

Wish you were here: My great academic holiday

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Introduction

Many people associate me with food. Apparently, after meeting the then chair of the Department of Psychology at Unisa at the end of 2003 to discuss my joining the department through the merger of Unisa, Technikon South African and Vudec, he reported back to colleagues: "He cooks." From early mornings, when you pass my office on the fifth floor of the Theo van Wijk Building, you smell coffee. And you hear talking and laughing. There are two pots brewing and colleagues join for a chat and to have coffee. And of course there is often a bowl of rusks, muffins and strawberries. Food is a way of bringing people together, and I live the metaphor of breaking bread together. Room 5-52 is more than just an office. It is a space of sharing, of becoming and of being. It is a space where stories are told, meetings take place, and colleagues co-write. It is a space where new colleagues are invited and welcomed, a space that alumni students return to. In such moments when colleagues and post graduate students get together in my office and in the Marc Room next to my office, these casual talks often evolve into new initiatives that continually expand the boundaries of what we do in academia. When I get up in the mornings to go to my office it doesn't feel much like going to work. It feels a little bit like a holiday. So today I am going to talk to you about my great academic holiday. I will be looking back on my career journey and reflect on the spaces we occupy and the initiatives that we imagine and reimagine while being in and beyond these spaces.

The poetics of space

Here is a quote from Foucault: He says: 'We are at a moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein ... I believe that the anxiety of our era has to do fundamentally with space, no doubt a great deal more than with time' (Foucault, 1998, p.23, p. 26). So, I am going to tell you about my

journey across space and time and about my anxieties in dealing with space and time, but mostly about the joy of occupying these spaces and time.

Space calls for action, and before action, the imagination is at work. Bachelard in *The poetics of space* (1994) says that space mows and ploughs. Conradson (2003) speaks of the 'doing' of organisational space by seeing organisations as provisional entities that emerge through social practices and which continue to evolve, taking on new forms and sometimes unexpected characteristics over time. During my academic journey, I became more and more intrigued with institutional culture and space and what we do with, in, and beyond it. My first scheduled lecture in February 1993 to a group of more than 300 first year psychology students at Vista University in Port Elizabeth never took place. The lecture hall was on that particular morning, and unbeknownst to me, the gathering place for the onset of a student protest action that lasted for several weeks. Thinking back, my first few months as an employee of a university already exposed me to diverse dimensions of how different stakeholders approach, perceive and contribute to the identity, culture and spaces of institutions.

Each institution has its own personality which is shaped by its spatial layout as much as by anything else. It's impossible to imagine Unisa without thinking of this wonderful strange ship of a building in which we find ourselves at this moment. Certain spaces allow for and encourage commitment and belonging and fun. Others turn employees into zombies. But, spaces are not immutable, we can create our own spaces.

Over the last few years, and together with one of our Master's Degree students and post graduate research assistants in the department, Gali Katide, I read up on organisational space, a branch of organisational theory (Hernes, Bakken, & Olsen, 2006; Kernberger & Clegg, 2004). While in the past, organisational space has often been used to refer to the interior space of an organisation, the concept of space has shifted. A theoretical turn has occurred in organisational theory, from considerations of space as an *organisation* to space as *organising*, viewing space as a process which is continually produced and re-produced through social relations. We live in changing organisational spaces and we carve out new spaces for ourselves

(Moulavi, Mohammadi, Zirak, & Azizzadeh, 2014). A name on the door, paintings on the wall, coffee pots brewing.

But it is not only about tinkering with office decorations and equipment. We also create space as Lefebvre explains by practices such as walking, occupying and meeting; by planning; and by imagining (Halford & Leonard, 2005; Nokolaou, 2015).

The Vista years

Let me talk a little bit more about the Vista years. I didn't spend all my time there presenting lectures that never happened. My role was the usual participation in teaching and revising undergraduate and honours psychology programmes, as well as participating in the introduction of a Master's Degree in counselling psychology and founding a community clinic on campus. Together with the first group of MA students, we designed and planted a herbal garden in front of the community clinic. An interesting feature of how Vista operated was that academic departments were spread across eight campuses around the country and that almost all communication with colleagues on other campuses took place electronically and during occasional meetings. Once a year we – Linda Blokland, Terri Bakker, Gerhard Viljoen, Michelle May, Anneli Pauw, Greg Howcroft, Chris Hoelson, Zinzi Nqweni, Ilse van der Spuy, Willem Louw and others – got together on the Mamelodi Campus, or at a guest house in Pretoria, and a few times at a game lodge outside Bloemfontein. During these get-togethers we attended to the usual departmental activities such as curriculum revision, assessment of students' work, reporting and reflecting on the teaching programmes, but more importantly to get to know each other better and to have a good time.

