into the present views of migrant labour and the uses of memory as a political instrument (cf. Crooke, 2005). To access such memory narratives, the article zooms in on the site of the museum and interprets the intersectional inequalities presented through the migrant labour system from the perspective of the Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum (LMLM), which officially opened its doors in 2000. This museum views itself as 'a memorial to the system of migrant labour, single sex hostels and the control of black workers [...]' (Lwandle website, 2019). At the same time, as this article will show, the museum must not be regarded as a de-politicised account of distant history. Instead, its memory narratives testify the relevance of the accounts provided in the museum for the understanding of contemporary inequalities and injustices. Such memory narratives are emplaced in specific sites (cf. Björkdahl et al, 2017, p.9). The discursive reading of the museum as a political site in the urban periphery challenges the assumed rupture that is often seen as having taken place in 1994 and instead points to the interconnectedness between past and present patterns of movement. In the article specifically, I ask what kinds of peri-urban agency and performances emerge in Lwandle, as seen through the case study of the museum, and how these seem to suggest that colonial structures continue to dominate South Africa's contemporary political system.

Methodologically, the article takes an interest in how the museum, as a peri-urban actor, discursively produces its insurgent space of agency through its curatorial activities. Here, 'spaces of agency' are viewed as 'discourse clusters' through which meanings and representations are created on the one hand (Kappler, 2014, p.23), and the production of geographical space on the other hand. The latter resonates with what Dicks (1999) has termed 'territorialization' (p.356). Museums can do so by way of their discursive practices and thus claim a space 'where heritage is produced and represented' (Mason, 2005, p.221). More

specifically, the article relies on critical discourse analysis to investigate LMLM's mnemonic narratives in relationship to their political context. This approach assumes that 'knowledge, identity, and social relations' are subject to institutional negotiation, whilst interlinked with unequal access to power (Luke, 1995, p.12). Discourses are thus seen as able to both create and disrupt stability and power (Luke, 1995, p.12). As they are always intertextually linked with other communicative events (Wodak, 1999, p.187), it is important to consider discourses in reference to each other rather than in isolation. The article therefore not only analyses the visit to the museum and a guided tour in 2018, but it triangulates the exhibition narratives of the physical site with those that can be found on its website as well as the museum's so-called Hostel 33 blog.

It is important to emphasise that such a post-structural account does not mean that the material world to which the museum refers does not exist (Mason, 2005, p.224). Indeed, it would be almost colonial to devalue the LMLM as a fictional undertaking without outlining the lived, material challenges of unequal mobility that inspire the museum's narratives. The article will therefore begin by outlining the material underpinnings on which the museum's curatorial activities are based and which provide the (infra)structure that guides LMLM's approach to the representation of migrant labour. The themes of a) the governance of immobilities, b) urban peripheries as zones of friction and c) colonial practices in a neoliberal economy are derived from the lived experiences of migration in South Africa and thus guide the thematic mnemonic reading of the LMLM. This is in line with Janks' take on Fairclough's dimensions of discourse that require an analysis to include i) an 'object of analysis' (the museum site), ii) the production and communication of its narratives (exhibitions, website, social media) and iii) the social context in which the discourse is situated (historical legacies of migration in South Africa) (cf. Janks, 1997, p.329). This methodological approach will help us understand how the peri-urban agency of the LMLM is linked to the lived experiences of its community, and how the museum produces its own space by reference not only to local, but also to national and global discourses. I will thus argue that the ways in which such (im)mobilities are remembered cast light on the political salience of historical migration patterns as well as their significance for understanding control mechanisms that continue to dominate the contemporary neoliberal system of the country.

2) Labour mobilities and peri-urban agency

It has been suggested that there has been a 'mobility turn', specifically in the global south where we see increasing mobilities as a phenomenon of modernity (cf. Rigg, 2007). In this context, Shamir (2005) argues that mobility regimes can be viewed as a phenomenon of globalisation in terms of how movement is directed across borders more generally. He goes on to explain that such mobility regimes are deliberately engineered to maintain inequalities (Shamir, 2005, p.199). It is therefore perhaps little surprising that they have come to serve as a crucial political tool in societies suffering from high degrees of inequality, as is the case with South Africa. At the same time, this phenomenon is by no means limited to the global south. Instead, as Wacquant (1999) has suggested, urban marginality can equally be found in European societies. Urban peripheries and limitations to mobility can thus be said to derive from a larger global project of governance, which aims to structure political and economic space through the creation of marginal peripheries. One might argue that both global and local structures of inequality are shaped by varying levels of mobility, with the poorest often contained in isolated arenas.

