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Reimagining the City, Rewriting Narratives: Music, Suburban Youths, and Inner City Redevelopment in Johannesburg, circa 2015

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Humanities,
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Abstract

This research explores the influence that inner city redevelopment in Johannesburg has had on both its music scenes and the identities of those participating in the music scenes, particularly young participants from Johannesburg's suburbs who did not interact with the city before its redevelopment. Understanding the city's history as well as the current lived and imagined divides between its suburbs and inner city illuminates its fragmented nature and informs the significance of the presence of suburban youths in today's inner city music scenes. Personal and collective narratives gathered from participants of these inner city music scenes provide insight into the city's spatial, social, and musical transitions, adding subjective voices to the city's complex and ever-evolving history. The use of culture-led regeneration (within cultural clusters), as a model of redevelopment, has aided in the success of attracting new audiences to the inner city once eschewed by suburbanites, providing grounds for new experiences and interactions within an increasingly diverse social sphere. Due to this, the music's diversity within these spaces is expanding too. The role of music – and in particular, alternative music – in enticing suburban youths to the inner city requires an understanding of why 'alternative' (or arguably, creative) people are often drawn to urban spaces, and in doing so, often become main contributors to the accomplishments and successes of redevelopment initiatives. Examining social interactions and relationships within the inner city, in comparison to those in suburban Johannesburg, exposes a unique and highly valued manner of communal bonding amongst participants that is often tied to involvement in similar music scenes. The experience of the inner city, the experience of music in the inner city, and the experience of a community of like-minded people within the inner city all combine to create new discourses about Johannesburg, as well as impacting on the identities and experiences of those contributing to these discourses. Transforming city. Transforming music. Transforming people.

Declaration

I know that plagiarism is wrong. Plagiarism is to use another's work and pretend as if it were my own.

I have used the author date convention for citation and referencing. Each significant contribution to and quotation in this dissertation from the work/s of other people has been acknowledged through citation and reference.

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

A. C. Mullins

Amanda Mullins
11 March 2016

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Introduction

The spatial configuration of Johannesburg is one of its most fascinating and unique features, made even more so by the city's now infamous decline during the 1990s and early 2000s. Referring to the repeal of apartheid's Group Areas Act in 1991 when the movement of black citizens was no longer controlled and as heavily scrutinised, Russell West-Pavlov describes how

> The erstwhile polarisation of apartheid Johannesburg into rich white suburbs in the north, impoverished black townships in the south, and a central business district (CBD) where both groups met in the everyday labour transactions of a major commercial and financial metropolis abruptly became fluid. Following upon the mass flight of large corporations from the CBD to peripheral centres such as Sandton or Rosebank, the city centre has been 'hollowed out', in the words of urban theorist Martin Murray [2011], resulting in a metropolis 'turned inside out' (2014: 11).

In this logic, the 'inside out' city resulted in the peripheral suburbs becoming the 'heart' of Johannesburg while the inner city, on the other hand, was eschewed. Perceptions towards the inner city were greatly affected, with many such attitudes still prevailing today. However, recent redevelopment projects in the inner city are steadily challenging and changing the perceptions of the city. Middle-class suburban youths – specifically those who self-identify as creative and 'alternative' – were some of the first people to notice and participate in the beginnings of the city's redevelopment. Music in particular was a main drawcard for them. From around 2007 onwards, the growing presence of alternative music scenes and clubs appealing to these creative and alternative middle-class suburban youths resulted in a steady, although at first small, influx of people who had previously been too wary to interact with the city. Then, music acted as a stepping stone into the transforming city, and offered the young suburbanites glimpses of the city's potential. In turn, the presence of these suburbanites, displaying the comfort and ease with which (parts of) the city could be experienced, influenced and attracted more outsiders to visit and utilise the city.

The use of culture-led regeneration initiatives, a model of redevelopment that has experienced widespread global success, has been a main component in not only bringing new musical experiences to fruition within Johannesburg's inner city, but also in drawing vast crowds to its spaces. "The role played by culture in regeneration has become familiar and commonplace", says music academic and social anthropologist Sara Cohen (2007: 191), praising its accomplishments in her fields of study in Liverpool. Culture-led regeneration often comes to life in 'cultural clusters' where amenities such as restaurants, galleries, museums, and music venues exist in close proximity to one another.[1] These types of attractions – which often include trendy coffee shops and organic markets, too, for example

[1] Literature on topics of culture-led regeneration and cultural clusters includes: Mommaas (2004), Austin (2013), Carmon (1999), Richards and Wilson (2006), Landry *et al.* (1996), Garcia (2004).

– are vital in attracting new visitors, consumers, residents, and investors to a space. The inner city areas of Braamfontein, Newtown, and Maboneng – the three areas that this thesis focuses on – are considered to be cultural clusters in which the positive effects of culture-led regeneration are visible. Attractions in these 'hubs' also act as stepping stones into other areas of the city, with the hope that visitors and residents will experience newfound enthusiasm for, and gratification of, the city, resulting in further utilisation. Similar to the work of 'narrative space' designer and researcher Tricia Austin (2013), I wish to explore the idea that it is ultimately the personal, lived experiences and interactions in and with these specific places which are intertwined with local knowledge and understanding that make the experience of the 'new' city significant. Playing roles similar to those of migrants, suburbanites gravitating towards the inner city begin to appropriate its urban spaces and in doing so concurrently create new personal and collective identities that incorporate the lived experiences of their newly-discovered roles as urban participants.

Thus, a new social profile has been (and continues to be) created as a result of the city's transformed and transforming spaces. Furthermore, due to both the partly renewed spatial and social constitution of the inner city, its musical agenda has been greatly influenced too. Musicologist Adam Krims labels this typical shift as 'the urban ethos', where changes in a space ultimately produce changes in the people who use that space and hence changes in its music (2007). A large component of my thesis deals with the ways in which these three aspects are inherently intertwined: the spatial, the social, and the sonic. All sound studies, R. Murray Schafer believes, deal with the relationship between humans and the sounds of their environment, as well as "what happens when those sounds change" (2012: 95). It is my aim to pursue the nature of the relationships between music, space, and people in the context of Johannesburg's inner city redevelopment initiatives.

The city's diversity, which, in addition to Johannesburg being a migrant city, is ever increasing as a result of its cultural clusters drawing in new audiences, is an integral influencing component in the music one experiences in its spaces. While styles and genres of music such as hip hop, rock, and electronic dance music are the primary types of music found in the inner city, it is the diverse, hybrid, and progressive nature of these that is celebrated – essentially, music that does not have typical mainstream appeal. The connection between urban spaces and alternative and creative culture (consisting of audiences who characteristically favour progressive music), is therefore necessary to consider; and I aim to give an account of why alternative music scenes have flourished in areas such as Braamfontein, Newtown, and Maboneng. The experience of music in the inner city (as opposed to the suburbs, for example) is also examined, highlighting the aforementioned idea of space or place having effect on, and being tied up in, one's experiences. Urban studies theorists John Connell and Chris Gibson claim that, indeed, "despite fabricated geographies and elements of globalisation, places continue to give meaning to people's lives and music" (2003: 70). Therefore, it is

worthwhile to study how and why the urban environment impacts on musical experience in Braamfontein, Newtown, and Maboneng.

This study was inspired by my own experiences in and of the city, with the realisation that the change from experiencing music in the suburbs to experiencing it in the inner city was not only significant in terms of Johannesburg's socio-spatial history but also an important one in the shaping of my musical experiences; and therefore my identity. As Johannesburg continues to evolve and develop, it is important not only to document and analyse its physical changes but also to investigate the changing character of its peoples and cultures. Every small segment that constitutes Johannesburg as a city builds together to tell a more complete history; and with urban renewal and regeneration at the forefront of the inner city's current agenda, the narratives that constitute this specific aspect of the city are of great significance. Spaces such as Braamfontein, Newtown, and Maboneng have often been written about because of their rich accounts of successes and failures in rebuilding themselves.[2] However, little research has yet been done on the ways in which (and the reasons for which) these redevelopment projects have influenced the movements of suburbanites, in particular youths, towards the city; and, more specifically, how these youths are reappropriating the once-forgotten social spaces of the inner city through cultural activity. I hope that by focusing on the experiences and thoughts of individuals taking part in the current agenda, insight into the human experiences of regeneration projects – and the ways in which they affect identity, behaviour, and lifestyles – can be used in thinking about future projects in Johannesburg and beyond. Documenting the 'new' city's music – the 'soundtrack' that enlivens its spaces and people – also adds to the city's current narrative, which will one day, too, constitute its history. My first hand experiences and close identification with the topic and its participants will hopefully result in an honest and valuable account.

Using the voices of seven middle-class suburban youths to track personal narratives of experiences of and interactions with the 'new' inner city, I aim to illustrate the impact that the city's transformation, and the products and offshoots that have resulted from it, have had on these suburbanites, including the transformative effects it has had on their individual, collective, and musical identities. My seven 'informants' give accounts of the inner city's music scenes in which they participate, revealing the concurrent transformation of the inner city's musical profile as its spaces and people have changed. The informants, who are briefly introduced in the text boxes throughout this introduction, play important roles in

Informant 1: Saul

Saul is studying music at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) and plays drums in a local rock band. The 21-year-old grew up in, and remains living in, Norwood. He sings in a choir and enjoys trying out different bars and restaurants.

[2] For example, see Hedley (2013), Zehender (2014), Pitock (2014[a]), Taitz (2013), Burocco (2013), Pitman (2013), Venema (2015).

weaving narratives around and through both theoretical and case study evidence. I conducted two extensive semi-structured interviews with each informant over the course of six months (December 2014 to May 2015) from which all of the informants' material included in this research is drawn. The cultural clusters of Braamfontein, Newtown, and Maboneng are used as case studies to demonstrate instances of culture-led regeneration in Johannesburg, and reveal the significance that music has played in their development (and accomplishments). Subjects dealing with local music scenes and feelings of belonging within the city are broached through my informants' interactions with these areas.

Informant 2: Jess

Jess is a consumer collaboration agent who performs research and strategic development for brands and companies. The 30-year-old is originally from Cape Town and has lived in Johannesburg for approximately four years. She has recently started living in Newtown, and in her spare time explores the city on cycling adventures.

Important to note is that, throughout the re-emergence of the inner city, a dichotomy between Johannesburg's urban and suburban areas has become more recognisable. This holds a mirror to the social imaginings of Johannesburg's spaces: the 'normality' and comfort of the suburbs as opposed to the volatile and mercurial nature of its inner city spaces. In this thesis I often refer to this dichotomy between the two parts of Johannesburg, using it to demonstrate the often polarised imaginings of spatial configurations, socialising, music consumption, and identity formation, for example. Although the majority of the youths who participate in the music scenes in Braamfontein, Newtown, and Maboneng return to the suburbs thereafter, the city holds special meaning because of the influence it has on their identities and attitudes. In order to properly understand the dichotomy between the suburbs and the city, however, it is necessary to contextualise both of these components of Johannesburg, which is what Part One of the thesis does: it sets the scene. Two maps of Johannesburg provide the reader with an orientation of the metropolis. The first map (figure 1) shows (the majority of) the metropolis and illustrates the division between the inner city (circled in blue) from the rest of Johannesburg which is made up of multitudes of suburbs (a few of which are marked and named in red). This image also illustrates the far reaching 'mass exodus' from the city to the northern suburbs that began in the 1980s. I have attempted to label on the map any suburb that is mentioned in the thesis.

Informant 3: Andile

Andile is 27 years old and works as a 'youth and culture specialist' at a design company in Johannesburg. Since the age of eight he grew up in the suburb of Greenside, and very recently moved to a stylish apartment in the Maboneng Precinct. Andile enjoys collecting vinyl records and working on creative projects with his friends.

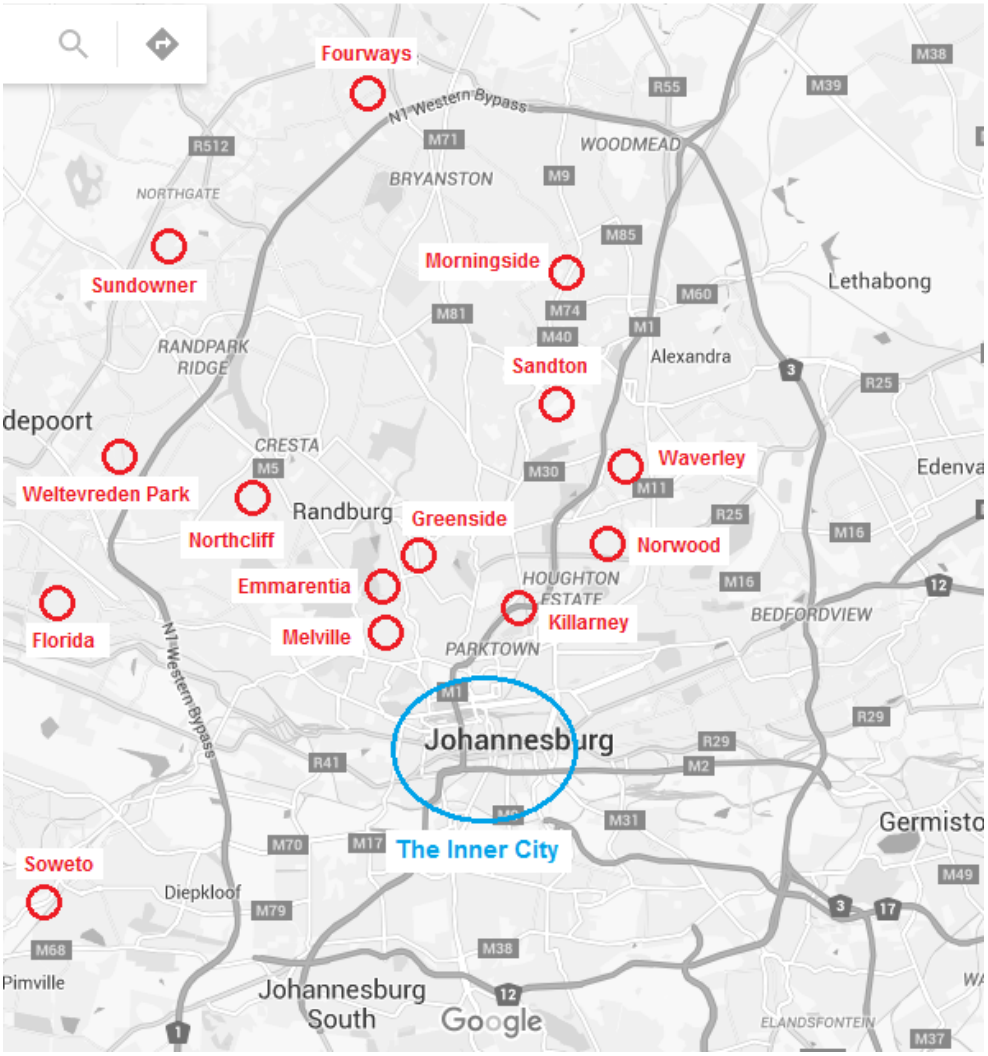


Figure 1: The greater city of Johannesburg demonstrating the (imagined) division between its inner city and its peripheral (mostly northern) suburbs (image from www.google.co.za/maps).

The second map (figure 2) is a focus on the inner city (the blue circle from figure 1) and marks off the three important cultural clusters of Braamfontein, Newtown, and Maboneng, and also labels several other landmarks that are referred to in the thesis. Background information on the three cultural clusters that constitute my case studies is needed to understand how they function within the city as well as how they have transformed over the past decade or so. Braamfontein, situated just north of the city centre, has been "an important commercial and economic node of Johannesburg" throughout the city's history. However, it was not unaffected by the city's general decay, and became rundown and underutilised during the 1990s and early 2000s ("Milestones > Braamfontein"). The area, which contains a large array of retail and office spaces, as well as several educational institutions and student accommodation hubs, has received substantial funding from both government and private sources since 2002 to facilitate the redevelopment. The Braamfontein

precinct is now described as "safe and clean, the result of its active city improvement district" that ensures "quality urban management" and safety for visitors and residents (ibid.). Newtown, originally a brick-making site known as Brickfields, is today regarded as a "vibrant, mixed-use area with a unique character based on existing cultural facilities" ("Milestones > Newtown"). The introduction of a city improvement district, similar to that of Braamfontein's, has also progressively made Newtown into a safe and exciting area of the city. With a wide variety of museums, galleries, and theatres, Newtown is "synonymous with the heritage and culture of South Africa and especially Johannesburg" (ibid.). Finally, the Maboneng Precinct, which is not itself a neighbourhood but rather a collection of sites in and around the neighbourhood of City and Suburban, is the newest and most progressive area of my three case studies. The precinct was conceptualised by young entrepreneur Jonathan Liebmann who desired to create safe and accessible modern urban living. Beginning with the Arts on Main development in 2009, Maboneng has expanded to include countless restaurants, bars, retail spaces, artist's studios, and apartments (Zehender 2014), and represents one of the most successful reimaginings of the city to date.