In January 2002, I needed more space and decided to move north to join the lecturing team of Vista University on the Mamelodi Campus. This move coincided with meeting my life partner, and my involvement in adapting the psychology curriculum to be offered to students registered at VUDEC, the distance education campus of Vista. Towards the end of 2002, the restructuring of tertiary institutions became an uncertain reality and we had to begin the process of accepting that Vista would be no more. As a departmental team, we attended our final bosberaad – and to an extent a final farewell – at a lodge in Tygerpoort outside Pretoria. Driving there

on the afternoon of 12 November 2002, we heard on the radio that Johannes Kerkorrel, an iconic Afrikaans struggle songwriter and singer, had committed suicide. One of his songs, *sit dit af sit dit af* (switch it off switch it off) felt sadly appropriate for where we were in our Vista journey. In 2003, the final year of Vista, I was the only full time lecturer in psychology at Vudec and the only employee who became incorporated into the Department of Psychology at Unisa during the Unisa and Technikon South Africa merger in 2004.

Marching up the hill

On the eve of the merger I found myself in yet another space, on the treadmill in the gym. I was contemplating how I would go into the merger while the pressure for registering for doctorate studies remained an omnipresent reality. And then it hit me: bring the two together and make the most of it. I registered for doctorate studies with the theme *Mergers in Higher Education: Towards a Survivalkit for Conserving the Self* (Fourie, 2008) and started the journey of exploring the often neglected side of institutional transitions, that of the impact on people. When the merger took place in January 2004, I found myself, together with a group of colleagues, marching up the hill to a new office on the Muckleneuk Campus of Unisa. It was a metaphorical and physical move, and for most employees not without challenges, including the harsh reality of phasing out Vudec programmes and assisting pipeline students while embracing a new beginning.

On holidaying

I have spoken about my academic career up to this point as a journey, but of course a journey is really a holiday. I had something of a holiday even before I arrived at Unisa. But truth be told, my academic holiday only really started once I arrived here. In the course of my academic holiday-making, Unisa generously assisted me to travel to many, many cities around the globe: Toronto, Stockholm, San Juan, London, Fortaleza, Rio de Janeiro, New York, Barcelona, Bloemfontein, Gaborone, Windhoek, Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg and once or twice even back to the great metropolis of Port Elizabeth. However, what I want to tell you about now is my visits to seven metaphorical cities of which some included visits to actual geographical cities around the world. Of course, holidays can become repetitive. I often end up doing the same things wherever I am – go to the beach, drink some

wine, drink some more wine and so on. Much that is repetitive also happened in the seven metaphorical cities I want to tell you about. But I think there is something unique about each of these destinations that made them special.

The first city – Re-imagining Community Psychology

The very first metaphorical city I visited after arriving at Unisa is not so much a city but a township. I call the city the city of community psychology which, as some of you might know, is sometimes derisively referred to as township psychology. Almost as soon as I landed at Unisa, I received an invitation from Johan Kruger to become part of the teaching of the community psychology modules. The community psychology team was in the process of revising the two undergraduate modules at the time and I joined the group in reading chapters of potential new prescribed texts for the modules. We met at the cafeteria here in Theo van Wijk during lunch times on Fridays to discuss each chapter. Well, for one thing, I liked the idea that I was not the only one who is into food. After a few weeks of readings and sharing our thoughts on these chapters, we decided, no we don't want to prescribe any of these books. Instead we negotiated with Juta to publish a new text from a selection of chapters from two local books on social psychology and critical psychology. The title of the new prescribed book was *Self, Community & Psychology* (Segalo, Kruger, Fourie, Nefale, & Terre Blanche, 2004), and although we only selected the chapters for inclusion in the book and wrote a brief introduction to the book, this became my first academic publication. To date, the book is being prescribed for both our second and third year community psychology modules as well as for undergraduate community psychology modules at some other universities. In case you were wondering, no unfortunately we do not receive any royalties from the publishers.