In that context, much has been said about questions of labour mobility, particularly in a neoliberal system, and, in that light, the creation of different stratifications of mobility therein. However, as Mbembe and Nuttall (2004) have argued, this focus on ‘marginality’ has come at the expense of looking at the ways in which cities and their township are mutually imbricated and how movement between those two has been somewhat fluid (p.357). In fact, it is the very migration patterns between city centres and peripheries that have come to shape the spatial identities of difference and convergence. Lerner and Eakin (2011) suggest that the lines between rural and urban spaces are increasingly blurred, with ‘peri-urban’ spaces emerging. The latter stands in dialogue with Caldeira’s notion of ‘peripheral urbanization’ as a new, global form of claiming the city from its outskirts through the production of new transversal spaces (Caldeira, 2017). Indeed, it is no news that there is a growing number of interactions between rural and urban areas, often for labour market reasons (Olsson, 2012). Certainly, such migration patterns create new inequalities, including gender, race, class or ethnic disparities (cf. Anthias, 2012; Chant and McIlwaine, 2016). The articulation of intersectional identities in the transversal spaces created through labour mobility therefore translate into a spatial politics shaped by complex and overlapping power relations.

Such constellations play into what Holston (2009) terms ‘insurgent citizenship’, claiming that the latter is ‘in large measure based on the struggles of residents of the urban peripheries for rights to urban residence, for the right to reside with dignity, security, and mobility’ (Holston, 2009, p.248). This approach no longer reduces township residents, for instance, to consumers of space but instead views them as active ‘agents of urbanization’ (Caldeira, 2017, p.5). They are seen to be mapping and scripting the city as holders of ‘socio-spatial agency’ (Forde, 2019). How those agents develop the space that they use is therefore a matter of spatial politics and illustrative, not only of the actual flows of movement within that space, but also their enactment and representation. Holston (2009) speaks of ‘insurgent performances’ (p.250). Hence, if we accept both space and its dynamics to be performative in nature (cf. Jeffrey, 2013), then museums can be viewed as one actor in the bricolage of insurgent performances. I will pick up this point below after discussing three salient themes of research on (im)mobility specific to South Africa.

3) The legacies of colonialism and the South African migrant labour system

a) Governing (im)mobilities

The South African context is arguably shaped by its colonial underpinnings. As Davies has suggested, racial and ethnic segregation have long been key aspects of South African urban governance, dating back to colonial times (Davies, 1981, p.59). Johannesburg, specifically, emerged from the Dutch and British settlers’ quest for wealth after finding gold in the area. They were relying on migrant workers to dig out this wealth, and up to this day, it is often foreign companies and national tycoons benefiting from South African wealth in gold and platinum, whilst paying low wages to the workers. Processes of industrialization in the colonies were linked to the increased desire for cheap ways of production and the associated need for the labour force required for the extraction of resources. The colonial masters were quick to realise that they were dependent on the indigenous and non-white population to sustain industrial growth. As a result, in the early days of apartheid, systems were put in place to make sure that black workers were kept outside the centres of power on the one hand, but were close

enough to serve as cheap labour forces in resource-rich areas. Migrant labour, that is, the governing of populations through industrial corridors where they would be working whilst profitable, but then return to the so-called ‘homelands’, was what the apartheid government suggested as the ‘solution’ to this problem. Apartheid, as Marschall argues, thus further increased processes of ‘domination and marginalisation’ that colonial rule had initiated (Marschall, 2004, p.98).

Patterns of restricted movement during apartheid therefore continued to be strongly shaped by the mining industry ‘and in particular the notorious migrant labour system that supplied black labour for the mines and industrial development from the 1940s to current times’ (Clark et al, 2007, p.35). This means that people were forced to live in ethnically denoted ‘homelands’, but with little land so they became dependent on cash and thus often resorted to migrant labour (Clark et al, 2007, pp.35, 36).

South Africa’s migrant labour system has indeed been viewed as ‘highly exploitative and socially destructive’ (Beinart, 2014, p.388). Beinart (2014) suggests that ‘[m]ass migrancy was in many senses a socially fragmenting experience’ (p. 399), in the sense that the migration of miners from rural areas to the urban peripheries indicated the breaking of ties with family members, with husbands working in the mines far away and wives often staying behind in rural areas. Miners were thus located in the in-betweenness of family life and the mines: whilst they were providing income for the family from the mines, it also meant that they were physically away from their families for most of the year and in a constant situation of transit between worlds.

b) *Apartheid’s urban peripheries*

Apartheid policies continued to exploit migrant labour, whilst at the same time criminalising movement outside confined areas for black people. Urban areas were considered white zones (Davies, 1981, p.64) and apartheid primarily played out spatially (Björkdahl and Kappler, 2017). The creation of townships outside major urban centres was a tool to drive black people out of the cities and, at the same time, control their movements. ‘Pass laws’ were a well-known instrument to stop movement from black into white areas. The migrant labour system itself has spatialised violence at the intersection between rural and urban zones. Dixon (2015) argues as follows:

If the protesters at Sharpeville posed a threat to apartheid’s ability to control the movements of an urban African workforce and regulate the number of people coming to join it from the countryside, the strikers at Marikana, and their claims for what they saw as a living wage, represented a challenge to a brutalizing system of migrant labour on which Lonmin, other platinum producers and the mining industry more generally continues to depend for its profits (p.1138).