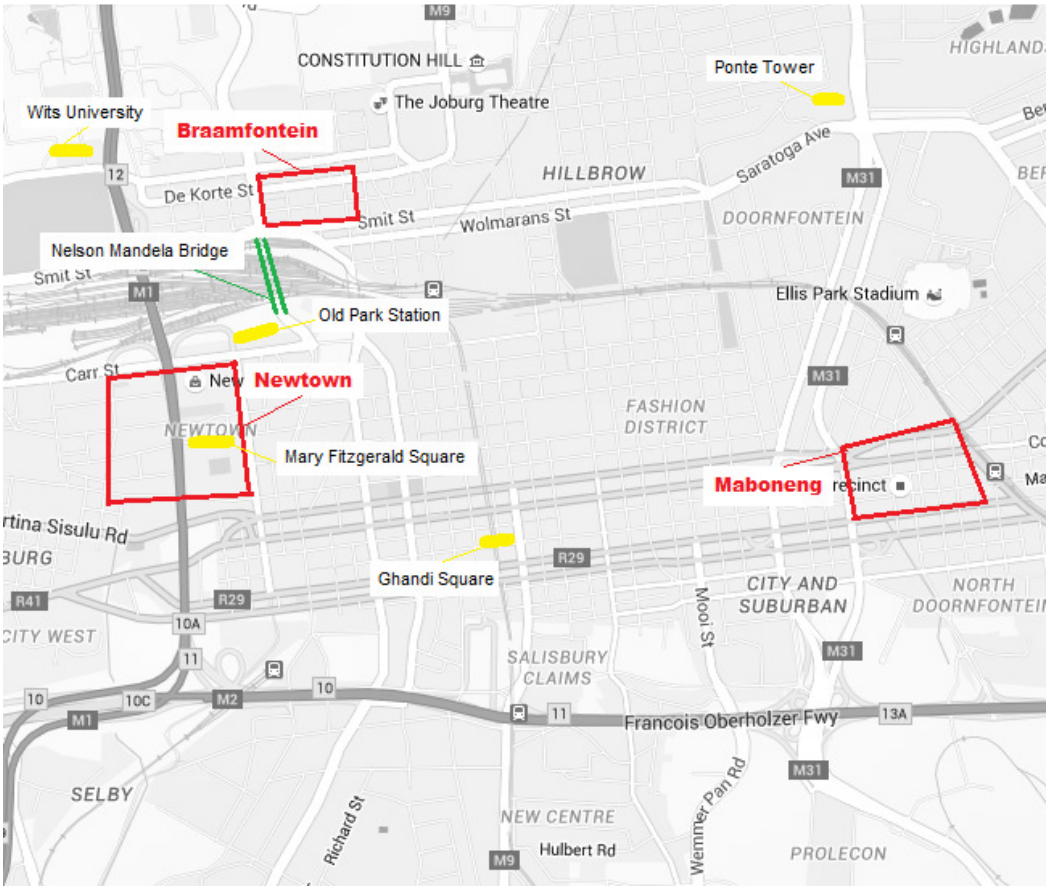


Figure 2: A map of Johannesburg's inner city, with Braamfontein, Newtown, and Maboneng demarcated in red. Noteworthy landmarks are also labelled (image from www.google.co.za/maps).

Informant 4: Nas

Originally from Durban, Nas spent most of his life growing up in the western Johannesburg suburb of Florida. He now lives in Killarney and works as a freelance copywriter and screenwriter. Nas is 27 years old and is a film and comic book fanatic.

Because of the significance of spatial configurations and conceptions, I chose to utilise the research method of mapping, inspired by Sara Cohen's work entitled 'Bubbles, Tracks, Borders and Lines: Mapping Music and Urban Landscape' (2012). Cohen describes conceptual mapping as a methodological and analytical tool that can be used to reveal the ways in which people describe places and remember what is where, giving a subjective sense of space and place that contains spatial knowledge and understanding (137-138). Taking note of what the informants said and described as they drew their conceptual maps helped to expand on the symbolism and thematic elements that gave deeper meaning to their sketches. The conceptual maps of the inner city that my informants provided (which were done during each informant's second interview) were then used to illustrate points about Johannesburg's cultural clusters as well as expose personal opinions and feelings about the inner city's spaces. The thoughts and feelings that were expressed in the conceptual mapping exercises were significant in that they most likely would not have come up in normal discussion, thus demonstrating how conceptual mapping added value to my research.

Informant 5: Bassie

At only 19 years old, Bassie has been taking a gap year before starting her law degree, working at an orphanage on a farm outside of Johannesburg. She grew up in the suburb of Waverley and spends her free time doing yoga, reading, and listening to music.

The sort of thematic and narrative analysis I performed on the mapping exercises was similar to my approach to all of the interview material. This thesis's reliance on the voices of my informants meant that the scrutiny of each of their two interviews was an extensive and important task. Using personal narratives as a research tool, I believed, would illuminate and enrich my research, injecting subjective experiences into the city's story. Personal narratives "transform life's journeys into sequences of events and evoke shifting and enduring perspectives on experience" (Ochs and Capps 1996: 20), allowing informants' use of stories rather than 'answers' to make sense of topics at hand. Additionally, in Vanessa May's words: "people lead storied lives and understand their experiences in story form" (2011), while each narrative "imbues the past with significance" (Ochs and Capps 1996: 37). When performing analysis on these narratives, I needed to consider and confront the texts on three levels: first, the literal meaning of the informant's descriptions; second, the symbolic meaning, or interpretations of the literal meaning; and third, the understanding of the socio-cultural environment that could, for example, connect themes or influence connotations (Sosulski *et al.* 2010: 40). Following this model, I hope to have done justice to my informants' words as they are represented throughout the research, contributing to Johannesburg's current story and future history.

Informant 6: Mike

Mike, who works as a software developer in Midrand, grew up in Fourways and now lives in Northcliff. The 28-year-old also works as a part-time photographer, often seen documenting inner city parties and events.

This thesis is divided into two main parts. As previously mentioned, the first part works to 'set the scene' and provide context in order to understand the second, larger part of the thesis. Part Two, entitled 'Inside the Scene', then sets out to fulfil the aims of my research: detailing the relationship between the spatial, social, and sonic (Krims' urban ethos), analysing the 'soundtrack' of Johannesburg's inner city, demonstrating space's influence on the experience of music, examining the social aspects of music consumption, and finally, exploring how these processes have impacted on perceptions and imaginings of the inner city. As the title of this research suggests, Johannesburg's transformation has resulted in the city being reimagined and in the process identities – personal, collective, and musical – are consequently being 'rewritten'.

Informant 7: Jean-Michel

Also known by his DJ moniker Half 'n Half, Jean-Michel is a 25-year-old visual artist, band agent and music industry consultant. Jean-Michel grew up in Sundowner but now lives in Killarney. His hobbies include creating art, collecting vinyl records, and watching live music performances.

Part I: Setting the Scene

Chapter 1
Suburban Life in Johannesburg: Comfort vs. Community

Johannesburg has been described as having a touch of schizophrenia (Mabandu 2014) because of its spatial and social extremes. Few other major cities in the world match Johannesburg's 'pocketed' nature – pockets of safety, isolation, tolerable movement, exclusion, and acceptance. It is a city of both visible and invisible divides, with barriers that are constantly being navigated and, more recently, being broken down. One of the dichotomies at play in the narrative of Johannesburg is the polarised and contradictory nature of its inner city and suburbs. One imagines most major modern cities to contain these two spaces – an inner city and surrounding suburbs – in a synergetic conjunction, acting as permeable bubbles that feed off each other and coexist in productive tension; bubbles through which people constantly pass. Johannesburg, however, has complex divides; as if the inner city is the nucleus of a cell of a city that is trying to exist without its core. Starting in the late 1980s and continuing until recently, Johannesburg's nucleus was considered by many a thing of toxicity and inferiority. The effect was that the surrounding cell, the suburban areas, attempted to survive independently as a self-contained bubble. This fractured nature of Johannesburg has facilitated matching attitudes and behaviour patterns amongst its inhabitants; and informed my informants' own narratives about the city.

Apartheid laws planted the seeds for Johannesburg's patchwork of locales, enforcing the separation of peoples and designating the use of areas for specific groups – "a whole apparatus of juridically enforced and geographically structured racial separation" (West-Pavlov 2014: 10). "Apartheid was a politics of space, if you look at the 1913 and 1936 Land Acts they were all about space, and much of the apartheid legislation was about denying people the right to move. It's about space, restricting space", say David Koloane and Ivor Powell (1995: 265). Ultimately, such colonial and apartheid policies intended to keep black people in rural areas and to allow only as many of them into the city as required to fulfil the city's needs for cheap labour (Mubiwa and Annegarn 2013: 12-13). Around the 1960s the apartheid government began forced-removals of black residents from the inner city and relocated them to homelands or townships, such as Soweto and Lenasia, on the city's periphery (see figure 1). Simultaneously, exclusively white suburbs were being established in Johannesburg's northern regions (12).

When the Group Areas Act (initiated in 1950; and which assigned specific racial groups to specific areas) was repealed in 1991, a major "rural-to-urban migration" of the black population was triggered, allowing them access to the areas that they had once been forcibly kept out of (13). By 1994, the time of apartheid's political fall, the residents of Johannesburg's CBD and its surrounding inner city areas had gone from being mostly white to mostly black (Kracker-Selzer and Heller 2010:

154). The arrival of the poorer black population into the city, as well as an increasing number of African immigrants inhabiting the city centre, sparked a 'mass exodus' by the white residents to the outlying suburbs – a movement which had already began taking place from the late 1980s onwards. Here, middle-class suburban residents became increasingly separated and closed-off from the inner city, having "secured themselves behind electric fences, guard houses and security patrols" (Bremner 2004[b]: 19).

For the generations born after the mid- to late-1980s to middle- and upper-class families (like my informants and I), life in Johannesburg meant life in the suburbs. Andile, who grew up in the suburb of Greenside (see figure 1), emphasises that "for most young people you can't separate suburban life from growing up in Joburg; they're one and the same". Suburban life also meant living in fear of the city's nucleus. For the generation mentioned above, the inner city became a hazy muddle of crime, grime, sin, danger, and no-go zones. These perceptions were fed to my informants and I by our families who had experienced the dramatic social and spatial changes I outlined above. Waverley resident (see figure 1) Bassie describes that her mom would always warn her about the city and how unsafe it was. For Jess it was a bit more drastic: "When I moved into Newtown and was working in Braamfontein my mom nearly disowned me". Her mother lives in Morningside, a wealthy northern suburb (see figure 1).

> She was like: 'What are you doing?' She still doesn't want to come and visit me in Newtown; she's been to my apartment once during the day but she won't leave her car there after dark. And she won't come after dark; she won't drive anywhere near [the city] after dark. And on a Saturday when she came to Braamfontein, we were sitting outside Father Coffee, and she was sitting like this (Jess grabs her handbag and clutches it against her chest with both arms). She was petrified! Yet she lived in Hillbrow in the 70s.[3]

Andile told me that his first job in Johannesburg was located in Braamfontein which led to him spending a significant amount of time in the inner city:

> I think my mother especially couldn't understand it. She was like: 'Why? What is happening there?' That was the first sort of reaction… I think for them it was totally bizarre, like, 'Why is this happening? Why do you guys want to go back there?' And I think a big part of it is that for them, there was an exodus from the city to the North, so it's almost like going backwards … All of my negative perceptions [about the city] – like every single one of them – are from the generation before me. My entire negative perception is from people telling me about the 'golden era' of the city and me not being there or experiencing it.

Northcliff resident (see figure 1) Mike had a similar experience: "I think the first few months of me regularly going into town, my parents had no understanding of what I was doing there or why I was going there – to them it was just a black hole where people would go when they really needed to and for no other reason". Jess expresses her anger at this common outlook: "It's such a terrible, terrible

[3] Hillbrow is a neighbourhood in Johannesburg's inner city that, although was once the pinnacle of modern urban living in Africa, declined into disrepair at the start of the 1990s. It is now widely regarded as the most dangerous area in Johannesburg, if not South Africa (see figure 2).

mind set to sit in your bubble of 'safety' and talk badly about an area that you've never been to [recently]. That mind set makes me so angry!"



Figure 3: A typical suburban scene in Johannesburg, with high walls lining the streets and no pedestrians walking the manicured verges (image from www.birdhavenrpa.co.za)

Nas, who grew up in Florida (see figure 1), had a different perspective. His parents experienced the post-apartheid changes in the city in a different light, perhaps because their movements and places of living were restricted by apartheid (although it is worth noting that Andile's and Bassie's parents didn't share these sentiments despite being in the same predicament). Nas's involvement in the city was a positive occurrence in his parents' eyes:

> I think my mom was like: 'Oh, you're going to the city? Be careful'. But not like: 'Oh, you're in the city. You're definitely going to get mugged'. Or: 'You're definitely going to get robbed'. I hadn't been hit with this barrage of negative connotations… Both of my parents are coloured – my dad is half coloured, half Indian and my mom is Malay-coloured – and I think that that culturally already informed their perspective that they didn't think that because there was a shift in '94 things were going to fall apart. They had a positive inclination towards everything happening in the country at this time. There was a positive association with the idea of their children getting to go to places they couldn't go before.

The way in which a city is imagined and represented has a profound impact on the way that it is formed, experienced, and lived. Human geographer Gary Bridge and sociologist Sophie Watson argue that "cities are not simply material or lived spaces – they are also spaces of the imagination and spaces of representation. How cities are envisioned has effects" (2003: 7). Perhaps one of the most influential contributors to the way in which Johannesburg has been conceived after apartheid – both from an international and local perspective – is the media and its portrayal of the city. The barrage of negative stories, statistics, and photographs communicated to the public during the

stages of its decline is what shaped the inner city into the 'no-go zone' that it widely became known as. Jean-Michel describes how he has seen the far-reaching effects of these negative portraits:

> From going to Switzerland a lot to see my grandparents you obviously see reports about Joburg city, and there'd be a German reporter with bulletproof vests on. And having gone there [to the city] you see the place where the guy was standing with a bulletproof vest and you're walking around like nothing's going on.

Nas also feels that local media contributed to the fear of the inner city: "The press just kind of goes: 'The city: no, no, no! Where you really want to go is the suburbs. That's where it's happening'. And I think that just created this image that the city is crime-ridden; that the city is being taken over by poor black people".[4] More recently, however, these negative representations in the media have rapidly shifted as more instances of Johannesburg's new status as a hot-spot for visiting and travelling to are visible. This is largely due to the success of 'renewed' areas such as Braamfontein and Maboneng and the resulting drop in crime in these areas. With headlines such as "Johannesburg: From no-go to gotta-go" (Venema 2015), "Why Johannesburg is the Rough Guides' top city of 2015" (Barford 2014), and "Johannesburg – the latest hip city break" (Rivalland 2015), Johannesburg's reputation appears to be shaking off its contentious past.[5] These 'improving' and popular areas, however, do still remain highly contested spaces. Residents of surrounding areas feel that they have become more disparate and excluded, resulting in a tension that is typical of the processes of gentrification that has, in part, characterised these areas.[6]

For the majority of middle-class suburban youths who were raised with these negative associations of the city, the suburbs exist as a safe haven away from the toxic nucleus of the city. Life in the suburbs is typically removed from any form of urban living, involvement or association, such as using public transport, walking in the streets, living in apartment blocks, and being in constant contact with a diverse population. Suburban life centres on, in my and my informants' experiences, the physical trimmings of large spaces, sprawling gardens, swimming pools, and high walls. While most of the feedback from my informants was critical of suburban life, Norwood resident (see figure 1) Saul expresses an appreciation for it, revealing the positive psychological consequences of suburbia's material benefits: "It's quite protected but I feel very fortunate living in suburbia … I live comfortably and have security. I get my three square meals and have access to internet, a swimming pool, a well-protected neighbourhood with nice restaurants to go eat at". But other informants spoke of the downside of the suburbs' spatial identity, noting that they felt starved of any sense of community: "It's isolating because you live in your house with these high walls, you don't really

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[4] Crime obviously has been, and still is, a large problem in Johannesburg. However, it is worth noting that the six or so incidences of crime that I have personally been involved in have all occurred in the suburbs and I have never had an issue in the city. In early 2015 the Johannesburg Metro Police Department (JMPD) reported that crime in the inner city had dropped by 80% due to the presence of CCTV cameras around the city (Dipa 2015).

[5] See also, for example, Brown (2015), Galloway (2015), Lane (2014).

[6] For example, see Lupindo (2015).

interact with your neighbours, and there's also not a lot to do", says Andile. It is also experienced as boring, insular, and individualistic according to Jess. Similarly, Jonathan Liebmann, the creator and developer of Maboneng, stated in an interview: "I was feeling empty in that [suburban] existence. I mean the suburbs are completely gated, there is no walkability, there's no connectivity between people" (Venema 2015).

Nas feels that the suburbs are restrictive, secure, full of narratives of paranoia, and offer a kind of comfort that does not allow one to be an active participant in various discourses in South Africa. And while Jean-Michel, who grew up in Sundowner (see figure 1), believes that there is "no kind of communication that goes on", Jess explicates this with a personal example: "My mom lives in Morningside in a housing estate where her front door is five steps away from the other person's front door and they have no idea who each other are. There's no community there, not at all … It's very much like a 'me first' kind of thing". The middle-class suburban youths who have been starved of urban contact, despite the city's close proximity, have not been able to experience the kind of community and integration that cities are known to offer. Therefore, the youths that choose to frequent the inner city embrace the escapism it provides and utilise the many freeing and 'life changing' experiences that its spaces and people have to offer.