Martin, Puleng, Johan, Angelo Fynn and I, together with other colleagues and students, have shared our community psychology teaching experience on various platforms such as conferences and peer-reviewed publications. But our main audience was not fellow academics. Over the years we tried to impress upon hundreds and maybe even thousands of students in South Africa and around the world the importance of inclusiveness, collective ownership of problems, and of empowerment. We also tried to actively demonstrate this ethos in how we went about teaching these modules. One product of this process that I am particularly

proud of is a book, *Some communities imagined*, published in 2013. Under the editorship of one of our team members, Melusi Mbatha, and one of our external markers on the module, Yaseen Ally, we invited community psychology students to submit their honours research reports for peer-review and for inclusion in the volume. And then there are the rewards, not that we are bragging of course. In 2008, we received the Excellence in Tuition Award at Unisa for the teaching of the second year community psychology module.

The community psychology modules are again being revised in 2017 and we are rethinking and re-imagining both undergraduate modules as well as the honours module. At this point, the revised modules will even more actively incorporate online interaction as it is central to creating spaces for engagement for students to learn from each other's encounters with their different communities. We acknowledge that students do not come as empty vessels but rather as knowers and carriers of various forms of knowledge. Our task is to provide them with space for reflection and sharing. By allowing them to explore their environment and engage with communities we attempt to show that learning does not only reside within university spaces and textbooks – we highlight how various contexts and locations are carriers of knowledge. In this way we dismantle and attempt to decolonise the academic space. We acknowledge that the university is not a neutral space of knowledge production. Students are co-creators of knowledge; they help to build the city of community psychology which might one day contain the best of both township and inner city and the suburbs (Fourie, Segalo, Mbatha, Roman, Terre Blanche, Gumani, & Kruger, 2016).

The second city – A conference (ISTP) and a journal (SAJP)

The phrase *publish or perish* is for most academics an ongoing challenge. It serves as motivation or as daunting challenge or most probably both. As you would have gathered by now, over the years, and because we love travelling, we imagined and became involve in many initiatives and projects. I was catapulted into the world of academic peer review soon after I joined Unisa when Vasi van Deventer invited Puleng, Martin and me, together with others, to assist with organising the International Society for Theoretical Psychology (ISTP) Conference in Cape Town in June 2005. If this is Tuesday it must be Cape Town. What fun we had. Fred van

Staden, the chair of the department at the time, really knew how to get people excited and involved. He got the then Executive Dean of the College of Human Sciences, and now Vice Chancellor of Unisa, Professor Mandla Makhanya, on board to generously support us. A large group of colleagues from our department and many of our students set up office in the Breakwater Lodge in the Waterfront for the duration of the conference. Interestingly, the lodge is situated in an eighteen century prison – something that I will get back to later. I have to confess that organising the conference dinner and making sure that attendees taste much of our local cuisine was a highlight for me. And of course I liked the presentations and the discussions and the daily conference newsletter that we compiled and printed on the spot.

As coordinators of the conference, we had the opportunity to edit the conference proceedings which was then published at the next biannual ISTP conference in Toronto in Canada in 2007. The title of the proceedings is *Citizen city: Between constructing agent and constructed agency*. We were more excited about seeing the book in print on that first morning of the conference than to register for the conference, I recall tears. I just cannot remember who was doing the crying.

In 2006 and 2007 we took one of the big local journals on board by hosting the *South African Journal of Psychology (SAJP)* in our department, with Martin as editor and Rene van Eeden and myself as associate editors. Fred generously allocated a room – the Marc Room today, but more about that later – to store hard copies of manuscripts and to get together to work through the different stages in editing the journal. Being involved in the ISTP conference and conference proceedings and in the making of SAJP, set the stage for a life-long passion for assisting scholars in getting their work shared either through conferences or publications. During a round table discussion of journal editors a few years ago at Wits University, I introduced myself as a pimp. Journal editors typically don't think of themselves as pimps but that is what we are. We are however thoughtful and self-reflective pimps and I am proud to have been part of many debates about the role of students, researchers, editors, and publishers in the academic knowledge production project. I think in particular of participating in a conference and a book edited by Solani Ngobeni in 2010 on opportunities and impediments in scholarly publishing in Africa.