It is therefore no coincidence that the study entitled ‘The Smoke That Calls: Insurgent Citizenship, Collective Violence and the Struggle for a Place in the new South Africa’ and published by Von Holdt et al (2011) locates its case studies at exactly such urban peripheries where inequalities meet and compete most fervently. Investigating the manifestations of protest in different forms (from citizen uprisings to xenophobic violence), they zoom in on townships – areas that connect the urban centre to its rural surroundings. The Marikana mine, as many other South African mines, is similarly situated at a spatial intersection between urban and rural landscapes. Indeed, South African mines have historically recruited from rural and remote

districts (O'Laughlin, 1998, p.4; Moody, 1988, p.250). The mine as the meeting point between platinum and poverty is a symbolically and materially powerful location to understand the frictions between rural and urban economies on the one hand, and between rich and poor on the other hand. This is not to reify the rural as a homogenous or backward-looking area (cf. Naicker, 2015, p.101; Mgijima and Buthelezi, 2006, p.802), but to suggest that the mines, just like other peri-urban areas, are located at the intersection between rural and urban political economies and therefore subject to insurgent politics, as outlined above.

c) Colonial practices in a neoliberal economy

The precariousness of mobility and immobility can be seen as particularly articulated in the migrant labour systems that colonial governance instituted in its different colonies. In South Africa, the system was considered particularly useful upon the discovery of gold and diamonds in the late 19th century and eventually became an integral part of the country's globalised economic system. It was primarily black workers whose labour force was geographically directed towards urban centres of productivity, whilst their private lives were expected to take place in remote, rural areas. Such control measures were largely driven by factors of race – a categorisation that translated all too easily into apartheid's system of racial segregation. However, if there had been hopes that the country's transition to democracy, proclaimed in 1994, would lead to a smoothening out of inequalities, these were largely disappointed. A spatial analysis reflects the extent to which post-apartheid South Africa continues to be shaped by almost unsurmountable barriers to free movement, particularly for the poorest sectors of the population (cf. Björkdahl and Kappler, 2017).

In the current neoliberal system, the Marikana mine is a case in point through which we can understand the ways in which (im)mobility is governed by powerful interests – through colonial powers and the apartheid government, but also through a political economy of intersectional and unequal exploitation. It can be argued that, rather than representing a rupture, the post-apartheid era represents a continuation of the intersectional identities as they were shaped by colonial practices (cf. Moolman, 2013). Chinguno (2013) argues that precariousness and fragmentation are used as instruments through which mine workers continue to be controlled (p.640). The precarious working conditions undermine links of solidarity and union cohesion. They contribute to the perpetuation of poor working conditions and social fragmentation, which plays out intersectionally. This means that, in most cases, black miners earn less than white miners (mineworker 6, interviewed in Alexander et al, 2012, p.95), many still live in dire poverty (Benya, 2015, p.550) and women's experiences are generally neglected and marginalised in narratives about the mines, although women are crucial actors in maintaining its systems of production and reproduction (Benya, 2015, p.546).

To this day, most workers spend the best part of the year living either in a so-called 'hostel' (which became known as a controlled space during apartheid as well as a space of violence) or in dire living conditions in makeshift accommodation near the mines, usually far away from their families who stay behind in rural areas. There is no family-friendly infrastructure at the mine (such as family housing, schools, transport) to provide for the potential migration of entire families, so the work at the mine comes with considerable social fragmentation of families and exhausting migration patterns of the men who move between the mine and the former homelands. Given that the mining system is primarily built around a neoliberal economy, the establishment of corridors of movement in favour of profit maximisation and the resulting lack

of social and career mobility continues to underpin structures of inequality in the South African political economy, both in the mines and in other sectors.

Against this background, the following section will turn to look at the ‘museum’ as one agent participating in insurgent politics on the urban periphery and investigate the ways in which it interprets, edits, translates and curates the spatial experience of migrant labour and the associated governance of (im)mobilities.