The housing estate that Jess mentioned is an example of the plethora of gated communities that have been developed in and around Johannesburg as a means of 'survival' from the city's crime. Karina Landman and Willem Badenhorst describe two types of gated communities: there are "enclosed neighbourhoods" where existing neighbourhoods have been "fenced or walled in, and where access is controlled or prohibited by means of gates or booms erected across existing roads". The other type is that of "new security developments" whereby an entire area is privately developed, and the areas are "walled or fenced off and usually have a security gate or controlled access point" (2012: 2). Christina Culwick believes that gated communities are not just places where people retreat from society but are also spaces of exclusion that restrict the freedom of movement (2015). Culwick adds that unlike apartheid, however, these gated communities do not discriminate based on race, but rather that they restrict and control the movement of everyone who cannot afford to 'buy' access (ibid.). Interestingly, the Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO) produced research based on results of a 2013 Quality of Life Survey (QoL) that measured aspects such as fear of one's neighbourhood, community participation, feelings of apathy, disconnection from current affairs, and self-isolation. The research found that 77% of gated communities in Gauteng were located in wards where social isolation scores were above the provincial average, showing a high correlation between living in a closed-off setting and the experience of loneliness and lack of community (Culwick 2015).



Figure 4: A gated community or 'estate' in the northern Johannesburg suburb of Fourways (see figure 1) (image from www.privateproperty.co.za).

The forbidding images of the city with its skyscrapers and concrete landscapes remain foreign to many of the city's suburban residents, despite having a constant view of it on the horizon in the distance. Architectural researcher Lindsay Bremner suggests that since the 'mass exodus' of the early 1990s, the inner city of Johannesburg has not been imagined as a "place to be"; a place where one would chose to raise one's children, walk one's dogs, eat out, shop, or make a living (2004[b]: 63). Subsequently, property developer Eric Herr revealed that having to convince people that Johannesburg's inner city now offers a safe lifestyle option is a great challenge because "most young people have not been exposed to [the idea of] urban living" (Hedley 2013).

These abovementioned scenarios have in turn made the city possess a 'mystical' or special feel for many suburbanites, which my informants believe is not necessarily a good thing. "The city shouldn't be all too special to us; it shouldn't feel precious. It should be this thing that we interact with like it's a normal thing – like it is Linden or Greenside or Melville or whatever", claims Nas (see figure 1). Andile feels the same: "Everyone treats [the city] like it's a bit of a thing – like going to the city is a big deal. If we think about other cities around the world, that's a weird thing… it's a weird perception to have". I was surprised when a thirteen-year-old piano student of mine recently excitedly told me about her first ever trip into the city – a trip seeing the city from an open-top tour bus. There are two fundamental abnormalities about this: she had lived in Johannesburg her whole

life, seeing its famous (or perhaps infamous) skyline every day – probably a twenty-minute drive away – yet had never experienced this nucleus of her own city. Second, the only way it was thought 'safe' or 'sensible' for her to see the city was on a tour bus, just as if she was a tourist in a foreign land. Urban tourists they are: the suburbanites who choose to stay in their gated 'communities' – an ironic title for the lonely places they are – and not interact with their surroundings and the people that fill it.

I previously suggested that an inner city and its surrounding suburbs should be interactive, united, synergetic elements where neither one feels especially special. They should indeed just be "normal things" to us. And this is what my informants and I – suburban-raised middle-class youths participating in the inner city – are trying to do. We are challenging the perceptions we grew up with by normalising the inner city through our increased interaction with it. We are using the newly created artistic spaces to rewrite stories of the city, and we are doing this through music amongst other things; music to break down boundaries, perceptions, attitudes, and hopefully one day, to persuade the army of recluses to come out of their gated communities and experience the warmth and vibrancy of the inner city's peoples and cultures.

Chapter 2
Inner City Redevelopment: Context and Contest

Ideas on and practices of redevelopment and regeneration currently form a large part of the discourse and development of Johannesburg's spatial identity.[7] Regular sightings of refurbished buildings and a constant stream of reports in the media about the inner city's 'rebirth' remind us every day not only of the interesting present and the exciting future, but also of the city's tumultuous past. In the words of Russell West-Pavlov,

> The city itself is a material archive in time and space of its own transformations over the two decades since the demise of apartheid. In other words, layered palimpsestically in the urban fabric itself, but none the less inseparable from one another, are traces of the past and the present, whose combined effects explain the transformation of the city today (2014: 12).

This layered history, visible at every turn, owes a lot to apartheid's economic, spatial, and social implications. Ultimately, the control over people's movement – and the subsequent relative freedom of people's movement – complicated the city's spatial blueprint in almost every aspect. For example, one factor that impacted the departure of businesses from the CBD was apartheid's limitations on the number of black labourers allowed to be employed in factories in the city. Companies therefore moved to the edges of the homelands to more easily attract black labour ("Death and rebirth of Johannesburg"). Another factor that affected the desertion of commercial properties from the CBD were anti-apartheid sanctions against South Africa. Numerous international businesses withdrew from the country, leaving behind empty buildings that would soon become dilapidated (ibid.). When apartheid's Group Areas Act was repealed in 1991 many of the black township residents and illegal immigrants – the ones whose movement was specifically targeted by the Group Areas Act – moved into the newly 'free' inner city (Mubiwa and Annegarn 2013: 12-13). The vacated spaces of the city fostered breeding grounds for crime and illegal occupation which resulted in middle-class residents fleeing to surrounding suburbs. Not only was the city having to deal with capital flight to the suburbs but also with the undocumented newcomers whose unregulated occupation of buildings "exacerbated the problems of governance" (Kruger 2013: 151).

The disorderly situation in the city was taken advantage of by many people, for example by landlords who saw the 'illegal' status of black tenants as an opportunity to raise rents and reduce building maintenance (Bremner 2000: 35). The city's decline spiralled out of control throughout the 90s, such that it become the infamous 'no-go zone'. When Johannesburg's post-apartheid local government took office in 1996, Loren Kruger describes the mammoth task of tackling the late

[7] I take regeneration to entail investment opportunities for property developers as well as a means to enhance the functional capabilities of a rundown place – such as improving infrastructure and providing safer, better-lit environments for pedestrians (Austin 2013: 2).

apartheid administration's neglect of the built environment, the problem of absentee owners, and the irregular operators who took their place (2013: 150). Over these years of scrambling for solutions, the inner city went from being "the citadel of white dominance to the declining inner city of crime and grime" (Tomlinson *et al.* 2003: xii), where the core of Johannesburg was consequently "othered" and ignored (xiii).

Speaking at the TEDx JohannesburgCity 2.0 conference in 2013, architect Gerald Garner proposed that Johannesburg's decline lasted until 2000. It was only then, he claims, that the private sector began uplifting the city by investing in public spaces like Ghandi Square (see figure 2) ("Death and rebirth of Johannesburg"). When asking my informants about their views on and understandings of the inner city's redevelopment, Jess, who works as a consumer collaboration agent, shared her insightful knowledge:

> I spoke to a lot of developers last year – we were making a documentary on living in the city. We spoke to all the developers that had a hand in starting to redevelop the city after '94. And the first guys to get involved were OPH (Olitzki Property Holdings). Gerald Olitzki and his brother saw the opportunity … when everybody fled the city they were like: 'this can't last forever and right now property is so cheap'. So what they did is … they started with one apartment and grew it from there. Then they realised that a lot of the old buildings that had been deserted were taken over by slumlords. That's where a lot of the problem came in and that's why a lot of the suburbanites are quite scared to come back to the city, because they think it's like a slum gangster's paradise or whatever – which is a lie! So Gerald (Olitzki) started tackling that problem … basically what he did is he'd go to the guy who was in charge of a building and say to him: 'Listen, your building is falling apart, you have five families to one room, no one has water, no one has electricity … This isn't a great situation. You can still be the lord of the building, but how about moving everyone to *that* building down the road', which would be a building that Gerald owned. And he developed buildings that were more habitable and would help move everyone that was in a derelict building to a nicer building down the road, and then take the derelict building and build it up. And slowly but surely they did that – it started around the area where Ghandi Square is... That was one of the first things that started getting people to come back to the actual city.

In addition to early investment from astute private developers like Olitzki Property Holdings, the start of the 2000s also saw the formation of the JDA (Johannesburg Development Agency) which was given the focused task of urban regeneration ("Death and rebirth of Johannesburg"). The task was never going to be easy because of the deep-seated problems, with the JDA's executive manager of planning and strategy, Sharon Lewis, recalling that the JDA "felt very much alone" in its attempts to improve rundown parts of the inner city. However, this has changed in more recent times due to a "wave of new stakeholders and investors targeting the city" (Hedley 2013). As proof of its more recent success, the JDA states that between 2008 and 2014 over 100,000 people moved into the inner city due to the "mass conversion of empty shops and buildings into affordable residential flats" ("Death and rebirth of Johannesburg"), and approximately 44,000 new apartments were added to the inner city's inventory between 2007 and 2011, according to Taitz (2013).



Figure 5: One of the many dilapidated buildings in the inner city, in contrast to the image below… (author's photograph).



Figure 6: The city from a different perspective: a view from Newtown looking out over Braamfontein towards Hillbrow. In the foreground is a newly redeveloped park near the Bree taxi rank (author's photograph).

Since its conception the JDA has played an instrumental role in redevelopment projects around the city, whilst simultaneously creating jobs, campaigning for various policies and by-laws, establishing City Improvement Districts, and being "consultants and communicators" in various security projects

(Broll Property Group 2011). The upgrade of Ellis Park, Joubert Park, and Ghandi Square, as well as assisting with the Joburg Art City Project, are some of the ventures in which the JDA has played a crucial role (ibid.). One of the JDA's most ambitious and successful undertakings has been the redevelopment of Braamfontein. Braamfontein's own website states that by 2002 it was clear that the urban decay in the area desperately required attention. Problems at street level were listed as: broken sidewalks, dirty pavements, inadequate refuse removal, homelessness, informal traders, traffic congestion, and unauthorised taxi ranks. The first step was to provide security, and create a clean, well-managed environment ("About Braamfontein"). In the same year, 2002, the JDA and the City Council took on a R13-million regeneration programme after realising "how important the location and function of Braamfontein was to the local economy" ("Milestones > Braamfontein"). In addition to the JDA having spent more than R55-million on Braamfontein's upgrade since 2002, over R4-billion has been spent by private investors and developers. This has resulted in vacancy rates dropping below 10% (ibid.). Laurice Taitz states that Braamfontein has thrived because of the significant private property ownership, enabling the area to "draw sustained contributions from property owners for upkeep and services" (2013). In 2004 the Braamfontein Improvement District was introduced to protect the investments made by private owners as well as the JDA ("Braamfontein Improvement District").

Just south of Braamfontein, across the railway lines, the once-industrial area of Newtown, known as the 'cultural heart' of Johannesburg, has seen similar endeavours to improve its liveability as well as maintain its heritage. The JDA fund the Newtown Management District (NMD) to oversee the area, dealing with the likes of general maintenance and services. The NMD also provide security – or "public safety ambassadors" – and cleaners, ensuring a safe, clean, and inviting environment ("Newtown > About the District"). In an attempt to improve the area's cultural standing, Newtown's Market Theatre Foundation is expanding around Mary Fitzgerald Square (see figure 2) with "new rehearsal rooms, a theatre, library, gallery space, classrooms, and offices" ("A New Chapter in the History of the Joburg CBD is Upon Us" 2015). Two other notable regeneration projects in Newtown are the recently completed Newtown Junction shopping mall (which cost R1.2-billion and is described as bringing much needed amenities to residents and visitors of the inner city) and the Mill Junction student accommodation, which converted old grain silos along with shipping containers into unique living spaces (Taitz 2013).

The Maboneng Precinct, on the opposite, eastern side of the city, differs from areas like Braamfontein and Newtown in that it is a completely new area of development that has been imprinted onto and around an existing suburb, almost becoming a new suburb in itself. Maboneng was born in 2009, starting with the mixed-use arts centre named Arts on Main and spreading from there. Propertuity director Eric Herr points out that what differentiates Maboneng from other regeneration projects "is that its properties are owned by a single developer whose focus is the

upgrade of the entire area" (Hedley 2013). In July 2013 Herr stated that R350m was being invested in the expansion of the precinct, whilst also having an impressive total of 38 buildings in its portfolio (ibid.). The precinct is teeming with artists' studios, restaurants, apartment blocks, and hotels. In addition to a focus on an integrated lifestyle, Maboneng's attention to security has been a main factor in its success, with crime rates in the area dropping significantly in recent years (Zehender 2014).

Local government has been a significant driver of and investor in the city's redevelopment. From 2007 to 2012 the Inner City Charter governmental programme was implemented as a "regenerative strategy focusing on property and environmental upgrades" ("Roadmap to shift inner city regeneration drive up a gear"). Almost R2-billion was spent on improving public spaces, upgrading buildings, developing the Rea Vaya bus system (the only notable contribution to public transport in the inner city), upgrading housing and infrastructure, as well as making the city more eco-friendly (ibid.). At the beginning of 2015 the next chapter in governmental redevelopment was introduced in the form of the Inner City Roadmap. It is described as a long-term strategy with a holistic approach to addressing the challenges in the city (ibid.). Most notable, it intends focusing on a precinct-based approach to redevelopment, perhaps having been inspired by the successes of the Braamfontein and Maboneng precincts.[8] Gauteng Premier David Makhura also revealed in his State of the Province address in February 2015 that the government would make available R10-billion in investments over the next five years to regenerate the CBD (ibid.). "Taken together, these two bold steps are probably the strongest indications yet of the Gauteng Provincial Government's determination to reverse the degeneration of the inner city" (ibid.).

The redevelopment of select areas of the city has so far taken over a decade, and the general consensus is that Johannesburg's city is better for it. If, as some argue, the inner city is not yet the thriving hub it once was, TEDx Johannesburg organiser Thati Mokgoro offers the following rebuttal: while people are still nostalgic about the old city, "what they forget is that the bench had a 'whites only' sign on it and the blacks were not allowed to be in the city after a certain time". He believes that the greatest achievement of the city's rebirth is "transforming Johannesburg from a place where amenities were reserved for only one racial group to one that is more equitable" ("Death and rebirth of Johannesburg"). And "more equitable" it is. While issues around displacement and marginalisation through the gentrification model of redevelopment remain an ongoing concern (and will be addressed later), the city is indeed experiencing higher levels of integration as a result of its redevelopment ventures.

[8] In July 2015 the go-ahead was given for the long-planned Kopanong Precinct in the CBD – an example of the precinct-based approach to redevelopment. This development, with a projected cost of R5-billion ("A New Chapter in the History of the Joburg CBD is upon us"), is being pursued in a 'Public-Private Partnership' tasked with delivering the project and managing the precinct and its buildings (Stoltz 2015). A promotional flyer stated that the development "will entail the rehabilitation, development, and management of twenty-one inner city buildings" (ibid.).

Enlivening Johannesburg

While the redevelopment projects I outlined aim at improving Johannesburg's physical spaces and contribute to the city's rejuvenation, in themselves they cannot generate impactful change. Tricia Austin describes how new buildings and redeveloped environments do not themselves bring an area to life; rather it is the way that they are used, lived, and reported that impacts on their success and that creates a sense of place (2013: 2). In Lindsay Bremner's more forthright words regarding Newtown: "It's going to take more than the fancy French lighting and strange midget-sized busts littering Mary Fitzgerald Square to change things" (2004[b]: 62-63). Rather it is the people of Johannesburg who utilise the spaces, the things they choose to do with the spaces, as well as their attitudes towards the spaces that will determine the city's future. Mokgoro put it thus: "we cannot sit here and wait for it to come to life". People need to bring Johannesburg to life by *participating* in it ("Death and rebirth of Johannesburg").

Culture-led (or arts-led) regeneration is a model of redevelopment that focuses on the implementation of cultural activities and the arts as predominant sources of success in the redevelopment of cities or spaces. In her description of the redevelopment of the English city of Liverpool, Sara Cohen defines the concept succinctly, explaining that "culture and cultural heritage have been used as a focus for the revival of decaying city centres and to promote new and positive city images that professionally package cities as 'different' in order to enable them to compete with others for visitors, investment, and funding" (2007: 191-192). Culture-led regeneration especially emphasises the *experience* of place as the main factor in its success (Austin 2013: 2). Bremner affirms this belief, stating that key urban renewal projects are demonstrating a major "shift from 'spectacle' to 'environment' as the cornerstone of urban regeneration" (2000: 190). What this means is that the focus is on involving people in spaces in order for the space to become meaningful – and arts and culture are considered the primary means to facilitate a city's inhabitants' relationship with its spaces. When participation in arts and culture is incorporated, a space can no longer merely be a 'spectacle' and instead becomes an 'environment' in which people live out meaningful experiences.