The third city – New Voices in Psychology

From 2008 to 2014, I was the chief pimp of our in-house journal, *New Voices in Psychology*. New Voices has a long history in our department. It started in the nineteen seventies as a means for academics to tell students about their work and about new developments in the department, under the title, *Unisa Psychologia*. New Voices is a peer-reviewed journal that emphasises supporting post-graduate students and developing scholars to share their work. The journal mostly focuses on psychology issues within the African Context, as well as on critiques of the discipline of psychology. New Voices is more than just a journal, it is a space for discourse, planning, and creating, as well as for having fun. The most exciting part is that the journal indeed creates a space for the voices of new and upcoming researchers in psychology. Over the years, the editorial team got together on a regular basis for so-called coffee storms during which ideas are shared and new initiatives brainstormed. We often invite representatives from various local publication houses, including Unisa Press, to participate in these get-togethers. In winter around a pot of soup, a loaf of bread and some sherry.

Closely linked to *New Voices in Psychology* are a few other initiatives in the Department such as the *People behind the Papers* project which was launched in 2011. The idea for the project came from one of our Marc alumnus, Sydney Butler, who was curious to know more about the authors of journal articles as people. We have interviewed a wide cross-section of South African psychologists and other scholars in order to explore the human element in research and publication. We want to demystify the professional and personal processes that go into the production of academic knowledge. Students and others are often intimidated by the “finished” quality of journal articles and textbooks, and struggle to imagine the personal and social processes that go into producing these texts. The project moves beyond the theoretical confines of methodology textbooks, to help define, discover and represent the uniquely South African and African traditions in social science research. To date, 24 established researchers, 7 developing scholars and several group interviews with researchers, authors and publishers were recorded and shared on the project’s website. Both New Voices and People behind the Papers are now being pimped by yet another one of our Marc alumni and colleagues in the department, Khonzi Mbatha.

The fourth city – The South African Students' Psychology Conference

Another initiative that is taking us to various cities in Southern Africa is the *biannual Southern African students' psychology conference*. As with most stories, there is a story behind the story of how the conference came into being. While attending a teaching psychology conference in Bloemfontein in 2007, the then chair of psychology of the University of Botswana, Liza Plattner, raised the question: but where are the students? A relevant question indeed. After the conference, a group of us from the department were invited to spend some time with and share our ideas about and experiences of teaching psychology with colleagues at the Departments of Psychology at the Universities of Namibia and Botswana. It was during the visit to the University of Botswana that we decided to host a biannual students' psychology conference. And in 2009 the first Southern African Students' Psychology Conference with the theme *re-imagining psychology* took place at the University of Botswana in Gaborone. The 2011 conference with the theme *re-imagining psychology – the journey continues*, was co-hosted by the University of Pretoria and took place here at the Sunnyside Campus of Unisa. In 2013, the third students' conference with the theme *psychology (in)action* was co-hosted by the University of Witwatersrand and took place on the Wits Campus in Johannesburg. The fourth conference with the theme *psychology in communities* and co-hosted by the University of Limpopo, took place at the Unisa Campus in Polokwane in 2015. That brings us to the fifth students' psychology conference that will take place in Harare, Zimbabwe later this year. The conference is co-hosted by Unisa and the Women's University of Africa in collaboration with the University of Zimbabwe with the theme *psychologies in dialogue: strengthening our African connections*. Some of the students and young colleagues who have been prominent in imagining and organising the conference are: Sean Hagen, Angelo Fynn, Precious Sipuka, Mapula Mojapelo-Batka, Khonzi Mbatha, Errolyn Long, Puleng Segalo, Janice Moodley and many others.

Papers of the conference have on several occasions been published as peer-reviewed conference proceedings and as special issues of journals. With reference to the journal *Organization Studies*, Gabriel (2010, p. 757) argues that "a useful way of looking at the journal is as a place where, following different institutional practices, ideas arrive, settle and meet each other, sometimes fight it out or, more often than

not, decide to coexist in a civilized and polite way. Like the spaces of large cities, journals too become spaces crucial for the formation of individual and group identities, something that is accompanied by much agonizing about quality, acceptance, purity, contamination and even annihilation". Unquote. One could argue that the same applies for conferences and any other spaces where researchers and scholars engage and share their views and work.