4) The museum and the migrating community

In this section I will ask whether and if so, how, the museum as an institution can be part of an insurgent performance at the urban periphery. Certainly, museum practice, perhaps as opposed to oral histories (cf. Minkley, Rassool and Witz, 2017) can be considered primarily Western in nature. This raises the question as to whether the use of museums in peri-urban spaces may be primarily a post-colonial phenomenon. In fact, Boast (2011) claims that dynamics of inclusion and participation in museums are often found as a way of dealing with post-colonial structures of the past, whilst those dynamics continue to be embedded in neoliberal discourse and colonial underpinnings (Boast, 2011, p.64). In this reading, the museum is a neocolonial site (Boast, 2011, p.67).

This seems to suggest that museums are situated somewhere on a spectrum between local and global practices, perhaps more in the sense of an ‘urban shadow’ (McFarlane, 2008), an experience somewhat alien to urban peripheries whilst still feeding into practices or peri-urban agency. Here, Caldeira (2017) suggests that ‘[p]eripheral urbanization generates new modes of politics through practices that produce new kinds of citizens, claims, and contestations’ (p.9), producing peri-urban space accordingly. The focus on a museum on the urban periphery vis-à-vis its curatorial community therefore casts light on a relevant agent in the making of this space, yet without neglecting the controversies that surround museum representations and curatorial choices. The museum acts as a micro-site that engages in the production of political space by its inhabitants, a form of empowerment through representation for those who are able to participate in curatorial choices in a meaningful way. In this, museum activists may resort to post-colonial methods if they seem to be the most appropriate way to perform peri-urban agency.

This form of agency that forms the centrepiece of this paper can be said to differ considerably from much of the urban literature that puts agency in the ‘slum’ in the context of poverty alleviation (McFarlane, 2008, p.346). Instead, it focuses on the museum as an institution that can be considered part of a peri-urban infrastructure, following the assumption that the urban fabric is produced in the interaction between human and non-human agents (McFarlane, 2008, p.349). The texture of this fabric is by no means even: it consists of concentrations of power and funding, as well as a range of intersectional inequalities, which make up the community at stake. The museum is situated in the complex web that makes up this fabric and has a specific kind of agency in that it is able to choose over the ways in which identities are framed, interpreted, edited, translated and curated. It adapts to potential funders and audiences on the one hand, whilst making important decisions about which issues, actors and situations make it into curated museum space. The role of the curator is therefore crucial in shaping museum agendas. Senie (2003) points to crucial decisions about which artwork makes it into public space to begin with (p.186), in which museums play an active role. Chul Lee (2010) suggests that such ‘curatorial space’ is naturally shaped by political and ideological battles (p.110).

In that, the process of collaboration between museum and community is hugely variable (Swan and Jordan, 2015). They must by no means be understood as synonymous. Instead, following Douglas' reasoning, we would rather assume that museums curate the idea of a community on the one hand, and produce interruptions in notions of community on the other (Douglas, 2017). She argues that '[m]useums, like constitutions, function as authorizers of the world, its history, its reality, and its possibilities' (Douglas, 2017, p.4). The creative agency of the museum is thus shaped by its curating community, but not limited by it. Heritage is therefore not about the search for authenticity, but rather a political production (cf. Rassool, 2000). In this production process, distortions and modifications arise, given that certain stakeholders in the community have closer relationships with the museum than others (cf. Swan and Jordan 2015, 42). This is where the museum not only differs from its community with whom it shares its space, but where, as Douglas (2017) suggests, its radical reflexivity interrupts 'steady, strong, sovereign conceptions of political community' (Douglas, 2017, p.14). In a more problematic take, this also means that, no matter how participatory curatorial processes are designed to accommodate its immediate community, there are still issues of (unequal) power at stake (cf. Claisse, Ciolfi and Petrelli, 2017). Therefore, whilst there can be cultural co-production and co-ownership to a certain extent, disagreements about editing are inevitable (cf. McLaughlin, 2003). Specifically in relation to the Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum, Mgijima and Buthelezi (2006) reflect on the tensions in the interaction between community and museum, illustrating some of the negotiation processes that took place in the early stages of the museum's establishment. The museum is therefore a suitable case study through which we can understand the ways in which the experience of labour mobility and, accordingly, the creation or peri-urban areas, is interpreted, edited, contested and curated in the post-colony.

5) Interpreting the mine: governing (im)mobilities, urban peripheries and the constancy of colonial practices

The following section will interpret (im)mobilities from the perspective of contemporary memory narratives on the subject of migrant labour mobility. The key source for this analysis will be the exhibits of the Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum (LMLM), which specializes its exhibition in a township outside Cape Town on the experience of migrant workers during apartheid, albeit 'far from the industrial centres of the mining system' (Murray and Witz, 2014: v). The museum has a more traditional exhibition space with objects, photographs and representations of oral history. In addition, next to the main museum space, there is the so-called Hostel 33 that visitors can access with a guide to visualise what migrant workers' accommodation would have looked like.