Cultural Policy expert Beatriz Garcia explains that the principle of arts-led regeneration was first explored in U.S. cities in the 1970s and 80s, later spreading to other cities such as Glasgow, Bilbao, and Barcelona (2004: 312). In these post-industrial contexts the relationship between cities and culture was investigated for the ways in which culture and the creative industries could contribute to the process of urban regeneration and economic restructuring (Cohen 2007: 3). It was believed that culture and the arts held the key to transforming spaces in new and exciting ways. The participatory nature of arts and cultural events and activities – including being a participant who spectates – not only offered opportunities to draw citizens to spaces but also offered opportunities to get them involved in these spaces. This engagement with and of people is, therefore, vital for the

transformation of place. In Austin's words, the development of a thriving and successful neighbourhood cannot be done without a strategy to "include, invite, prompt, and engage its inhabitants and visitors from the start of the process" (2013: 2). Hans Mommaas claims that culture-led regeneration can benefit a place by both promoting amenities and encouraging preservation (and perhaps also appreciation) of history and heritage (2004: 530). Another example of culture-led redevelopment can be found in Cohen's description of how the spaces that were appropriated by musicians in Liverpool were transformed into distinctive areas that were associated with cultural vibrancy (2007: 212). Newly formed cultural associations of a place can increase its popularity and reputation, attracting further interest. Similarly, culture-led regeneration is celebrated for the impact it can have on shaping or re-shaping the image of a place. The new "cultural image" increases the attractiveness of a place for potential newcomers, visitors, and investors (URBACT Culture Members 2006: 1).

Art also has the ability to enliven and vivify spaces and make them more attractive to people. Speaking specifically about Newtown, Taitz says that, ironically, the amassed graffiti is the most enlivening aspect of the area despite the art form previously being interpreted as a sign of urban degeneration (2013).[9] Kaid Benfield believes that since culture-led redevelopment initiatives require sites to occupy and utilise, previously vacant or disused spaces can be "activated", resulting in a possible reduction of vacancies and crime (2013). Art and culture projects and events also offer opportunities for people not only to explore their local environment, but also for them to develop an interest in the environment (Landry *et al.* 1996: 38). Perhaps more consideration and care is given to a place when one knows it more intimately, identifies with it, or knows that it is a space that one can make use of. All of these benefits have lasting effects on a neighbourhood.

Charles Landry *et al.* offer examples of ways in which culture-led regeneration positively impacts on the quality of life of local residents and visitors: "wealth creation" through new opportunities for ventures which draw non-residents to the neighbourhood; "social cohesion" through increased interaction, made possible by new ventures and collaborative art and culture activities; and "confident, imaginative citizens" who are empowered and inspired by the new ventures and activities in which they partake (1996: 9-10). Ultimately, individual and community development are essential in the results desired by arts-led regeneration, generating capable and inspired citizens who may then even further better the space. Many of the desired outcomes of culture-led regeneration are dependent on a community working together and sharing the same vision for their neighbourhood; with the latter term indicating a community that is tied to a locale. As argued in the previous chapter, the idea and creation of a sense of community is often lacking in many parts of

[9] Inner city urban art walking tours in Johannesburg are offered by Past Experiences: (http://pastexperiences.co.za/?page_id=815).

Johannesburg because of how many of its citizens' lives, especially those in the suburbs with which this study is concerned, have focussed on 'surviving' – but blocking out the crime means that we block out our neighbours and community too. The result is that little dialogue takes place, there are few joint efforts, and little feeling of bonding and rapport. These, however, are exactly the acts of communing that culture-led regeneration has the capability of facilitating. Through activities and events held in the name of arts and culture, people of all types are brought together, different audiences are able to mix, and social cohesion is enhanced (Landry *et al.* 1996: 37). Mommaas also suggests that this stimulates local cultural diversity and democracy (2004: 530), where an understanding of others is more likely, and therefore an acceptance and appreciation is established.



Figure 7: Colourful street art in Braamfontein (author's photograph).



Figure 8: The streets of Newtown 'littered' with creative graffiti designs (author's photograph).

'Community', it is suggested, is "defined on the basis of common interests" rather than concrete relationships (Landry *et al.* 1996: 28). This looser definition is possibly what gives credence to the accomplishments of culture-led regeneration. In proposing that cities do not only need built infrastructure and people but also "imagined communities", Landry *et al.* state that knowing that other citizens – even if they are strangers – "share elements of a common culture and react to events as one would react oneself" (21), gives one a sense of connection and accord. This allows for a variety of people to feel welcomed together in one space, creating what is referred to as a 'socially-mixed' neighbourhood. It is these types of neighbourhoods that many regeneration projects strive towards because of their many benefits to the people and the environment in which they exist. Building inclusive neighbourhoods is what can make a city liveable, what will attract people to live, work, and play in the area, as well as what can rebuild the damages of the past – both physical, economic, and social. Other reasons that arts and culture are 'special' in redevelopment, according to Landry *et al.*, is that they engage people's creativity, they develop problem solving skills, they assist dialogue between individuals and groups, they encourage questioning, they are unpredictable and fun, they engage the imagination, and they offer an opportunity for self-expression (1996: 12). Identity formation is also an important outcome of cultural involvement and participation, as expressed by the URBACT Culture Members: "Culture is part of our realities – it both defines who we are as citizens and at the same time provides us with the raw materials for the construction of our identities" (2006: 1).

The role of artists and artists' abilities are possibly the most highly considered "regenerators" in the process of culture-led regeneration. Landry *et al.* consider artists' ability to see value in objects,

people, or spaces (that most people would likely disregard) as one of their key functions (1996: 18).[10] Theorists agree about the value of artists in redevelopment, with Benfield, for example, describing how artists bring life and purpose to urban areas (2013). In reference to Richard Florida's work on the creative class (2012), Greg Richards and Julie Wilson believe that creative people's tendency to cluster and form linkages between creative enterprises is beneficial to a redeveloped area (2006), with Florida even asserting that the success of a city depends on its ability to attract and retain the creative class (2012).[11] Jonathan Liebmann decided to base Maboneng's Arts on Main development around this ideology, stating that artists and creatives are the best catalysts for change as well as being the perfect 'early adopters' (Pitman 2013).[12]

A way in which a culture-led regeneration project can have lasting effects is explicated in an example given by Landry *et al.* Starting in the early 1990s, the city of Helsinki, as with many European and north American cities, holds an annual event called Night of the Arts. The event allows local cafes and restaurants the opportunity to both extend their trading hours and to let their business spill out onto the streets. The event experienced such popularity and success that over time these once-'treats' became the norm (1996: 12). The cultural initiative of creating a fun annual event therefore changed the way that people permanently experienced, lived, enjoyed, and perceived their city (ibid.). A similar project was recently launched in South Africa by entrepreneur Gareth Pearson. After being inspired by an event in Zurich, Pearson began First Thursdays in his hometown of Cape Town in November 2012. First Thursdays is modelled around an initiative started in London whereby galleries and museums are made more accessible to the public by not charging entrance fees and extending opening hours on the first Thursday of every month ("First Thursdays Cape Town"). By starting this initiative Pearson hoped to make the city more walkable, to change people's perceptions of Cape Town's CBD, and to encourage a "gallery-going" culture (ibid.).

Redevelopment initiatives in Johannesburg's inner city

First Thursdays made its way to Johannesburg in May 2015 and centred around the variety of cultural activities available in Braamfontein. A write-up on their website describes the event as being "as much about experiencing art and culture as it is about exploring the city on foot" ("First Thursdays Johannesburg"). Art and culture's ability to 'inadvertently' facilitate people being able to

[10] An example of artists being able to "identify potential in the seemingly intractable and difficult" is that of Camden Lock in London. Landry *et al.* say that recognising possibilities in the previously disused and rundown area allowed for Camden Lock to become a successful market place, an asset for small traders, and a popular tourist spot (1996: 18).
[11] Florida's definition of a 'creative' extends beyond the usual conceptions of artistic industries and encompasses the equally innovative fields of science, engineering, and medicine, for example.
[12] 'Early adopters' is a term developed by Everett M. Rogers which relates to the rate at which new trends and ideas spread throughout a culture. See *Diffusion of Innovations* (2003 [1962]).

walk around the city at night – possibly for the first time for some people – is another example of the effectiveness of arts-led regeneration. It provides opportunities as simple as walking between galleries that resultantly impact on people's experiences and perceptions of the city. One could speculate as to what many other consequential effects this could have, but one possibility is that it inspires more visits to the city, and another is that it could lead to stories of the city being told in a new, positive light. Each of these new and inspired efforts are slowly transforming Johannesburg's inner city into an inviting and exciting place.

In addition to First Thursdays, Johannesburg's inner city has seen many other culture- and arts-led type of projects as its redevelopment gains momentum. Indeed, the display of public art has always seemed to be at the forefront of the city's transformation. Gerald Garner explains that art plays an important role in making people aware that Johannesburg is being reborn: "It's one thing to fix pavements and plant trees, and doing these things makes a difference. But art makes the city humane … It tells stories of people who live here" (Pitock 2014[b]). Todd Pitock also explains how public art in Johannesburg has helped create a "virtuous cycle". Firstly, colour and beauty draw people. The presence of people promotes security, which then draws more people. And this creates a bigger audience possibility for more art to be displayed (ibid.), continuing the 'supply and demand' sequence. Whilst beautifying the city – or aestheticizing it as a way of dealing with the "contingent and chilly nature" of urban spaces (Bull 2012: 198) – public art is also contributing to the success of its regeneration, additionally sometimes becoming landmarks or 'tourist spots' themselves.

Braamfontein, Maboneng, and Newtown can all be considered – in varying degrees – as creative hubs. Each of the three neighbourhoods are filled with a variety of creative enterprises such as restaurants and coffee shops, theatres, markets, clubs, galleries, museums, and artists' studios. One of the first major successful ventures in the inner city was that of Neighbourgoods Market in Braamfontein, held every Saturday in a concrete and sterile parking lot on Juta Street.[13] The array of food, drinks, and trinkets on offer, along with the buzz from the crowds, turns the lot into a vibrant space. Andile recalls that during his stint of living in Cape Town he had heard rumblings of "things happening" in Braamfontein for the whole of 2010 and 2011, and that all of it was centred around the market. Mike believes that Neighbourgoods has been the most successful venture of all in the city because it attracted a sizeable community of city-goers to the area which then spawned a lot of other growth in the area. The similar Market on Main (at Arts on Main) was also the original drawcard to the Maboneng Precinct. Saul describes that once the market started, Maboneng became more popular: "Maboneng knew what the demand was. But just like any area that has managed to

[13] The Neighbourgoods market was first conceptualised in Cape Town in 2006 and then later brought to Johannesburg by its creators Justin Rhodes and Cameron Munro. This style of urban market where fresh produce and artisanal food and goods are sold has gained worldwide popularity over the past half-decade or so.

bring in nice food, nice culture, and give a sense of security, people want to go back there to experience it more".

Mike explains that once an area receives wider public exposure because of a culture-led regeneration project, people then think 'what can I do with this space?'. His view is that culture-led regeneration is the best way of achieving renewed interest in decaying areas. He demonstrated this by recounting his version of Braamfontein's recent history:

> If you look at all the businesses that helped Braamfontein start off – besides Kitcheners and Great Dane – it was a couple of art galleries that opened up, like Kalashnikov. And once those were there then things started happening and the rest of the growth really formed. Neighbourgoods market has also been a massive factor in that. If you look at the offices that companies are renting in Braamfontein and Maboneng, most of them are creative industries – there are very few companies in the area that aren't directly in the creative industries.

The opening of galleries and markets thus shifted Braamfontein and Maboneng into thriving spaces offering opportunities for other creative businesses to flourish, with the knowledge that the environment created by the hubs would bring along with it new and vested audiences.



Figure 9: The outside seating area of Neighbourgoods market buzzing on a Saturday amongst the high rise buildings of Braamfontein (image from www.playbraamfontein.co.za).

I asked my informants what they thought to be positive and beneficial types of cultural and artistic ventures in redevelopment. In addition to Mike's opinion that the Neighbourgoods Market was a catalyst, Saul adds that bars and nightlife play a vital role in an area's success in relation to redevelopment. Andile suggests that the most comprehensive tool for redevelopment is one "built around the idea of a history or a heritage". In line with this, Nas spoke about a cultural event that he had attended where he felt that the benefits of culture-led regeneration were strongly at play. "I went to the Chinese New Year celebrations in town recently and the coolest thing about it was that it was fuller than usual". He continued:

> But then afterwards when people were done, they stayed on the street for a lot longer and had drinks and something to eat … People were out on the streets in town, in China Town, which has been there for ages, rather than going to the place that they knew would be safe and I think that that's cool. It's good that people had the opportunity to engage with the existing cultural history in Joburg, not just with the new things that are popping up. At the same time, doing that allows for new things to pop up, and those new things are good.

Alongside this, Nas believes that the most important aspect of any redevelopment project is that it offers people the chance to *participate*, just as the Chinese New Year event did. He emphasises that humans are social creatures who want to socialise and take part in different experiences – "telling people to get involved is always more effective than telling them to 'come by'" – and adds that when people document or relay the participation of themselves or of others, they are concurrently creating new narratives about the city. Asking Jess whether she believes certain creative ventures are more productive than others, she responded: "I don't think one is more successful than the other thing. I think the most successful thing is when there is a fusion of everything. They have to exist in harmony to create a hub – like a kind of cool, appealing package for people otherwise they won't come". Jess considers Maboneng as exemplary in this regard (and the same can be said for Braamfontein) because it encapsulates a fusion of music, exploration, street art, cycling, fashion, food, and stores "where you can get everything in one place".

In line with Jess's sentiment, the areas of Braamfontein and Maboneng could indeed be known as 'cultural clusters', a popular way of developing long-term or permanent culture- or arts-led regeneration programs. This entails an array of different forms of artistic and cultural ventures coming together in close proximity – sometimes literally enclosed together and sometimes more sparsely spread – where an integrated, community-driven approach to regeneration-through-arts is emphasised. The concept of cultural clusters developed into somewhat of an urban development 'hype' at the start of the 1990s, claims Mommaas (2004: 530), and is now considered one of the most widespread strategies of development (Richards and Wilson 2006: 16). Cultural clusters – also referred to in the literature as creative hubs or cultural quarters – aim to profit from the presence of many different cultural and art enterprises being located in one space; what Mommaas calls an "inclusive, horizontal, and stimulating perspective" (2004: 530). The settings of these hubs are meant to facilitate the sharing of thoughts, spaces, experiences, and ideas – acting like "incubators" for

craftsmen and artistic entrepreneurs, in Benfield's words – and bringing about inspiration and innovation (2013).

Cohen describes how the cultural quarters that were introduced in Liverpool's inner city regeneration typically emerged in places that had not been sites of cultural activity but which after development initiatives became the focus of cultural production (2007: 191-192). This is the case in Johannesburg too: its three major creative hubs – Maboneng, Braamfontein, and Newtown – now stand where industrial factories and businesses once stood. Cohen describes how the cultural quarters in Liverpool were aimed at providing a common ground or base for interrelated cultural businesses and projects, and that aside from being focused on cultural consumption, the quarters also created an environment that was "conducive to cultural creativity and economic growth" (ibid.). In Liverpool's case, as with Johannesburg's creative hubs, Cohen points out that property developers, city planners, and investors often seek to capitalise on the interesting "bohemian image and artistic reputation of certain areas" by turning them into cultural clusters (2012: 155). But what these kinds of public spaces offer is not only a "setting for beautification" and increased popularity, but also a "manifestation of vested interests" and a "site for contestation" (Austin 2013: 3). Cultural quarters allow for spaces to become "dynamic interactive experiences" (10) where, amongst many other things, participants can challenge existing – or create new – discourses, where new groups and individuals can meet and find common ground, where expressions of the self and the community can be articulated, and where areas that were once dying (or perceived to be so) come back to life.

Gentrification and its affects and effects

Gentrification often accompanies inner city redevelopment. If the latter entails changing spaces in order to draw and achieve financial support and sustainability, then negative or unattractive aspects of an area need to be hidden, changed, or erased – such as decrepit buildings, 'undesirable' residents, and disagreeable going-ons such as begging, homelessness, or children playing soccer in the street, for example. By hiding, changing, or erasing these elements, some people are bound to be effected.[14] Urban geographer Paul Chatterton describes the typical private developments brought about by gentrification as "enclaved 'urbanoid' environments dedicated to the consumption needs of middle-class consumers" (2000: 393). The original residents are often moved out of their neighbourhoods, whether directly or through subtler ways such as raising rental fees, for instance. For this reason, urban studies scholar Zak Cheney-Rice states that gentrification is not dissimilar to colonialism: "We've seen such systems before, those which literally move poor people around, in and out of their homes, at the behest of the wealthy. It's usually called colonialism" (2014). The inclusion of culture-

[14] See Reid's article on gentrification in Maboneng: "In Johannesburg, Once Known for Apartheid, Gentrification Means Displacement for The Poor" (2014).

led regeneration initiatives in many gentrification projects has revealed the validity of Sara Cohen's claim that "despite the language of inclusion that might be associated with culture [and culture-led regeneration], the reality is that culture is not always the unifying force that some may like it to be" (2007: 193). Gentrification is consequently controversial, and has surrounded the discourse of Johannesburg's inner city growth over the past few years.