Four down, three to go. But before I go on to the final three metaphorical cities, I want to pause and highlight some core themes that I think characterise my visits to each of these cities. The first theme is that of *soul*. Soul for me is about having fun while being creative and innovative, about passion and beauty. Soul is about inviting people in and accepting invitations by others. Caring for others while co-existing in collaborative spaces, including career spaces. Another theme is that of *growth*. Growth through professional development, through personal development, through creativity, while making things happen. A final theme is that of *connections*. Connections between the inside and the outside. Developing a sense for spaces that overlap each other, for boundaries that are explicitly defined, boundaries that are porous, boundaries that are enabling. I am sure you will also recognise these themes coming up again as I talk about the remaining three cities and no doubt there are many more themes that link these cities together.

The fifth city –The Marc Programme

I often think of myself not as Eduard but as Marc. Marc is the abbreviation for Unisa's MA in psychology with specialisation in research consultation. The programme, together with the MA clinical psychology programme, are professional Master's programmes offered in our department that are accredited with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA). Some brief background: in the late nineteen eighties some universities in South Africa introduced and registered MA programmes in research psychology with the HPCSA. Unisa's first three students in this programme registered in 1989 and since then the programme has grown from strength to strength. I joined Kate Grieve, Piet Kruger, Chris Janeke, Fred van Staden, Martin Terre Blanche, Vasi van Deventer, Johan Kruger and the rest of the teaching team a year or so after arriving at Unisa. And in 2010, I became the seventh coordinator of the programme.

At the heart of what we do in the Marc programme is networking and work integrated learning. Our students and us are constantly building relationships with individuals, organisations and communities. Each student negotiates two practical placements during their first year of study in order to develop skills and expertise in a real world context. Apart from learning skills this process also allows them to gain entry into a network of research practitioners and to kick start their career in research. Placements occur across a wide range of contexts including education, civil society organisations, corporate business, social services, medical research, and marketing research. Some key organisations where placements often take place are the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), Unisa Institute for Social and Health Sciences (which is affiliated with the Medical Research Council), Ask Africa, Columinate Online Market Research, as well as NGO's such as OUT LGBT Well-being, Orange Babies South Africa Prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and Social Welfare.

A spin off of this emphasis on networking and practical work exposure has been that the Marc programme is now at the centre of a community of research practitioners, many of whom freely donate their time to share their expertise with new students. Students also once a year organise a research psychology network day which includes students and facilitators from neighbouring universities (Universities of Pretoria, Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, North West and Limpopo) as well as alumni and representatives of the industry.

Another important resource and network opportunity for students lies in our link with the Unisa School of Interdisciplinary Research and Graduate Studies who assist us in inviting and contracting experts in advanced research techniques. These workshops incorporate a practical aspect so that students are provided with an opportunity for rehearsal of the new skill within a supportive environment. Among those who have shared their expertise with Unisa staff and students are Brendon Barnes from the University of Johannesburg who facilitates a workshop on programme evaluation; Jeanette Maritz from the Unisa Department of Health Studies who facilitates a series of workshops on qualitative research; Desmond Painter from Stellenbosch University who takes the students on a journey of interviewing people

and how to manage interview materials; and Liz Archer who introduces students to qualitative data analysis software.

I am proud of what we have achieved through the Marc Programme which is now widely acknowledged as one of the leading such programmes in Southern Africa. I am also particularly pleased that, due to its embeddedness in dynamic network of research practitioners the Marc Programme is not dependent on one or two individuals but is able to sustain itself through changes in personnel. Among the recent changes are that Marc alumnus and colleague, Helena Erasmus, recently joined as co-coordinator of the programme, Marc alumnus and colleague, Errolyn Long, now coordinates the practical placement aspect of the programme, Masefako Gumani coordinates students' research proposal development, Marc student, Harold Ncongwane assists in all the practicalities of the programme, and M&D departmental administrator, Joshua Nyamande, coordinates all of us. And then of course there is Angelo Fynn who is also a Marc alumnus and colleague who has been involved with the Marc programme for a long time and is currently famous for the annual boot camp that Marc students are required to survive before they can start with the rest of their studies.