Zooming in on the main exhibition space and following the themes of (im)mobility proposed above, I will first investigate museum narratives relating to the governance of (im)mobilities. Second, I will cast light on the narration of urban peripheries as zones of economic, social and political friction. Third, I will discuss the continuity of colonial practices and their presence in a neoliberal economy, as understood by the museum. Whilst not striving to provide a representative analysis of views on migrant labour throughout South Africa, the memory narratives presented deliberately highlight the voices of some of those affected by migrant labour and represented in museum exhibitions in order to account for the ongoing marginalization of their views, not only in South African, but also global politics. This is not to deny the multiple lines of friction that meet at the museum as well as the associated struggles

for representation associated with the institutionalisation of the memories of migration (Mgijima and Buthelezi, 2006). However, the oral history methodology the museum uses is an attempt to encourage marginalised voices to provide a different script of history (Murray and Witz, 2014, p.127), not only with respect to the history of Lwandle itself, but also in relation to South Africa's broader history of migrant labour (Murray and Witz, 2014, p.139). In that, the museum has tried to move away from a more general tendency where the managers and visitors are predominantly white, given that the LMLM can be considered a space that is, despite its frictions with the surrounding community, more closely rooted in the latter than many other museums (Mgijima and Buthelezi, 2006, p.797). Importantly, other than the European-centric museum landscape of post-colonial and post-apartheid South Africa, situated 50km outside Cape Town's centre, this museum is located away from other tourist attractions (cf. North, 2017, p.85).

a) Governing (im)mobilities

What the governance of (im)mobilities implies is not strictly a limitation to *all* movement, but instead a regulation of the types and spaces of mobility that are encouraged, and those that are inhibited. This was a strategy well known in colonial and apartheid South Africa. One key feature that used to shape the governance of (im)mobility during apartheid was the 'pass system'. The system implied that migrant labourers had to have a 'dompas' (pass book) in order to move to their (urban) work place. However, its validity would end upon expiry of the work contract and former workers would return to even stricter mobility restrictions than during the productive period of work. The LMLM places particular emphasis on the object of the pass book – the museum holds a copy that tends to represent the first item to be presented to visitors as a symbolisation of the mobility restrictions that mainly Black South Africans faced during apartheid. The museum emphasises the racial stratifications present in the system, which further divided the workers from different racial backgrounds. A museum panel reads: 'Those, racially classified under the Population Registration Act as 'Coloured' were to be given preferential employment in the region. Only if it could be shown that 'Coloured' workers were not available, could people racially classified as 'Black' be employed' (Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum, 2018). The museum also displays a panel that explains that the children of black workers in Lwandle in the early 1980s were not allowed to attend the nearby schools, but instead had to travel 25kms for the next available schools, or stay behind in rural areas. Such restrictions clearly demonstrate the racialised undertone of governed (im)mobilities, with particularly strong restrictions in place for black workers and their families. Certainly, class played into this jigsaw as well in that there was almost no opportunity for wealth redistribution in a system that based the ability to earn an income and acquire savings on the colour of one's skin.

The museum emphasises that the intersectionality of migrant labour is further shaped by gender dynamics. Certainly, this affects questions around the gendered roles performed around the work places as well as who actually earns and administers the money. The LMLM dedicates a panel to this question, stating:

Although Lwandle was established and regulated as a place for men only, women lived here unofficially from the 1960s. Some were live-in domestic servants in nearby Somerset West who joined their husbands on the weekends. Sex workers also operated in Lwandle. From the 1980s, as poverty in the rural areas of the eastern Cape increased, large numbers of women and children [...] moved into Lwandle, seeking employment and joining their partners (Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum, 2018).

This situation is not dissimilar from the one at the mines, such as Marikana, where women would predominantly play supportive and caring roles, often following their husbands to live with them. Like in Lwandle, others would be sex workers. In that sense, the governance of (im)mobilities did not only affect the workers directly, but also their families who had to choose between physical separation or life in overcrowded hostels with little to no privacy. In this context, Witz (2011) points to the frictions between men and women in terms of how the museum would represent its history and how the differentiated gender roles would (not) be represented (p.382). The intersectionality of privilege extends further and can also be said to include ability and disability. Mobility was only granted to ‘profitable’ workers, whilst those less able to work were not granted an employment contract nor a passbook. Only ‘profitable mobility’ was allowed. Indeed, on a panel dedicated to the spatial segregation inherent in the migrant labour system, the LMLM suggests that ‘single males were seen as a way of satisfying the needs of both industry and the government’ (Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum, 2018). Being male was equated to being able to work profitably, so further divisions materialised within the community of potential migrant workers.