Doug Barry offers a 'model' that outlines the ways in which gentrification usually develops through a four-phase cycle (2013). In a rather tongue-in-cheek manner, Barry explains that certain social cohorts are responsible at each phase for pushing the gentrification process along. The first phase, he believes, is established by "gutter punks" or young transients with troubled backgrounds who are drawn to rough neighbourhoods in their rejection of societal norms. "Hipsters" then see these punk-infused neighbourhoods as "bastions of coolness" and through their similar rejection of the mainstream become interested in these spaces. With the presence of "hipsters" generating a "funky vibe", "bourgeois bohemians" also become attracted to the neighbourhood. They are described as free-spirited and well-educated people who would usually be found at the Saturday morning farmer's market. They also usually have the financial means to restore buildings and create an impressive image for the neighbourhood. In the fourth and final phase "bona fide gentry" – usually consisting of the likes of doctors and lawyers – arrive to the area after it has attained its complete "revived" status (ibid.). As gentrification progresses, according to Barry's model, the more attentive to those with money the area will become.

Johannesburg's inner city cultural hubs, I would suggest, are most likely at the end stages of the "hipster" phase and entering the "bourgeois bohemians" phase. Consequently, not many middle-class Johannesburgers live in the city yet (as opposed to the suburbs) but are nevertheless becoming increasingly familiarised with it through the many culture-led regeneration strategies available, such as shopping at the "Saturday morning farmer's market". In time, however, living in the inner city should grow in popularity amongst this cohort (if the gentrification model is followed). But for now they are mostly "passenger consumers" (Burroco 2013: 17-18). These "passenger consumers" determine the types of facilities and conveniences being made available in redeveloped areas. Amenities like art galleries, restaurants, night clubs, and coffee shops are what are in demand, and while these amenities may facilitate all of the benefits of culture-led regeneration that I have discussed, the needs of the majority of the residents of the neighbourhoods are not represented. Often it is instead schools, supermarkets, community halls, or clinics that a neighbourhood needs to really 'succeed' for those who call it home (ibid.).

Although no extensive demographic data on Johannesburg's newly developed inner city areas is available, the Director of Urban Planning at Columbia University, Lance Freeman, says that, to his surprise, research in the U.S. shows that low-income residents were no more likely to move out of

their homes when a neighbourhood was gentrified than when it was not. While higher costs in gentrified neighbourhoods may push out some renters, many of the original renters remain – especially if "new parks and safer streets" are provided (Sullivan 2014).[15] However, with high levels of migrancy and poverty in Johannesburg's inner city – there are approximately 1 300 'slum' buildings in the city centre (which are prime sites for redevelopment) housing 250 000 people (Serino 2015) – Johannesburg faces a challenging task in its gentrification attempts.

My informants offered interesting opinions about the moral dilemma surrounding gentrification in Johannesburg, citing as many positive as negative views. While every informant agreed that there were indeed damaging impacts for many of the city's residents, many also proposed interesting perspectives on why these negatives are a necessity. For example, Mike said that the negatives of gentrification are the price one has to pay for progress. He justifies this by claiming that most buildings that are bought for redevelopment are usually not fit for human habitation, continuing that "the Nigerian landlord that has taken over a building isn't actually interested in improving anything anyway".[16] Therefore, while people may be displaced for some time, in Mike's mind it is a necessity in order to improve their lives in the long run. Andile expresses a similar belief, saying that he couldn't imagine the process going any differently: "How do you re-imagine a space without affecting somebody?" He adds that although the situation is not currently "great", it is possibly good for the long term, and concludes: "I think there's an opportunity for change and we are still learning. I'm just really glad that people are investing in the city again – at the end of the day that's really important. And young people are investing in the city."

Florida's theory of the creative class (which all of my informants and I could be considered part of) being the 'redeemers' of redeveloped neighbourhoods (2012) has attracted much criticism. Barry explains that despite some "urbanists, journalists, and academics" believing that an influx of "hip, young residents" into deteriorating urban areas would benefit those areas, the "hip, young residents" are in fact the only ones benefiting (2013). While they may build and support independent businesses, coffee shops, book stores, music venues and so on, the majority of the poorer residents – as Burroco asserted previously – do not need these amenities and cannot afford to utilise them. The romanticised idea of "locally-sourced produce" being available for all of the "enlightened" residents, as Barry puts it, is not realistic (ibid.). Gavin Mueller adds that gentrification is an idealised image and process that only plays to middle-class tastes (2014). Finally, with a hard-hitting truth, Cheney-Rice notes that "we should be concerned that the most dependable way to ensure economic and

[15] Cheney-Rice also offers statistics from Washington D.C.'s National Public Radio that claim that gentrification does not increase the likelihood of lower-income occupants moving out, and that those who stay reap many benefits (2014).
[16] An example of this, reported by Al Jazeera, is an old factory near Maboneng that houses over 150 people (mainly migrants) and which only has one tap and two toilets for everyone to share (Serino 2015).

infrastructural investment in struggling, low income, and mostly black neighbourhoods is to have white people with money move into them" (2014). What this statement reveals is that much work needs to be done to find better solutions for redevelopment that features equality and fairness at its core.

In the case of Johannesburg – a city with many areas that some residents still deem to be dangerous – the redeveloped areas in the inner city that I am concerned with have become 'islands' or 'pockets of privilege'. With the comforts of security and crowd-safety, these 'islands' – just like the suburbs of Johannesburg – isolate themselves from their surrounding areas. Nas captured this reality well: "Well, when I say Braamfontein – we always talk about Braamfontein – but it's not Braamfontein. We're talking about a two block stretch of Braamfontein that goes from where Juta Street starts. We're talking about nothing in the grand scheme of things". This demonstrates how the 'party strip' or the 'Juta intersection' that constitutes the 'island' of redevelopment has come to represent the entire neighbourhood of Braamfontein – a neighbourhood that has a plethora of other amenities, businesses, and infrastructure unknown to most outsiders. Jess, who works in Braamfontein, does not agree with Nas's belief, saying that Braamfontein has benefited everyone because – unlike Maboneng – it isn't a "solid four blocks of safety space that doesn't let the rest of the city walk through". She believes that all of the money that the small, trendy 'island' of Braamfontein has brought in has helped support the rest of the neighbourhood. Those who only visit Braamfontein may just stay in the 'Juta intersection' but, she argues, for those who work and live in Braamfontein, such as herself, and who cannot afford to only eat and socialise in the trendy part, they do indeed "go up the road to the curry house or go to some chicken place around the corner. There are a lot of local businesses that aren't hipster or cool in any way, but we also support those shops".

Saul expresses his frustration at people who are determined to stay inside these 'islands' instead of exploring and experiencing a larger part of the city:

> On a Saturday if you walk through Braamfontein it's like all of a sudden there are expensive cars parked everywhere and there are families and everyone is dressed up – you can see that they don't fit in. It's not a matter of 'oh, I don't like those people' or 'they're doing it wrong' or whatever, but it's like they literally come because there's this fancy market where everything is upmarket. Like, rather go and check shit out in town than just come to this market where you feel that security. I think it's so messed up – it's really, really weird. I've taken chances and gone on weird drives through town because we want to. And then we get out and go for a walk … But these people, they literally put themselves in a little shield, a little force field between what's actually there and what isn't, instead of going and checking it out. I do find that strange and I think it does frustrate some [local] people sometimes.

In defence of the 'island' formation, Jean-Michel offers an interesting take: he proposes that one could call Sandton[17] and Fourways, which encompass large swathes of suburban Johannesburg north of the city, major 'islands of privilege'. One can "criticise Braamfontein and those spaces for trying to do what Sandton did however many years ago", he continued, "just on a more creative, small scale. Sure, it's rich people that are buying up city buildings, but so is Sandton". Jean-Michel adds that the islands are necessary in a sense that they grow outwards, they give people an idea of what is possible, and they also allow the government to see that there is money to be made in those areas. Maboneng's prime developer Jonathan Liebmann similarly states that the creation of Maboneng was "meant to send out a message to the entire area" (Zehender 2014), acting as a sort of example for others to follow as well as showing that it is possible to make a success out of the inner city. But while these redeveloped 'islands' may be a necessity to perpetuate further redevelopment, Saul still expresses his discomfort, recalling a recent experience at a bar in Maboneng:

> We were literally looking onto a dilapidated building, some kids playing with shit in the street, and down the road there was a squatter building … and I found it weird that we were sitting on this balcony drinking beer going 'Ah, what a lovely day' when there's all this fucked up shit going on around us. And if you walk one block out of Maboneng then you're either in Doornfoontein or Berea and it's quite messed up and dodgy on those outskirts.[18]

Saul's sense of guilt and awkwardness is commonly voiced by myself, many of my peers, and my informants. The World Development Index in 2013 rated South Africa second – only one point behind Lesotho – in having the biggest disparity between the rich and poor ("Gap between Rich and Poor: World Income Inequality"), and the consumption of expensive artisanal products in places like Maboneng and Braamfontein whilst being surrounded by impecunious residents and neighbourhoods constantly reminds us of this. It is a moral debate that we face incessantly. While there is good in 'recycling' old spaces, there is bad in taking those old spaces away from their occupants. While there is good in injecting the city with life and culture, there is bad in disregarding certain types of lives and cultures. And while there is good in creating businesses and amenities, there is bad in only catering to a select few.

Moving forward

To exist in denial or disregard of our surroundings is perhaps the biggest issue thwarting Johannesburg's success. Bremner speaks about locals' "unconscious history of self-interested indifference" that has the potential to "continue to shape Johannesburg's future" (2004[b]:135-136). While my informants and I cannot claim to be innocent of "self-interested indifference", I would

[17] Sandton is a wealthy area of Johannesburg that overtook as the main 'Central Business District' after the inner city's decline in the 1990s (see figure 1).
[18] A visual illustration of Saul's feelings about this area's fragmentation can be seen in his conceptual map (discussed in the next chapter; included in the appendix).

argue that if participants in the inner city became more aware of their role in creating and perpetuating exclusion, walls may slowly start to be broken down. The fact that my informants and peers speak about the subject as much as they do shows that we are already taking steps in this direction. Tomlinson *et al.*'s statement that a "successful city requires that its residents also identify with it and feel a moral attachment to its fortunes" (2003: xi) explicates the necessity for people to invest not only financially but also emotionally and socially in Johannesburg. Caring for its people and its spaces equally – not only those within the 'islands' – is a crucial part of Johannesburg's future.

Jess suggests ways in which one can confront these issues. As a young creative working and living in the city, she wishes for a community instead of having 'others' removed from the city to make way for 'us': "If I feel guilty about this, how can I rectify it? How can I make sure there is more integration? How can I be aware of how my area is literally shutting out anyone that is a part of it? Can people still walk through? How do we make it more accessible?" These propositions are easier voiced than acted on, but with more awareness of and sensitivity to the issues at hand, future endeavours in redevelopment have the chance of offering better solutions as well as integrating new ways of dealing with such issues. Of course, while culture-led regeneration may not build clinics and schools, its purpose is to facilitate these kinds of discussions and offer platforms on which solutions can be deliberated and workshopped. It also, I believe, offers an experience of community involvement whereby that "self-interested indifference" of which many of us are guilty can be challenged.

Another main issue that Jess highlights is the importance of the city's need to create safe passages through the whole city, or essentially, between the 'islands'. Linking up 'improvement districts' – including ones like Bank City and Marshalltown that are not creative hubs – is perhaps one answer to creating a more inclusive environment as well as an environment that is more easily explored, experienced, and utilised by outsiders. Nas brings up the fact that the divide between people created by 'pockets of privilege' is a fundamental problem. He says of Maboneng:

> Every apartment costs millions or at least nearly, and yet every restaurant there is staffed by people who can't afford to live there. Surely you want the people who are making your coffee downstairs or making your cake and food… – don't you want them to live in the same neighbourhood? Don't you want them to live there too because they participate in it? Shouldn't you want them to be there? There's this weird attitude that we'll take it over and replace everything that's here and then be angry that somebody shows up late for work – not thinking of that fact that the guy had to take ten taxis from four in the morning to get here when he used to live here, or he could've lived here.

On the divide between the city's residents, Nas also speaks about the fragmented nature of Johannesburg's redevelopment:

> The city is being transformed so that people who don't live in the city can come into the city, use the city however they want, and then leave... And then they go: 'We're doing better things for the city than the people that are here already'. I don't get it – how will we make it better by removing everything that's here. No! The reason why it was so amazing when you found it is because of the people that are already here.

Nas believes that the solution to creating a more inclusive and complete city is to provide more "mixed-rentals". He gives the example of the Ponte Tower in Hillbrow (see figure 2) where the apartments get more expensive, bigger, and lavish as they go higher up, but also allows for other types of people to live there because of the smaller and cheaper apartments available lower down. This type of mixed-living structure has facilitated, for example, the creation of the community organisation *Dlala Nje* ("Just play" in Zulu).[19] The organisation was started by Michael Luptak and Nickolaus Bauer who, after having moved into the higher parts of Ponte decided to create the organisation to provide activities such as games, sports, karate lessons, and swimming lessons in order to stimulate and entertain the 800 or so children living in the 52-storey building. My informant Mike, who knows the organisation well, believes that *Dlala Nje* has greatly benefited the community and has provided a much more liveable environment for the residents of Ponte. Luptak's and Bauer's ability to forgo their "self-interested indifference" and embrace the parts of the city that that are normally hidden or labelled undesirable allowed for the development of a community of caring and friendship in one of the roughest parts of Johannesburg. As Nas suggests, if more "mixed-rentals" like Ponte were developed, perhaps opportunities for more interaction and intermingling would inspire similar positive outcomes.

In conclusion, while redevelopment initiatives not only support local, up-and-coming artists as Saul suggests, or make for 'greener', eco-friendly surroundings by creating centrally located and walkable environments (Benfield 2013), they also challenge discourses, perceptions, attitudes, and ideals. Johannesburg's inner city 'rebirth' has facilitated a discussion that involves much more than the built environment. In my lifetime it has been the one thing that has stimulated and facilitated the most action and narrative around South Africa's history, present, and future. It has made us question matters of social injustice, made us more introspective and aware of issues, has inspired change – again, in more than just the physical infrastructure – and has challenged our city's people and their ways of thinking. The symbolic parallels between the transformation of the inner city and the transformation of the people who come into contact with it is intriguing.

[19] For more on *Dlala Nje* see www.dlalanje.org. Informative videos and details about the organisation can also be found in Tsaagane's article (2015).

Chapter 3
Reimagining the City: New and Changing Perceptions

Johannesburg's identity is often perceived as confused and indeterminate. Of more recent times, Bremner wrote that in the ten years following apartheid's end, the city had experienced a drastic reinvention of itself, citing the end of apartheid, the beginnings of democracy, its entry into the global economy, and its flourishing neo-liberalism as some of its major transformative factors (2004[b]: 18). Bremner believes that in this transition every aspect of the city has changed – be it economic, political, spatial, social, and cultural (2004[a]: 457) – and "the city that has emerged is one that very few recognise" (ibid.). With more than a decade having passed since Bremner's statement, the continuing development of the city is widely recognised as its hallmark. For instance, the promotional term used by Johannesburg's current mayor, Mpho Parks Tau, makes reference to this trait: "A city at work to remake itself" (Reid 2014).

The ongoing dialogue of transformation and reinvention has rendered an image of Johannesburg as being unstable and ever-changing. Although some find this characteristic of the city unsettling, I like to believe that there are many positive aspects to living in a city as unpredictable and unrestrained. A prime example is how this type of environment has allowed for an abundance of freedoms. Tomlinson *et al.* capture the essence of this image of Johannesburg, saying that in the post-apartheid era there are "as many 'Johannesburgs' as there are cultural identities" and that each individual and group "experiences the city differently and [that] all of these differences are valid" (2003: xi). This explicates the way in which the city allows for there to be many accepted (if contested) variations and interpretations of itself. One result is that its occupants and visitors are able to mould the city into whatever they imagine and desire it to be.

While many of the city's suburbanites choose to interact with the city as little as possible, those who do participate in the inner city, along with those living there, have the chance – and perhaps responsibility? – to partake in the active process of 'reinventing' and 'remaking' the city, and thus to write (and right) its new story. During the discussion about suburban life, Nas explained that although living in suburbia offers a comfortable lifestyle, the isolation of suburban life inhibits one's ability to be a "real, active participant" in the discourses surrounding the larger city. For example, to have a real impact on the city's fortune, one needs to be immersed in its environments, interacting with different people, seeing things from new perspectives, and being willing to make and accept changes. This, Nas concludes, is not possible when one avoids current and active platforms for change and transformation which, for instance, are plentifully available in the inner city. The renewed interest in the city currently shown by the youth allows for an important voice to be heard in the city's stories. This may be the first time in the city's mainly business- and industry-orientated

history that the youth – now in a more resourceful and liberated Johannesburg – are truly involved in shaping the city. This important development is affirmed by Thati Mokgoro:

> The young people frequenting the city are those who will make Johannesburg amazing in coming years. They do not carry the baggage many people who refuse to enter the city have. They look at it with optimistic eyes. They imagine this beautiful place which they want to be a part of ("Death and rebirth of Johannesburg").