The sixth city – Inside and outside corrections

Apart from teaching, learning and research, academics are involved in community engagement projects and initiatives. One such a project that is close to my heart is the *Inside-out Outside-in South African Corrections Interest Group*. The Inside-out story began in 2013 when one of our community psychology students, Mbongiseni Mdakane, met with a group of us in the department to discuss educational and career opportunities for people in prison as well as ex-offenders. We got together in an empty office, drank coffee and the idea of forming a prisons interest group was born. The aim of the group is to apply community psychology approaches and perspectives to the diverse communities that exist in and around correctional systems. We are particularly interested in initiatives that cross the boundaries between the inside and outside of corrections. Although we started off as an interest group and kept telling ourselves that Inside-out is not a project per se, the realities of the prison environment soon forced us to abandon our hands-off approach and to

become involved in practical projects (Fourie, 2015). So much has happened during the short history of the group, but I want to share just a few highlights.

The first is the fatherhood project. One of our MA students, Olebile Mosimanekgosi, who investigated experiences of fatherhood among male offenders in a maximum correctional centre. Olebile and I became part of a group of fathers who are currently incarcerated and who meet every Tuesday morning in Zonderwater Correctional Centre. From the onset, a strong goal of the support group was to spend more time with their children and love ones. In July 2016, the Inside-out team participated in a fatherhood day during which these almost thirty fathers were joined by their children, their wives, partners, the carers of their children as well as in some cases, their siblings and parents. I quote one of the fathers in reflecting on his participation in the support programme: *By coming to the group every week we are actually spending time with our children even though they are not here, but by discussing them and both our hopes and problems we are becoming better fathers and they need to know that and that I'm still part of this group.* As promised during one of the recent visits, I hereby dedicate this inaugural lecture to the group of fathers in the support programme at Zonderwater.

Another highlight is the *Inside-out Books Project* that was launched in November 2016. The aim of the books project is to collect books and to distribute it to libraries at correctional centres. The team delivered the first 200 books to the library at Kgosi Mampuru early in December 2016. The process of donating books initially involved applying for quality assurance at the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) and this was followed by weeks of planning, designing, launching, collecting and scanning books. We designed a logo for the project and each donated book has a library sticker, reflecting a unique ISBN number, the name of the donor of the book, as well as space for the identifying details of the reader. We met with the Area Commissioner and his team at Baviaanspoort Correctional Centre a few days ago and we trust that Inside-out books will soon be on the shelves at the three libraries there as well. It fills me with joy to think of people in prison who, through this initiative, have access to the luxury and challenge of good, recently published books. Books allow offenders to participate in the world of civil discourse, ideas, learning and imagination from which they are physically excluded.

More than just a community engagement initiative, corrections issues have also become a key research focus area for our department. An increasing number of postgraduate students now focus their research on corrections issues and already three dissertations have been completed and become part of the knowledge base about the interaction between the inside and outsides of prisons.

I would also like to acknowledge the staff and inmates from all the correctional centres where we have been active including Zonderwater, Kgosi Mampuru, Baviaanspoort, Boksburg, and Johannesburg Correctional Central. We have learned so much from you.

Before moving on to the next city, I want to take you on a short detour back to my teaching years at Vista University in Port Elizabeth. On Thursday evenings, I taught research methodology and statistics to a group of part time third year students. Two of these students, Aadiel Adams and Lachmie Pullen, later on continued with their honours as well as their MA studies. Over the years we bump into one another at conferences and I receive updates on the herb garden we planted outside the community clinic on the Vista Campus. During recent years, both of them joined the St Albans Correctional Centre as psychologists, and for me a few journeys and a few cities came together when one of my current MA students, Jacqui Pirzenthal who lives in the Eastern Cape, and I visited St Albans in 2016. We met with a group of social workers, educators and psychologists (including Aadiel and Lachmie) to hear more about their daily work lives at DCS. A link was established with the Inside-out Books Project and with the assistance of Jacqui and the Jeffreys Bay Rotary Club, books will soon be donated to the library at St Albans.