What is interesting in this context is the contemporary relevance of these museum reflections. Being situated in a remote area outside Cape Town, the inhabitants of Lwandle today are also confronted with severely restricted mobilities. The lack of affordable and safe means of transport as well as poverty in the township mean for many inhabitants that they spend most of their time in Lwandle itself. Only if they can find work, for example in Cape Town, will they be able to regularly commute outside the confines of the township. The notion of ‘profitable mobility’ thus seems to retain its political significance through infrastructural and economic barriers to movement that contain Lwandle as an almost isolated space. It links the different urban peripheries created through the migrant labour system through this comparable mechanism. What is more is that the museum thus links the local experiences of the Lwandle community to the wider national structures of migrant labour. The curators try to bridge the local and the national by reference to site-specific experiences (like the panel cited above) as well as reference to South African colonial structures, such as the ‘dompas’. This is in line with the website of the museum, which, too, speaks to local and national history alike.

b) The urban periphery as a zone of friction

As I have argued above, the space of the ‘mine’ sits at the intersection between urban and rural political economies. The economic resources present in urban spaces thus act as magnets to a number of people who hope for improved conditions of work and life. In addition, a city can function as ‘a mediation point between people, ideas, and spaces’ (Gusic, 2017, p.30). In an environment shaped by migrant labour, this manifests itself in an interaction of people from different geographical backgrounds, different languages spoken as well as a range of customs and traditions. What the Marikana mine has specifically shown is that urban-like environment can also act as sources of collective social mobilisation (cf. Reynolds, 2013), so protest movements often emerge from such dense quasi-urban spaces.

However, it would go too far to suggest that the environments in which migrant labourers operate are entirely urban in nature. Instead, what tends to be observable through the migration of rural communities into urban peripheries is an intersection, and potentially a clash, of different political economies. Partly, rural life is being enacted in urban zones, especially when family members join the primary breadwinner in their work space and need to make an additional living. On the other hand, the economic pressures of urban life take a toll on entire

families, most notable through a lack of living space. In the words of Wacquant (2016), these dynamics can be said to create an ‘advanced marginality’, stratified by hierarchies of race and class (p.1079). The labour camps are never quite urban. Whilst workers may hope to use migrant labour as a transitional phase in a longer-term transition to urban opportunities, in reality they will often get stuck in such a zone of advanced marginality from which they can never quite escape. What is more, instead of encouraging collective mobilisation as urban environments often promise, this position of marginality is shaped by attempts to fragment the waged labour force (Wacquant, 2016, p.1082), whether that be along the lines of class, race or gender.

Within families, this social fragmentation, or ‘dislocation’, as Murray and Witz (2014, p.19) term it, can indicate a particular hardship and is therefore a heavily-curated experience in the museum in Lwandle as well. A personal quote at the museum says the following:

Whites never wanted our families to come here. While I was here, I was also lodging and paying the municipality at Mfuleni where my wife was staying. My children were barred from staying with me. My children were in the rural areas. I was barred from staying at Mfuleni and my children in the rural areas were barred from coming to us. We wanted to be granted rights, as we stayed here. We wanted our wives and children to be able to visit us where we stayed [...] (Ephraim Nyongwana, Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum, 2018).

This was by no means a unique situation and can be found across the different urban peripheries created by the migrant labour system. Another panel in the LMLM confirms this to have been true for the Capetonian township of Langa, too, where male migrant workers ‘were treated as if they had no families’ and were regarded as ‘temporary workers in the city’ (Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum, 2018). In that vein, the economies of displacement that are linked to the migrant labour system affect social structures trans-spatially, that is, beyond the immediate locality of the workplace. In contrast, the rural areas where many of the workers come from, are equally affected by their position in a marginal position – neither really in the city, nor really in the area of rural activity. In the LMLM we can find the following statements:

[...] When we go away and come back we sometimes find that the crops have been damaged and we have to start afresh. There is no time to cultivate the fields because we are not there. There is actually a lot that we miss there even though we think we are gaining by being here in Lwandle. (Nozoule Cynthia Nontobeko Galada, Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum, 2018).

There are things that I miss when I am here. I miss ploughing during the season time. Women are all in the fields and the gardens. But now I am not there, and there is no one doing that. I am forced to employ someone to look after my livestock. We suffer a lot in that regard because things do not go well back home (Nontuthuzelo Christine Makhabane, Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum, 2018).