In continuation from some of the descriptions given in the chapter on suburban life, it is insightful to hear further how the city was perceived by my informants when they had yet to become actively involved in/with it. The answers were all fairly uniform in revealing an austere perspective on the 'old' city. At the same time, however, it is an encouraging reminder of how Johannesburg has positively changed for them. Adjectives such as 'unsafe', 'dirty', 'busy', and 'claustrophobic' (Bassie) were matched with those of 'intricate', 'disorientating', 'intimidating', and 'intense' (Saul). Similarly, Nas's beliefs that the city was "dirty and dangerous and that the people in the city were dirty and dangerous too" accompanied Jess's perceptions of the city being about "crime, strikes, and things not working" – which she notes was how the media's portrayal of Johannesburg informed her perceptions as a then-Cape Town resident. Andile envisaged the city to be ghostly, frightening, empty, imposing, and dated. He continued to explain that sometimes he and his family would drive through the city on the weekends to get to the south of Johannesburg to visit family and that "it would be quiet, empty, like a vacuum. And that's what it has always been to me: a dead-zone". The side of the city that Andile focused on is one of two extremes that Johannesburg is known for: the empty and quiet times which are experienced at night and on Saturday afternoons and Sundays, as opposed to times of chaos and busyness during the week when people are working or using the city as a thoroughfare. These two stark contrasts characterise Johannesburg's different moods: a place of desolation and despair versus a bustling and active hub. It was interesting to see how each informant internalised the city as one or the other, never both.

Post-2007

I then asked each informant how their perceptions of the city had changed since spending time in it. It is important to note that my informants' responses are not only informed by the time they've spent in the city; as the recent redevelopment of the city has also contributed to the transformation of their opinions and imaginings. In addition to descriptions of the city as now being experienced as fun, lively, and beautiful (Bassie), and thriving yet still imposing (Andile), Jess noted that there are now many opportunities in Johannesburg and that the city is integrated, unique, and collaborative. She also explains that from her extensive travels around Africa she finds Johannesburg to have the "nicest mixture" of cultures: "We've had our influence from the States, we've had our influence from Europe, and there are obviously immigrants from all over the continent coming to Joburg – that's

really cool!" This diversity of peoples and cultures certainly makes Johannesburg an eclectic and interesting place. In a similar vein, Mike explains how he feels that the city is where he can experience "proper culture" because of it being "a lot more mixed and diverse than most other areas that have been established for a lot longer". He also describes how he made a conscious effort to reintroduce his parents to the city so that they could experience how much it has changed: "I took them to Maboneng – a little trip to The Living Room. And they absolutely loved it! I think that finally got them to understand what I find so amazing about the area and why I keep going back there". Jean-Michel did a similar thing by taking his parents to the Neighbourgoods market where they found the city to be very different to what they imagined: "It was good for them to see that the city isn't as dangerous as it was after they left".

Thus, in addition to the youth being one of the main drivers behind the successes of the inner city, our actions, such as the ones of Mike and Jean-Michel described above, are having residual effects and influences on others, further perpetuating the city's restored status. Many of these shifts in perceptions are indeed a result of the positive impacts of culture-led regeneration initiatives. For example, The Living Room, where Mike took his parents, is a 'rooftop jungle' venue within the Maboneng Precinct that incorporates sprawling urban views with plentiful lush greenery, as well as an eclectic array of musical offerings. As their unique 'Bali Beat Boutique' and 'Caribbean Edition' type of events (see images below), along with the venue's renowned interior design and promise of good cocktails, lure new audiences to the previously eschewed part of the city, the *experience* of the space that a venue like The Living Room can materialise, as Austin attests, is what marks the achievement of a redevelopment like Maboneng (2013: 2). After all, a successful culture-led initiative, as mentioned in the previous chapter, is one that allows spaces to be "transformed into distinctive areas" that are associated with "cultural vibrancy" (Cohen 2007: 212). Changes in such associations are what work to build positive reimaginings, and which increase the attractiveness of a place for potential newcomers, visitors, and stakeholders (URBACT Culture Members 2006: 1).





Figure 10: Two promotional posters from The Living Room showcasing their interesting range of musical offerings. The culturally-inspired themes create an attractiveness through promising a distinctive experience (images from www.facebook.com/The.Living.Room.JHB/).

Saul explained that his old preconceptions of the city ("busy, intricate, disorientating, intense, and intimidating") remain but that he has become more familiar and comfortable with these characteristics as he spends more time in the city. This, it could be argued, is proof of the inner city's culture-led regeneration's success. After all, the purpose of culture-led projects is to attract people to areas and allow them to explore and develop an interest in the environment (Landry *et al.* 1996: 38). So while Saul's experience may not be a complete 'reimagining', knowing the city's spaces more intimately as a result of culture-led redevelopment projects has allowed him to develop a comfort and security that has consequently enhanced his experience of the city. And Saul's description of the city remaining intimidating and disorientating is true of many metropolises. This reality of the nature of most cities has been veiled, Nas believes, by films and other media that construe idealist images and stories of city living. He argued that "part of the reason that cities appeal to us in general – image-wise – is because we grew up on the same media that punts the idea of New York and Chicago and other cities in America as being these exciting places that you want to be in… Where it's filled with people and you have to get a coffee from the little coffee shop before you run to your office". It is because of this romanticised image of the city that Nas believes people were attracted to Johannesburg's inner city: it "literally resonates with the image that I've been exposed to my whole life". While those aspects of city life are exciting and appealing, Nas cautions that the first thing that one realises when initially interacting with the inner city is that it is in fact dirty, overcrowded, and a "shifty and grimy" place. However, while an urban lifestyle or city living may not be as appealing after experiencing these realities, gaining a newfound familiarity with Johannesburg's inner city is a necessary step in order to begin to reimagine its spaces.

Changed perceptions allow for transformed spaces. Johannesburg's inner city now offers new ways for it to be imagined and experienced, as well as for new opportunities and prospects to be lived out. A positive energy was exuded from all of my informants as they explained ways in which the city has opened up for them. There was a sense of optimism regarding not only what the city can now offer them, but also regarding what they can offer the city. Anecdotes by my informants of how the city functioned as a 'new' platform for them to utilise and occupy were aplenty. Jean-Michel emphasised how the inner city has become a hub for the creative industry where freelance workers like himself gather for inspiration, support, and collaborative opportunities. He explains that people "go there and grab a coffee and talk about any future plans and ideas. Because it's not a conventional nine-to-five job in the creative industry". The cafés and coffee shops of Braamfontein and Maboneng therefore serve as quasi-offices (or 'coffices' as they have come to be known) where creatives meet. For one of my interviews with Jess we met at Daleah's Café in Braamfontein and sat next to a large table of several of the top musicians in the South African hip-hop, rap, and electronic scenes. Along with their unique fashion items and eclectic style, their vibrant personalities and presence radiated a sense of freedom, inventiveness, inspiration, and stimulation. It is no wonder that these environments are so loved and successful as incubators of the imagination. And it is for these reasons that Andile expressed how the inner city is the "pulse of Johannesburg and where everything happens", making the rest of Johannesburg so "boring and dull" in comparison.

Jean-Michel also explained how the inner city has now become the go-to place even when it is not the most convenient. When he and a friend, who both live in the neighbourhood of Killarney (see figure 1), met up for a coffee, they did not even consider going to the Killarney Mall two blocks from where they live but rather drove several kilometres to meet in Braamfontein. Jean-Michel gives two reasons for this: the first being the energising environment as described above, and the second being the desire to support independent, small, local businesses. He believes that it is better to back a 'start-up', which are available in abundance in the inner city, rather than supporting big businesses that characterises mall retail in South Africa. This shows that the city is also becoming associated with a moral agenda whereby, for example, cafés are using locally-sourced or organic produce; young, independent entrepreneurs have fair opportunities for work; and an environment of walking, cycling, and eco-consciousness is often promoted.

Growing up in Johannesburg, Mike recalls how he saw things deteriorate over time, "falling apart everywhere around us". Now the inner city represents real possibilities for change, and the difference between the present and fifteen to twenty years ago, Mike explains, is "massive and offers hope for everywhere else". Jess also told me how the 'new' city has perpetuated the change of narratives within, and of, the inner city from those of crime, disintegration, and fear to that of "trying to educate and tell stories of love and adventure and exploration". The local community invested in the inner city (made up of residents and suburbanites who work in and visit the spaces)

aims to make people feel welcome and involved; a goal that culture-led redevelopment ultimately aspires to. Finally, Saul expressed pride in the reimagined city: it is now "*the* place to go" and "it's a treat to be in town". He also told me that he enjoys how people are "doing whatever they want to do" and that there is now an exciting energy that one feels in the city.

Despite my informants' evident enthusiasm and love for the reimagined city, Andile raised an interesting point that resonates with my own feelings. He feels that his experience of the inner city is "still very much as an outsider going in", and that, regardless of how much time he spends in the city, it will always be imposing "because it's not my space. No matter how much I pretend, it's still not my space".[20] Indeed, most of my informants, including myself, are mere "passenger consumers" (Burroco 2013: 17-18) in the city. Interestingly, however, Andile believes that one of the reasons the city is as appealing and exciting to him is because he can leave it: "I think it's different when you're really bound to the city and have to deal with all of its problems. The people that talk about the city and that are really excited about the city will always look at the city from the outside". What Andile means is that the positivity about and hope for the city that suburban youth experience – the same positivity and hope that influences my often overly optimistic musings about the city – is possibly only viable because they do not have to deal with the harsher realities that still plague certain areas. The fact that many newcomers (whether residents or frequent participants) to the reimagined city are able to drive back to their parents' house in the suburbs, or afford to eat at restaurants in the northern suburbs, or shop at Woolworths (and in Andile's words: "At the end of the day, I want to have a Woolworths around the corner – it's sad but it's true"), only allows for a reimagining of the city that omits vital parts of it: those that are easier to forget, hide, and leave behind.

Limitations and freedoms

Adam Krims proposes an 'urban ethos' theory (as mentioned in the introduction and which I discuss in more detail in a later chapter) which considers, amongst other things, "the relationship of subjects to their urban setting: who can go where and do what? Who is constrained by the city, and who is freed by it?" (2007: 13). While Krims' discussion of this is grounded in music-based instances, I was interested in the way in which this aspect of the ethos related to the 'new' Johannesburg in relation to social and spatial issues pertaining to redeveloped hubs and their contrasting surrounds; how people saw the transformation of the inner city in relation to how it impacted on freedoms and restrictions. For example, the presence of redeveloped hubs such as Braamfontein, Newtown, and Maboneng, along with the variety of amenities they boast, has provided previously-absent

[20] Andile's feelings on this issue are made clear on his conceptual map (discussed later in this chapter; included in the appendix) where he labels his map as a "suburban migrant's view of Joburg", once again illustrating his feeling of being an outsider.

suburbanites a freedom to utilise the city's spaces once again. Music concerts and parties, of course, are one of the original 'freeing' drawcards for these suburbanites, and allowed them a glimpse of further possibilities and experiences within the inner city's spaces. On the other hand, however, these redeveloped hubs also produce restrictions for many of Johannesburg's poorer residents who, because of the provision of "passenger consumer" needs in the gentrification model, can no longer afford to live in or utilise the spaces (Burroco 2013: 17-18). Venues such as the aforementioned The Living Room, for instance, often come with hefty entrance fees and artisanal, expensive food and beverages that deter poorer people. Also, the alternative and contemporary musics that fill the redeveloped hubs possibly also clash with the sensibilities of many of the established residents who may, as an example, no longer enjoy the progressive musical aesthetics of Kitcheners and have had to find a new place at which to socialise. All of these slight changes in the environment – such as the type of amenities on offer and the styles of music played – have, as Krims' urban ethos proves, resounding effects on how spaces are experienced by different people.

Although I previously argued that the city's unpredictable and unrestrained nature allows for "an abundance of freedoms", I envisaged that claim as being in relation to Johannesburg's permeable and malleable nature – the characteristic that tolerates the many reinventions of itself. And, truthfully, it was also in reference to the 'good' or redeveloped parts of the city where freedom, or the lack thereof, is mostly not an issue. But referring to the basic ways in which the 'new' Johannesburg as a whole interacts with its people, and vice versa, I asked my informants' opinions on the matter. Speaking only of middle-class suburbanites and overlooking the poorer residents that I mentioned in the previous paragraph, Andile believes that the reimagined city is not constraining at all, for "if there's one place in Johannesburg that tends to have no rules or constraints to it, it's the city". He added that people are "able to choose how they want to interact with the city", resulting in people being a lot more dynamic than they would be anywhere else. Mike similarly felt that the city constrains "very few people" and that it is "very much open" for anyone; people just have to be open to accepting and taking on the opportunities available. The younger generations, he suggested, more than anyone, have a lot more freedom: "There is a whole new world of possibilities and opportunities". Nas, on the other hand, more aware of *all* dimensions at play in the city, presented another view, arguing that while "it's still a big deal" that people of colour now have the freedom to walk wherever they wish, the people who are currently constrained by the city are the same people who have always been constrained: the poor working class, consisting mainly of people of colour. In order to explain the constraints on the poor, Nas describes the freedoms that the middle and upper classes have:

> If you had the right to say: 'I don't want to go to the city' ten years ago and create this narrative that the city is dangerous and it's dirty and its people are gross, you now also have the freedom to say: 'Oh, the city is awesome, it's great, and we should all go and live there. We need to take it back!' If you had the freedom to make one decision, you generally still have the freedom to make the other decision. So it's the same people who were free before.

However, those who are constrained, Nas says, "still don't get to decide: 'It's time for me to move to Killarney'". The majority of those who live in the inner city – although not necessarily in the case of the redeveloped hubs – live there because it is their only option. The sordid, over-populated, and resultantly cheap apartment blocks in the inner city are often the only type of affordable accommodation in Johannesburg. Nas also points out that a lot of those constrained to or by the city due to financial limitations are often African immigrants, who make up a large portion of the current inner city residential population. The points raised by Nas offer a sobering reminder of how this 'new' and 'reimagined' city that is presently being celebrated for its transformation and rebirth – as it should be – is also in many parts still a derelict city filled with hardships and adversities for many people.

Spatial matters

To further investigate the ways in which my informants perceive Johannesburg's inner city I chose to utilise the research method of mapping. My aim was to garner visual representations of my informants' experiences, thoughts, perceptions, and recollections of the inner city. Cohen states that conceptual maps have "long been used to study the ways in which people describe places and remember what is where; people's subjective sense of place and space; and a spatial knowledge and understanding" (2012: 137). This methodological and analytical tool also acts as a way of prompting memories and stories of places (ibid.). While Cohen's mapping project is closely tied to the relationship between music and place I use mapping for a more basic understanding of my informants' perceptions of Johannesburg's spaces, particularly in this section of my work that establishes context, or, as the title of this first part of the thesis suggests, that 'sets the scene'. However, many of my informants did, unprompted by me, link place to music because of the important role that music played and still plays in their involvement with and familiarity of the inner city.

Russell West-Pavlov quotes Shane Graham as saying of Johannesburg that there is a "sense of disorientation amid rapid changes in the physical and social landscape" and that these changes therefore "necessitate new forms of literal and figurative mapping of space, place, and memory" (2014: 9). The disorientation that Graham speaks of may better be thought of as a movement from the unknown to the known, or the imagined to the real, for the wave of newcomers to the city. Disorientation entails, in part, being caught up in the perplexities of change, and of experiencing the processes of past, present, and future as a whole. So while people who have visited, worked in, or lived in the city for longer than the past decade or more may have experienced a sense of disorientation because of its immense changes, those who only know the city's past as a story or a

construct of the imagination cannot claim to have truly experienced the disorientation that Graham refers to. I would argue, then, that my informants' maps are not informed by a sense of disorientation but rather by 'introductions' to, or 'meetings' of, the inner city, which are as informative and revealing, especially because of the city's current influx of new visitors and participants.

Each informant was given a 'skeleton' map of the inner city with certain place-names and landmarks to help familiarise them with direction and location as well as to create a slight consistency or 'common denominator' amongst all of the maps. All informants had a different degree of familiarity with the inner city and also displayed varying styles of (and confidences in) visual representational methods. I asked them to narrate their drawing of the map and encouraged them to speak about any thoughts that arose at the time that could aid in the symbolism and analysis. I will briefly explain the maps and then scrutinise and discuss common themes, similarities, differences, and overall perceptions brought about by the mapping exercise. Due to space constraints, I will only be detailing three informants' maps. The remaining maps can be found in the appendix.

In each case of the exercise, Braamfontein was always the area on the map that my informants were drawn to first; the area they were most confident about and comfortable with in their representations. I believe that, along with the obvious spatial benefits of Braamfontein existing right on the periphery of the inner city – closest to the familiarities and protections of the suburbs – the area is as popular and loved by my informants as it is due to it being the least contested and 'confused' of the inner city's spaces, including those of the other redeveloped hubs. While concerns about Maboneng's gentrification and Newtown's under-utilisation were portrayed on most of the maps, Nas was the only informant to find issue with Braamfontein. Although he praised Braamfontein in his narrative, his drawing focused on the disconnect that he feels in the area due to the lack of assimilation between the various parts of the neighbourhood – a representation also of broader problems in the country. In fact, Nas was the only informant to have considered the east side of Braamfontein, whereas every other informant focused on the 'redeveloped' stretch of Braamfontein on the west side of Jan Smuts Avenue. This illustrates the extent to which our perceptions and experiences of the city are influenced by redevelopment and regeneration. In the mapping exercise Braamfontein was mainly marked as being a place for music, entertainment, and socialising, with depictions of having fun, watching bands, eating food, and other arts- and culture-led activities that are promoted in redeveloped areas (see other maps in the appendix for further examples). Such activities were also often represented within Maboneng and Newtown, yet were strikingly absent from any other areas of the city, proving not only the success but also the power or control over perceptions that these redeveloped hubs hold.