The seventh city – An inaugural lecture

That brings me to the seventh and final metaphorical city, an inaugural lecture. In preparing for the lecture, I have often visualised myself standing here on the afternoon of 28 February 2017 delivering an inaugural lecture. Each time I saw myself running away the moment that the Executive Dean reads my CV. But don't worry I know that it is not really an option as some of you have come from far to be a part of this konsert. On Easter Sunday in 2015, the month that I learned that I would

be promoted to full professor, my partner Johan, good friend Anthony, and I walked up a hill outside the town of Rosendal in the Eastern Free State. Standing on the edge of the hill overlooking Rosendal and Mautse, the former township, surrounded by the Witteberge, I just knew that I wanted to say something about space in my inaugural lecture.

But what about space? Personal, interpersonal, communal, intimate, inclusive, exclusive, geographical space? Turning to google and searching for *psychology and space*, I was not surprised to find more than 110 million results. Then I thought of how one typically becomes aware of space at the moment that you find yourself on the edge of space. I have always liked vista including the now much forgotten Vista University that I used to be a part of – look down on Rosendal, walking to a viewpoint on Muckleneuk Hill, staring at the endless Karoo landscape from a speeding car, catching glimpses of everyday Brazil from the infamous “circular bus” in Fortaleza. I remind myself of how my holidaying at Vista and Unisa continues to give me the opportunity to move into new spaces, not because I have to or because somebody is forcing me to, but because it is spaces that I really want to move into. It again reminds me of the blurred boundaries between work and home, between colleagues and friends, and between colleagues and students. Preparing for the inaugural lecture gave me the opportunity for many reflective conversations with colleagues and students during coffee sessions in my office, during walks on and off campus, and with friends and family.

It reminds me of Lefebvre’s construction of space as ‘constituted by relations among its objects’ and Callahan’s (2013) notion that space is not a ‘thing’, but rather that space is made up of ‘things in relation’; it is not a ‘container’ for activities, but is constructed through the interactions of actors. There are many actors, or rather companions, who journey with me during the many visits to the real and metaphorical spaces of my life. I want to use this opportunity to acknowledge some of them:

- My partner, Johan, for sharing a life journey. For your support and encouragement and for being the ultimate travel companion.

- My family for travelling to Gauteng to be here. My mother, Petro, my sister, Annarina, and my brother, Petrick, thank you for the wonderful memories that we have made and that we continue to make. I also thank those family members who couldn't be here, and especially those who are not with us anymore. I wish you were here.
- One of my other travel companions and soul mates, Karin Buter, for also flying to Gauteng to be here. I hope you are having a nice holiday.
- Colleagues from other universities who are here: Desmond Painter from Stellenbosch University, Peace Kiguwa, Kevin Whitehead and Sherianne Kramer from Wits, Brendon Barnes from the University of Johannesburg, and others who might be here but that I have not seen yet. Thank you.
- All my friends who are here. Thank you for travelling with me to various life destinations.
- The Vice-Principal: Teaching, Learning community engagement and Student Support, Prof Moche and the Executive Dean, Professor Phillips. The Unisa Department of Public Relations and specifically Rensche van der Merwe for hosting us.
- The Chair of our Department, Mapula Mojapelo Batka, for our travels over many years and for agreeing to respond to the lecture.
- My mentors Chris Hoelson, ou grote Ricky Snyders, Fred van Staden; and two professors that are always on the go with me, Puleng Segalo and Martin Terre Blanche. And a very special group, the doctorandi adventurers, Nikki Themistocleous, Catherine Govender, Christine Laidlaw and Angelo Fynn.
- My colleagues and the students from the Vista years and the Unisa years. This lecture speaks about the career holidaying we share, thank you! A special thank you to the early morning coffee drinkers. Thank you for listening and for sharing your stories, your readings, your ideas.

What is the message you want to bring across with the lecture, my partner asked. Well, for starters I hope that it will encourage others to continue enjoying and celebrating their own holidaying at work, and if they haven't started the holidaying yet, to seriously consider doing so. Second, to remind myself and others of the abundance of opportunities that cross our paths on a daily basis. Khonzi and I

recently talked about how we become our topics and how our topics become us. How we sometimes for various reasons try to get away from our topics and try to find something else, but that our topics keep coming back. Sometimes only years later. Until we accept and embrace them. Thank you.

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