Again, whilst such geographical disruptions and governed forms of (im)mobility may primarily appear as a remnant from the past, the museum could hardly be any more political in addressing this issue in contemporary South Africa. Indeed, not only with many of the mineworkers across the country, but also with a large proportion of domestic workers is it common to work rather far away from the family base in rural areas. This dynamic has become transnational, too – whilst many workers still originate from the rural regions of the Eastern Cape, there are also large numbers of Zimbabweans who find work in South Africa’s urban centres, but have to leave families behind far away. Again, this speaks to the museum’s trans-local narratives. The frictions that such directed mobilities create materialise in the urban peripheries, where the worries about those left behind alongside fears of failure and precarious work meet and risk further fragmenting possibilities of collective mobilisation.

c) Colonial practices in a neoliberal economy

As suggested above, the governance of (im)mobility must not only be exclusively ascribed to South Africa's apartheid past, but continues to play a role in a neoliberal economy, which strives to generate maximum profitability with minimal social transformation. In that sense it can be argued that colonial structures of governance do not stand in opposition to, but are part and parcel of neoliberal techniques of population control. Indeed, following Ong (2007), 'neoliberalism as a technique is fundamentally about the re-management of populations' (p.5). The migrant labour system is a particularly managed form of population control in that it filters productive from unproductive labour and outsources the social implications of precarious labour into the political and geographical peripheries of society. Specifically, in the context of Lwandle, Murray and Witz (2013) point out how the township was created as a remote, isolated space on the one hand, but designed as a highly visible and controllable place for compound managers and the police force on the other (p.56).

The location of the LMLM is symbolic in that it represents the bridge between those colonial and neoliberal systems. It is a postcolonial museum, the township itself marked by the racial differentiation vis-à-vis the surrounding, white and wealthy communities, yet situated in a neoliberal setting. The township itself bears visible traces of 'profitable mobility' from which the poorer sections of the population are excluded, accommodating the most marginalised sections of Cape Town's urban periphery, yet cut-off from direct access to the centre of urban productivity. Indeed, as one of the museum staff pointed out during my visit, there had been hopes in Lwandle that, with the opening of the museum space, more visitors would flood into the area and smaller food stalls and shops in the neighbouring streets would be able to benefit from extra income. However, so far, the museum still seems marginal as a visitor attraction and additional income to the township remains limited.

The link between the colonial past and the neoliberal present is curated more clearly in the museum. For instance, one of the panels talks about the origins of the migrant labour system, going back to the discovery of diamond mines in Kimberley in the late 19th century and suggests a continuity rather than a rupture from such practices: 'Although conditions improved considerably during the twentieth century it was the systems of discipline and control that remained a key feature of compound life' (Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum, 2018).

The link to contemporary South Africa is even made clearer through a big wall in the museum that is dedicated to the currently pressing evictions question. The wall illustrates how, in 2014, the inhabitants of Siyanyanzela, near Lwandle, were evicted and put in temporary emergency accommodation to make space for the construction of a national road. Again, there is a clear connection to the question of forced and governed (im)mobility that seems to run like a red thread through the lives of the inhabitants of Lwandle. And indeed, it has to be said that questions of displacement and forced evictions play a major role, not only in the LMLM but famously also in the District Six Museum in Cape Town, which narrates the story of those displaced from the area during apartheid (cf. Kappler, 2015). On a smaller scale but similarly, the Ditsong Museum of Cultural History in Tshwane (Pretoria) includes a room dedicated to the apartheid evictions from nearby Marabastad (personal museum visits in 2017). The use of the 'dompas' as a symbol of governed movement and thus repression is a common feature, speaking to a national and contemporary issue. The LMLM is therefore one institution in a larger landscape of museums, which has an education mission (clearly stated on the museum

website as well) and active in dealing with colonial and apartheid legacies. Even the Hostel 33 blog (hostel33.blogspot.com) features a former curator who frames the museum as ‘post-apartheid.’

The museum therefore suggests that there has not been a clear rupture between colonial and apartheid practices of governance, and those employed after the transition to a neoliberal system. Segregation continues to be enforced by a political economy that is largely shaped by racial, class and gender inequalities. The memories of the past may be primarily staged in museums, but they are equally alive in the collective memories of those communities who keep suffering from strong pressures in relation to their continuing (im)mobilities.

6) The globality of (im)mobility as seen by the museum

Colonial practices were a lot about keeping indigenous populations at bay, that is, away from productive centres for the stages in their lives in which they were not considered productive. In a way, such trends are still evident in many contemporary political systems, where frictions emerge through the governance of spatial movement. The latter is not limited to highly localised arenas, but is transscalar, including local, national, regional and global scales. Key players and, with them, the circulation of capital, are often global in nature. Against this background, Walters (2009) makes a clear point for the need to involve global mining companies in questions of reparations for apartheid exploitations of black workers. He suggests that these companies refused medical treatment to their workers, did not pay enough and at the same time generated huge profits through the availability of cheap labour (pp.68-9).