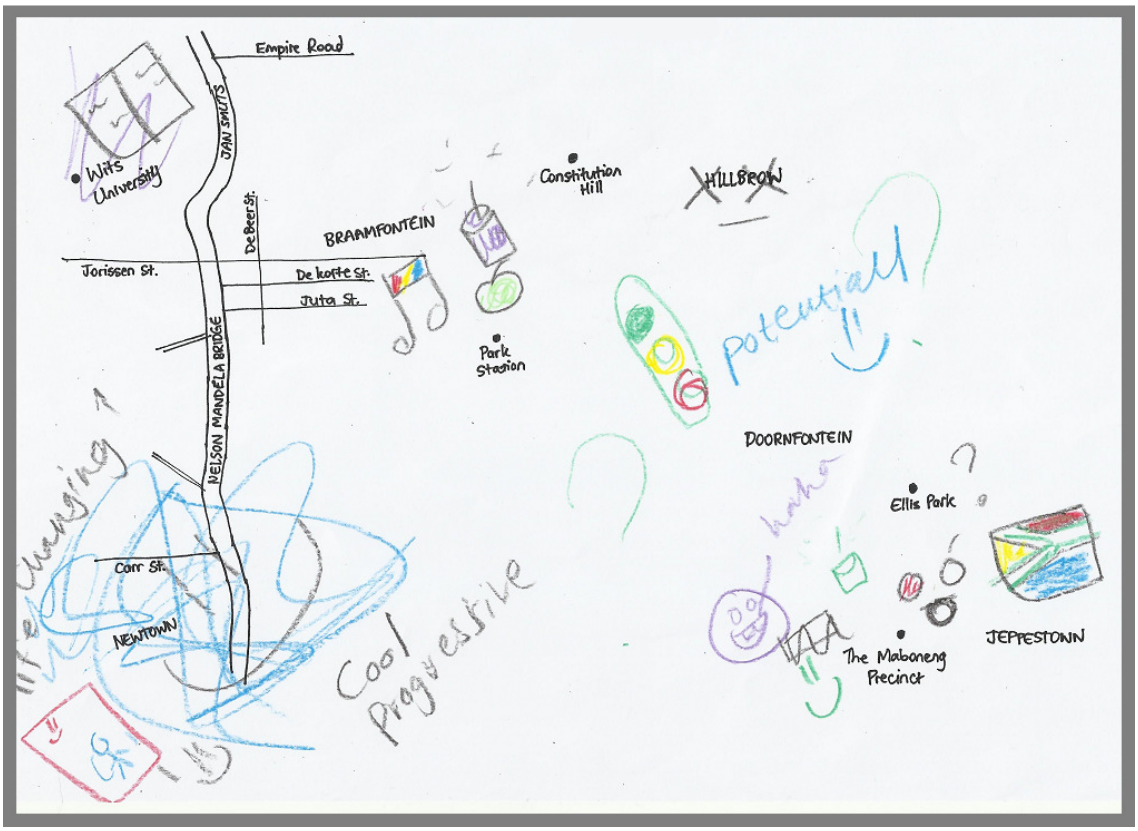


Figure 11: Bassie's conceptual map of the inner city (2015) (full description on following page).

The same disconnect that Nas feels about Braamfontein could indeed be said about the city as a whole, as blatantly evident on all of the maps. The redeveloped hubs of Braamfontein, Newtown, and Maboneng stand out with detail and depth amongst the empty or negatively-depicted spaces that form the rest of the inner city. Bassie's two big questions marks that signify those spaces as 'unkown', along with Jean-Michel's verbal statement that "there is nothing really there" (made evident by the stark white spaces on his map) point out suburbanites' lack of familiarity with and confidence in those parts of Johannesburg. Despite being in one of these discounted areas, however, Hillbrow did draw a lot of attention – though always negative – from the informants. As the go-to example when emphasising Johannesburg's bad side, written and verbal labels such as "unfamiliar", "still dodgy", "no-go zone", "imaginary wasteland", "dodgy place", "never done anything there", and "most intimidating place", presented the astounding contrast between neighbouring areas of the city. Nas's multiple use of the word "imaginary" on his map – "imaginary borders", "imaginary wasteland", "imaginary no-go zone" – in his description of Hillbrow symbolises how it remains to be what the whole city used to be: a place too intimidating to venture into that it has become a mere construct of the imagination for those who do not know it. Certain narratives of the past have evidently persisted and thus demonstrate the often confused and irregular imaginings of the city.

Bassie's Map
Bassie begins with a blue scribble over Newtown which she says symbolises the "weird and wonderful" electronic music scene in the area which is "cool" and "progressive". The "life changing" caption in Newtown refers to the night she saw Swedish rock band The Hives perform in Mary Fitzgerald Square (as part of Vodacom's In The City event in 2013), the memory of which, she says, she will cherish until she dies. The red box is Mary Fitzgerald Square with her in it dancing to The Hives, and the smiling faces represent her happy associations and memories of Newtown. In Braamfontein Bassie drew food, drinks, and musical notes to represent what she primarily does there. The musical notes also symbolise the many fun times she's had and the various artists she has watched or heard in Braamfontein. Bassie sees Maboneng as a very diverse and cultural place which is why she drew the South African flag. Food and drinks symbolise Maboneng's restaurants, while the two smiling faces represent the comedy nights that are held at different venues in the precinct. Hillbrow got two black crosses through it to symbolise Bassie's fear and uncertainty of the area. In the unfilled spaces Bassie put question marks to show her unfamiliarity with those parts of the city, as well as the uncertainty of those areas' futures. However, she added a traffic light to represent the stages of the city's progress – the "red stage" being the no-go stage, the "orange stage" showing the beginnings of change, and the "green stage" representing the regeneration and reuse of areas – and adds that these blank spaces have potential; they may just not be in the "green stage" yet.

As an illustration of what could perhaps be seen as a failure in culture-led redevelopment, Newtown, despite possessing some of the best cultural resources in the inner city, has not heralded the same achievements that Braamfontein and Maboneng have in their redevelopments. Thus, my informants' representations of Newtown were mixed. Due to many of the clubs and venues in Newtown having recently closed down, the area is resultantly being underutilised by the visiting suburbanites who had previously populated its recreational spaces. While Jean-Michel, Saul, and Bassie had good memories of past experiences in the area, Jess, Mike, Nas, and Andile all focused on its current state of being a "dead-zone". I was especially surprised that Nas – who spoke so frequently about his early days of partying in Newtown – did not provide a connection between the area and those fond memories of his. However, he did show the potential that he believes Newtown to have by writing that "we should be here all the time". There is indeed a sense of disappointment about the area's perceived decline amongst the informants which is influenced by their previous appreciation and enjoyment of the area. A very recent example of this was the cancellation of the popular In The City events held in Mary Fitzgerald Square mentioned by a few of the mappers. After a three-year run in the Square, the organisers announced that the 2015 event would be moved to the suburban venue of Emmarentia Dam, citing safety reasons as one factor for the change. So, ironically, the In The City event is no longer in the city. However, with the increasingly prevalent And Club recently moving to Newtown after leaving the Alex Theatre in Braamfontein, perhaps Newtown's next wave of popularity is on the horizon.

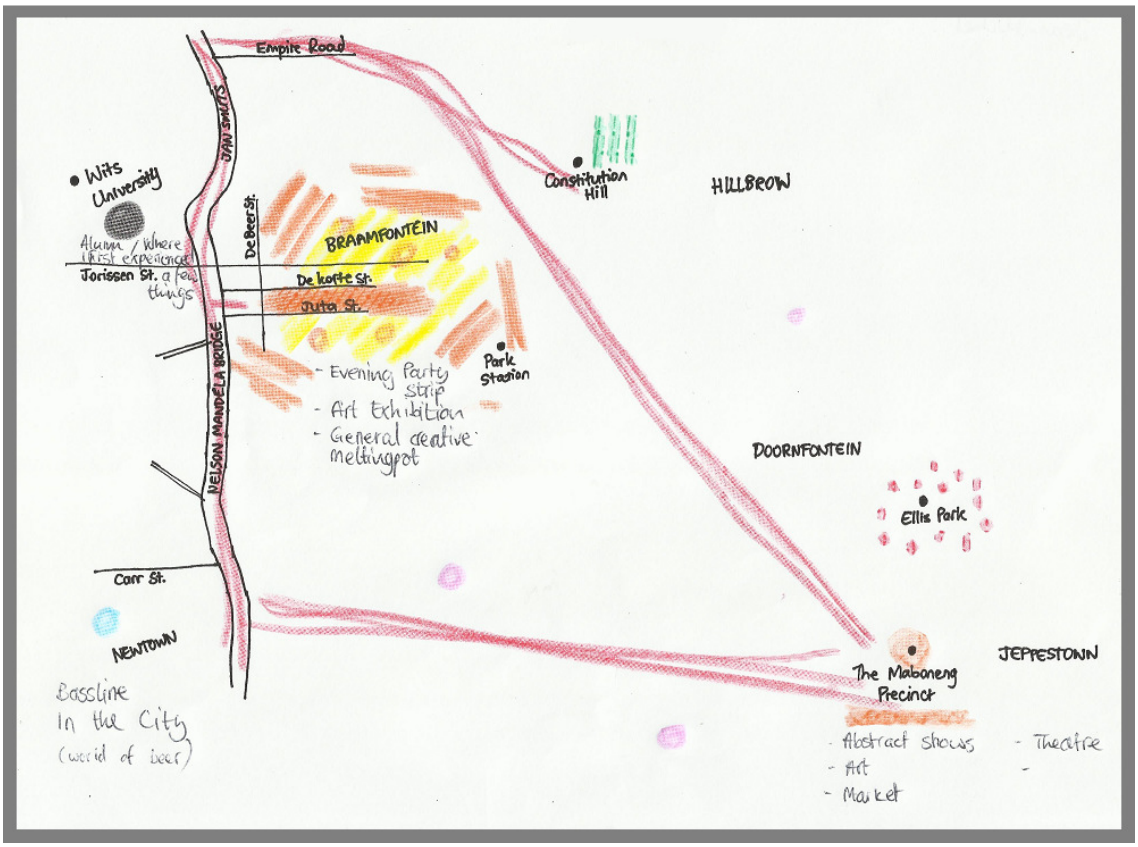


Figure 12: Jean-Michel's conceptual map of Johannesburg's inner city (2015) (full description below).

Jean-Michel's Map

The three lines that Jean-Michel draws next to Constitutional Hill represent the three times he has attended Sub_Urban State parties there, and he notices how, ironically, the three lines look like prison bars that could be found at this former prison site. Next Jean-Michel draws red dots around Ellis Park Stadium, expressing how "you go as an individual" to watch a concert or sports match and everyone bonds and "becomes a 'whole' in a neo-tribal sense". A black hole is drawn by Wits University to express Jean-Michel's feelings towards his years of tertiary education, but adds that "it's kind of where you 'grow up'; where you first experience a few things". The "Juta Strip" in Braamfontein is coloured in orange, as well as the areas around it, to show the places that Jean-Michel frequents. He says he goes there regularly for the "usual things" like bars, pubs, and concerts, as well as for art galleries, tattooing, and once-off parties in dilapidated buildings. He also adds the caption that it is a "general creative melting pot". Jean-Michel states that he goes to Newtown for three reasons: to the World of Beer – specifically when he takes foreign friends and family to visit it – as well as to the Bassline for concerts, and to Mary Fitzgerald Square for Vodacom's annual In The City events. Jean-Michel also lists the reasons he goes to Maboneng, which are for "abstract shows, art galleries, the market, and to watch theatre performances". The two pink dots to the left of Maboneng represent once-off parties that he has been to, one being the Puma Social Club. For the rest of the blank spaces on the page, Jean-Michel says that "there's nothing really there" and that he doesn't frequent them. He also adds that he has never done anything in Hillbrow: "What I know about Hillbrow is what my parents tell me … that it's a dodgy place", although he adds that Ponte Tower (the pink dot between Hillbrow and Doornfontein) is really nice these days despite it being renowned as being a "drug-bin". The array of red lines around the page show the routes that Jean-Michel drives between his house and Braamfontein, Newtown, and Maboneng.

Maboneng was not ignored by any of the mappers either and also prompted mixed emotions, which is expected for the controversially gentrified area. The sectioning off of the area on many of the maps emphasises Maboneng's reputation of being an 'island of privilege'. This conception of the precinct was the sole focus for Mike, Nas, and Saul who wrote "feels like a park/oasis", "thought prison", and "VIP" respectively. While all of my informants utilise and enjoy the Maboneng Precinct, they were critical of the way in which it has separated itself from the surrounding areas. These ambivalent feelings towards Maboneng illuminate the difficulties that many people experience when faced with the complexities of gentrification, and points to the need for continued 'reimagining' of the space in order to find the right balance. These globally-experienced problems with gentrification and redevelopment ironically seem to be both caused and (attempted to be) solved by culture-led regeneration. As expressed in the previous chapter, the development of a "thriving and successful neighbourhood" cannot be done without a strategy to "include, invite, prompt, and engage its inhabitants and visitors from the start of the process" (Austin 2013: 2). While these ideals of including and engaging people of all kinds are prevalent in redevelopment theory, the realities of exclusion (whether pertaining to housing or socialising at The Living Room, for example) relentlessly persist in Johannesburg's discourse.

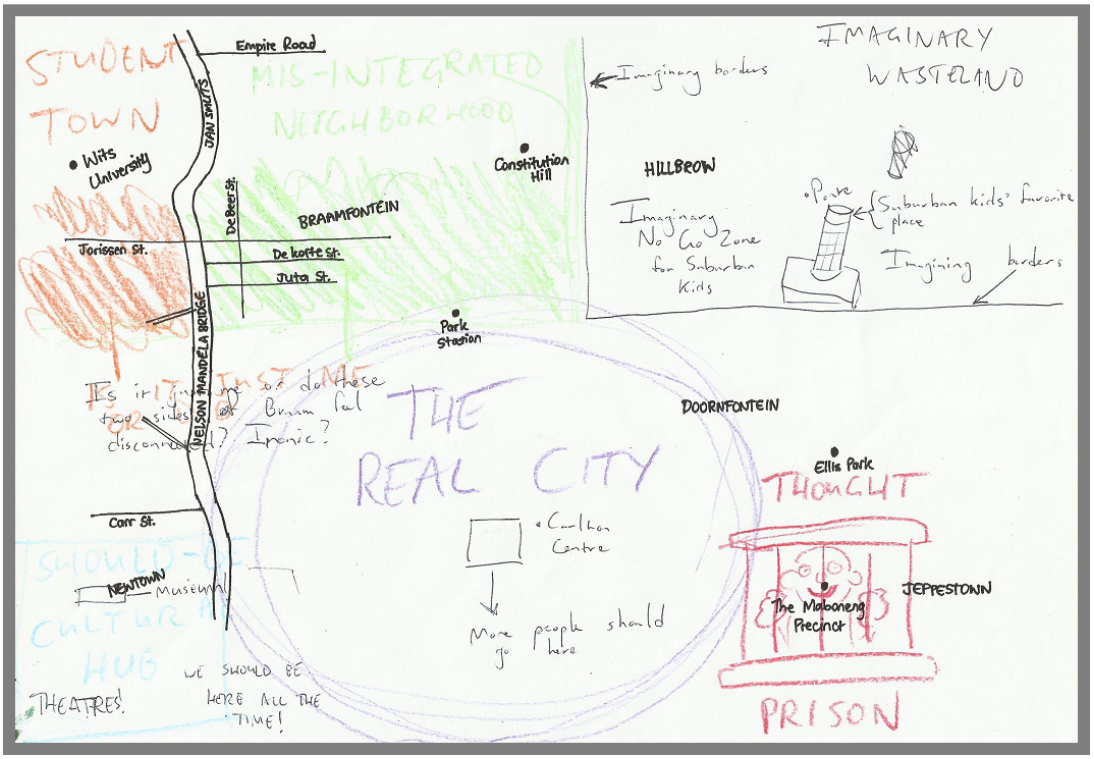


Figure 13: Nas's conceptual map of Johannesburg's inner city (2015) (full description on following page).