Certainly, whilst the governance of (im)mobility is global, so is resistance against it. Museums can play a key role in mobilising such peri-urban agency and resistance, as the LMLM clearly shows. Its mission reaches beyond Lwandle, though. The Hostel 33 blog mentions a number of international and national funders, and the museum website has sections that speak to tourists specifically. The wider political mission of the museum therefore stands in parallel, partly frictional, to its role in the local community. The fact that the museum proudly speaks of the fact that it was opened by the nationally and internationally famous poet Sandile Dikeni is illustrative of its mission to reach out beyond the Lwandle community and to be part of a wider political mission as far as the curation of the post-apartheid memory landscape is concerned. Whilst doing so, the museum needs to carefully curate its links with the local community. The blog, for instance, proudly announces that one of the museum’s goals in its early phases was to contract building works locally, illustrative of the entanglements between symbolic memory and its material resource implications. In that sense, we can argue that local (im)mobilities are not isolated from wider national and even global dynamics, neither ideationally nor materially. In that, international tourist visitors may act as carriers of a message as much as a financial resource for the operations of the museum. The marketing of a local narrative of (im)mobility thus becomes part and parcel of a wider, national and even global, narrative, curated by the LMLM.

7) Conclusion: The Museum as a peri-urban space of agency

This article has cast light on the continuities inherent in controlled mobilities in the ways in which the South African migrant labour system is organised. Social stratifications in terms of race, class and gender are still part and parcel of the intersectional inequalities that this system has been generating for centuries. Even more recent initiatives, such as ‘Black Economic Empowerment’ have failed to fundamentally end a system in which inequality is manifested through spatial governance and through varying levels of mobility across social sectors. The migrant labour system is just one of various spatial tools through which South African spaces are governed. It can be seen in relation to a wider landscape in which cityscapes continue to be dominated and structured in zones of wealth and poverty as well as an infrastructure which fundamentally disadvantages the poorest of the poor. The resulting lack of physical mobility and encounter between different sections of the population is presenting a challenge to the notion of a reconciled and just post-apartheid society.

It is this political context in which the emergence of the LMLM as a form of peri-urban agency or insurgent citizenship has to be seen. The museum therefore has political agency through the ways in which it curates the injustices of the past and links it with ongoing obstacles to mobility and striking inequalities. What the focus on museum narratives in this article has shown is that, rather than a stand-alone experience, the conditions at the Lwandle township of Cape Town are reflective of a pattern of unequal mobilities throughout the country, more globally, and across time. In that, the museum uses narratives that transcend the immediate local space of its host community and speaks to a wider, trans-local audience. There is a continuity, not only between the past and present, but also the spatial logics of migrant labour between the urban industrialised and rural zones of South Africa, both of which have been embedded in the same structures of social control. Social fragmentation as well as the creation of marginalised urban zones are symptoms of a system which favours profitability over social justice and employs the governance of (im)mobility in order to perpetuate power differentials. It remains to be seen to what extent the memories not only of power, but also of resistance, are able to challenge such deeply-engrained power imbalances. In North’s words:

By viewing the distant past through a lens which sits within living memory, museums can potentially create interest in what has long been forgotten. [...] This in turn may help museums to become platforms for discussing deeply-entrenched inequalities, rather than limiting themselves to atrocities from living memory (North, 2017, p.99).

Museums are therefore key not only to understanding the past, but also to engaging with violent historical legacies in the present. They are a form of peri-urban agency in a post-colonial environment and produce political space that has local, national and global reference points. The political negotiations between the LMLM and the needs of its surrounding community illustrate that the contestations between museum and community are part and parcel of the formation of museum agency. The extent to which such curated memories are able to transform political structures and landscapes is a different question though.

Policy recommendations:

- Donors of development aid should consider funding museums in peri-urban spaces as ways of engaging with local communities beyond direct poverty alleviation.
- However, in doing so they should understand that such actors only represent one particular set of discourses and are not automatically representative of the immediate community they claim to represent. Museums need to speak to both local communities and international audiences, and their agency emerges in the tensions therein. They must not be labelled as ‘authentic’ or ‘representative’.
- Institutions promoting democratic participation in peri-urban areas can find existing structures of participation in such community museums which they can build on, yet whilst understanding that this may lead to community fragmentation in cases where such museums are widely contested in their host communities.

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