Nas's Map

Nas demarcates the neighbourhood he has "always loved" – Braamfontein – in green. "I just feel like this is an area I know very well and I'm super happy about it existing". He calls it a "mis-integrated neighbourhood" because of its patchwork of assimilated and non-assimilated areas. The eastern side of Braamfontein, coloured in orange, is often not considered to be part of Braamfontein, and Nas writes on the map: "Is it just me or do these two sides of Braam feel disconnected? Ironic?" As he drew he told me that this mirrored the mis-integration of South African society in general. For Newtown Nas writes: "Should-be cultural hub" and that "we should be here all the time". With Newtown's array of museums, venues and theatres Nas believes that it is being underused but proclaims that he believes it will be the next big thing. "I just want it to be cooler than it is", he adds. "The real city" with the purple circle around it again shows the perception that other redeveloped areas in the city are separate from their surroundings and don't necessarily fit in with the rest of the city. The "real city" is also the area that suburbanites don't (want to) go to. Here lies the Carlton Centre, for example, which Nas believes is "the best place – I don't know why more people don't go there". Similar to the "real city" is Hillbrow which Nas shows to be delineated with imaginary borders. He calls it an "imaginary wasteland" and an "imaginary no-go zone for suburban kids": "I feel like I should draw little people walking around with gas masks on with guns like it's a wasteland, but I'm not going to do that". He includes Ponte Tower on his map, the infamous landmark which has recently attracted a select few suburban youths who want to "live on the edge" and truly participate in city life. Maboneng is labelled a "thought prison" by Nas. He talks about the way that it has fabricated itself by proclaiming that "this is where this ends and this is where this begins and this is where this line runs…" He has drawn a "little dude" inside the 'trappings' of Maboneng's hub and states that he's happy to be in that prison.

Evidence of this perceived separation is found in Nas's description of non-redeveloped areas as "the real city", suggesting that young middle-class suburbanites like my informants and I no longer view areas such as Braamfontein, Maboneng, and Newtown as 'real' city spaces. These redeveloped areas have indeed become so isolated and detached from the 'normal' city that they have become distinct areas of their own. Are we stuck in the perpetual, subconscious habit of separating ourselves from the city, constantly influenced by the history of Johannesburg's spatial quandary? What is apparent from the mapping exercise is that our reimagining of the city is limited to areas of influence and that we are remain guided by preconceptions of areas that we remain afraid of and unfamiliar with. However, the fact that areas like Braamfontein, Maboneng, and Newtown have had the chance to be struck off the 'unfamiliar' list over the past eight or so years gives hope that in the future other areas can be struck off that list too. There is also the possibility that Braamfontein, Maboneng, and Newtown will act not only as influencers to their surrounding areas but also as stepping stones to other possible reimaginings of the inner city.

Notably, this exercise illuminates the importance of the inner city's three redeveloped hubs in my informants' social and leisure activities. Whether it is the labelling of 'theatres' or drawing balloons and music notes to symbolise parties, the inner city has provided them with significant cultural experiences that make its spaces meaningful to them. Andile's caption for Braamfontein as being his "social home" is a demonstration of this significance. Meanwhile, Mike's label of "hipster central" written across Braamfontein points to the creative and alternative culture that draws specific kinds of people to these hubs: creatives like my informants who appreciate the distinctive offerings of culture-led regeneration. Attracting this

particular crowd has in turn created tightknit, likeminded communities which are highly valued by these suburbanites. All the while, alternative music of all kinds soundtrack their interactions, experiences, and communities, further creating memorable and meaningful exchanges within the city's spaces.

Part II: Inside the Scene

Chapter 4
Music Brought Me Here: *Migrating*

For my informants and myself, it was the offerings of progressive styles of rock, hip hop, and electronic music that enticed us to Johannesburg's inner city. This wave of movement of young suburbanites into the city for the purposes of music consumption and socialising began in Braamfontein and Newtown around 2007 and 2008 and has steadily grown since (and also spread to the Maboneng Precinct after its development in 2009). Although now, in 2015, we think of these areas as 'safe zones' or 'regenerated islands', in the years surrounding 2007 little was known about their redevelopment by outsiders; then, they were still the subject of the collective discourse around the city that perpetuated narratives of decay and danger. However, alternative music was spreading its roots and laying claim to specific venues in the areas, such as Kitcheners in Braamfontein and Carfax and The Woods in Newtown.[21]

I asked each informant what it was that first attracted them to the inner city. Their answers were almost unanimous. Alternative rock fan Andile explained: "I was really attracted to the music scene … it was like all the bands would play there [in the inner city], and people I knew would DJ there. It was definitely the music that attracted me because there was kinda nowhere else to go in Johannesburg that had the music I wanted to listen to and party to". Mike, Bassie, and Jess also went where the music took them, with Mike surmising that "if you like a genre you just start following it around wherever the party is". For Bassie it was particular bands that drew her in: "I started going to the city, like, when Alt-J was there and when a lot of local bands like Shortstraw and Shadow Club were there". Former Capetonian Jess even made a special trip up to Johannesburg to watch Japan's DJ Krush play at Carfax in Newtown in 2007, explaining that she had "missed the Cape Town gig so my boyfriend and I flew up here to go to the gig at Carfax. That was my first time in Joburg". Saul describes his first experience of the inner city as going to Kitcheners with his sister in 2009 when he was 16 years old, where he experienced the place to be "like this kind of underground, dodgy bar" with a completely "different vibe" [compared to now]. He adds that "Newtown, specifically, was always for music … we'd go to Newtown for cool music or cool parties". Lastly, Nas explains his reasons for frequenting the city:

> Definitely music. We'd go specifically to The Woods to dance. We'd go because we wanted to dance. We liked dancing in Melville; we liked dancing in Tokyo Star [club]. So we wanted to dance to more music like that, and other music that was electronic music. And watch great DJs. So that meant going to The Woods because that was really 'happening'.

[21] Carfax is a club in Newtown that has played a major role in Johannesburg's music scene for over twenty years. The diverse and always unique offerings at Carfax have consistently attracted a wide range of audiences over its long and successful history, with it still being a premier 'alternative' venue today. Kitcheners and The Woods will be detailed in the next chapter.

Why, one might ask, were my informants and other 'alternative' suburbanites so drawn to the city that, almost ten years on, many of the scenes that they essentially formed and maintained still flourish? The city was not, at that time, a common place for suburbanites to visit. Also, a fair amount of alternative music still existed in the suburbs at venues such as, for example, Roxy's, Tokyo Star, and Transky in Melville. One reason for suburbanites' interest in Johannesburg's inner city is offered by Sara Cohen who notes that 'the city' has always been associated with representing an escape from the restrictions of family, home, and suburban life (2007: 2). Jean-Michel similarly describes his opinion on why alternative music fans were so drawn to the city:

> The city is a space that allows for more freedom of expression just because it isn't really a family environment. It's a space that is distant from suburban life. And because of that distance your freedom of expression is far more active.

Nas added that the city "had that air of danger that attracts young people but also that air of danger that drives away certain conservatively-minded people". And while Saul suggests that the city became a popular place to consume music because it offered "something different, something new and exciting", Jess comments that it was the *feeling* of partying in the city that was so appealing: "it's a lot more free, a lot more gritty, it's a lot more African, it's a lot more raw". I too remember initially enjoying partying in the city because of the transformative effect it offered; it was so different and so out of the ordinary that I conceptualised it as being a journey to a completely new and different place. It offered an experience that was certainly not achievable elsewhere in Johannesburg's vast landscape. In addition to these suggestions, Nas believes that the rise of the inner city's popularity from 2007 onwards was due to the ennui of suburban clubs:

> Everything else had been so tried and trusted; you knew what you were going to get when you went to Transky on a Thursday night. You knew it was going be the same kind of music every time. You knew that when you went to Roxy's you were going to get the same kind of bands. You wanted something new and different, something that stepped a bit outside that. [People thought]: we can go to this new place, find new experiences, listen to new kinds of music, and interact with new kinds of people. I think it was the element of it being a new frontier that drew people – musically, culturally, everything. The city was a place of progress at the time, a place where the music was all mixing up, and the people were all mixing up.

The relationship between space and sound

The relationship between space and sound is much theorised. People link music or sound to specific geographical sites which then become bound up in our everyday perceptions of place (Connell and Gibson 2003: 1). Because of this, we have expectations of what music to encounter in certain places and we develop particular associations between space and sound. Subsequently, music can define behaviour in specific locations, elicit certain reactions and responses, and also reinforce roles in particular situations (192). Increasingly, since 2007, Johannesburg's inner city – and more

particularly, its redeveloped hubs – has thus become associated with alternative and progressive music, amongst other things; perceived as 'alternative' sites (from the perspective of suburbia and its 'mainstream' culture and values, for example) in which alternative lifestyles are lived out and alternative music is consumed. John Connell and Chris Gibson, when speaking about the ways in which a sense of community is experienced within music scenes, identified diverse places such as university towns as 'fertile ground' on which alternative scenes can grow (and offer a higher likeliness of a sense of community being experienced; a topic that will be addressed in chapter 7) (102). In addition to Johannesburg's status as a migrant city, Braamfontein's and Newtown's proximities to the Universities of the Witwatersrand and Johannesburg (and several other further education colleges), indeed result in 'fertile ground' where a vast range of diverse people coexist. The amalgam of peoples and cultures in these areas therefore allow for greater opportunities of alternative music being manifested, appreciated, and consumed. The likelihood of live performances and dance clubs also increases in university towns because of the profusion of youths who typically enjoy such activities.

When questioning why some suburbanites have found solace in the inner city for much of the past decade, the relationship between alternativeness, creativity, and urban spaces cannot be ignored. For one to be alternative, or at least to have an appreciation of alternative commodities and ideals, means that one does not follow the norms or conventions of society and rather chooses to display a strong sense of individuality. It is more likely for this to occur if one is creative. Whether it be through the clothes one chooses to wear, one's haircut, or the tattoos and piercings one displays, an alternative lifestyle requires creativity. And, conversely, a creative person is unlikely to choose to follow the norms and standards of mainstream life. The city's spaces satisfy the demands of alternative cultures: to an extent, areas of and spaces within the inner city are considered 'empty slates', as it were, full of relatively affordable property, empty buildings, and few preconceived ideas about these spaces (for outsiders, at least). Thus, creatives and alternatives have had free reign to explore, create, manipulate, infiltrate, and influence. In Jess's words: "The city is an open space. For a creative that is everything". Greg Richards and Julie Wilson, who believe that inner cities offer a multitude of multifunctional spaces which are empty of fixed ideas (once again, to outsiders, at least), posit that the development of different narratives are therefore possible in such spaces (2006: 18). One of the main purposes of art and its creators is to challenge old narratives and generate new ones which can be consumed and responded to. Among my informants is a photographer (Mike), a DJ and fine artist (Jean-Michel), a writer (Nas), a musician (Saul), as well as Bassie, Andile, and Jess who all display fine-tuned fashion senses and who spend their spare time on creative projects. Their frequent interaction with the inner city is testament to its appeal to creatives, and evidence that creatives find satisfaction from such spaces. Therefore, Johannesburg's array of interesting and challenging spaces on offer in the inner city are the ideal platform for artists and other creatives to express themselves, individually or collectively, publically or privately. Additionally, the accomplishments of

Johannesburg's inner city regeneration, as discussed in chapter 2, has, in part, relied on these creatives and alternatives to find and manifest inspiration, cultivate and execute ideas, and inspire others.

Urban studies theorist Richard Florida has done extensive research as to why creative people have typically, throughout history, been drawn to urban spaces. In "The Psychology Behind Why Creative People Cluster" (2012) Florida found "extreme concentrations" of creative people in "downtown urban neighbourhoods" and noted that one reason for this is that, as reflected by a large body of literature, creative people are highly likely to be more open to new experiences. Florida therefore labels creatives as 'open-to-experience' people, describing creative people such as designers, musicians, actors, and so forth, as "individuals who are curious, creative, intellectual, imaginative, inventive, and resourceful. These professions are primarily concerned with exploring, developing and communicating new ideas, methods, and products" (Jason Rentfrow quoted in Florida 2012). These attributes aptly capture what is required to transcend the interesting challenges, encounters, and opportunities one would find in Johannesburg's inner city. As mentioned in chapter 2's discussion, creatives are also considered to be notorious 'early adopters' (Pitman 2013), always at the forefront of trends and new initiatives. Therefore, the presence of alternative suburbanites in the inner city at the start of its new wave of popularity from around 2007 was signalling what was to be for the city's future.

Creative people, according to Florida, are also more likely to "attempt to escape the ennui experienced in small-town environments by relocating to metropolitan areas where their interests in cultures and needs for social contact and stimulation are more easily met" (2012). Chapter 1's discussion on suburban life in Johannesburg demonstrates the ways in which creatives' needs for such contact and stimulation would most likely not be met in suburbia's isolating configuration. And unlike suburbia, which tends to be relatively demographically homogenous, urban spaces offer a greater mix of people, allowing creatives the opportunity to satisfy their "interest in cultures" through meeting a largely diverse group of people, and to satisfy their "needs for social contact" which is more probable in a densely populated area. Florida's final point, which is possibly the most apt in Johannesburg's case, is that 'open-to-experience' people are more likely to "generate new perspectives on old issues and are comfortable with and adaptable to change" (2012). It was indeed the ability of the creatives who decided to open up music venues or shops, or the creatives who bought buildings to redevelop, to reconsider their perspectives on old issues which propagated the movement of alternative scenes to the inner city and their ensuing growth.[22] Adapting to this

[22] A prime example of this type of person is Maboneng's Jonathan Liebmann who saw potential in a largely decayed area when no one else could (Pitman 2013). Another example could be Bheki Dube, owner of Maboneng's Curiocity Backpackers (see Ferguson 2015).

change, which involved questioning previously set-in-stone notions of Johannesburg, would again more likely require an 'open-to-experience' attitude.

There are many reasons as to why Braamfontein and Newtown in particular were the targeted spaces for redevelopment and thus attracted alternative creatives. Here I offer a few thoughts on this. The locations of these areas are the most 'borderline' and easily accessible from the suburbs. It is possible to be in Braamfontein and Newtown without feeling that one is too deep in the 'real' city. Accessing these areas from suburbia also does not require passing through the city's remaining 'danger zones'. Chapter 3's mapping exercises illustrate the locations of Braamfontein and Newtown in relation to the 'safe' suburbs and the 'dangerous' and 'real' city. Newtown had also long been earmarked as a place of progress in the arts after being declared a heritage district in the early 2000s (Taitz 2013). The Johannesburg Development Agency explains how Newtown became synonymous with heritage and culture which was represented by its array of theatres, studios, workshops, museums and historic buildings, acting as magnets for creative activities ("Milestones > Newtown"). Once again, the mapping exercises included in chapter 3 demonstrate these cultural associations amongst my informants, with Nas, for example, writing "museums" and "theatres" over Newtown, as well as naming it a "should-be cultural hub", referencing its more recent underutilisation. With establishments like the historic Kitcheners in Braamfontein and the Bassline in Newtown, which acted as first points of entry into the city for many people (for example, Jean-Michel told me that "Kitcheners was the only place you'd go to in Braamfontein before the rest of the stuff started being developed", and that his "first show in Newtown was at the Bassline"), these two areas began being utilised more effectively for music and socialising. These music venues also offered the first opportunities for creatives to act as 'open-to-experience' individuals and have the chance to explore, interact with, and ultimately reimagine, the city.

The following personal accounts from my informants elucidate further thoughts on the relationship between alternative music and Johannesburg's urban spaces. To start, Nas believes that the attraction of the city for creative and alternative people, and youths in particular, has to do with the influence of the city's reputation on one's identity:

> When you're young you want to do something new and dangerous and different. The city has that image; even though I didn't really process it internally it was definitely hanging over the city. And at that point in your life you're also searching for a certain degree of identity that says who you are by the things you do.

Nas's comment that individual identity is built through behaviour and action resonates with Saul's experience: "We started going to these parties where not everyone wanted to go … different kinds of music appealing to an alternative crowd". Identifying himself with the "alternative crowd" was a way of expressing his own identity desires, distinguishing his identity from the "everyone" who did not desire to venture into the city. In the same vein, Jean-Michel conceptualises the wave of movement

to the inner city as being a sort of "counter-culture movement" where "you listen to that sub-genre of music that is associated with that movement and I guess that all relates back to how you build your own identity". Here, the way one chooses to interact with the city is shown to be significant in the construction of personal and collective identity. After all, we define ourselves not by the things that we *are* but by the things that we *do* (which I address in more depth in chapter 7).



Figure 14: Maboneng visitors and residents expressing their creativity and individuality through music and fashion (image from www.america.aljazeera.com).

While Mike placed focus on the matter of collective identity in the city, stating that he finds importance in being able to "be in an environment where I'm surrounded by people who understand why they're there and why I'm there and being able to relate to a broader community of people built around that", Saul linked the topic of identity formation to the artistic nature of the city. Displaying one's individuality, for Saul, goes hand-in-hand with being creative. The inner city's spaces provide the sites and inspiration for creating non-conformist identities and tightknit bonds; different to the perceived dominant middle-class identity that characterises suburbia:

> I think if you look at the general culture that inhabits the city, especially the youth culture, there's a lot of street style, and generally a bigger reflection of individuality. What alternative culture, from my perspective, stems from, is the display of individuality and artistic nature of people who frequent the city. There are all those different influences, and the guys that hang out in the city are the skaters and the DJs and the artists who do graffiti

> and want to come to all the art galleries to find interesting photos and juxtapositions … There definitely is a space created where it appeals to alternative culture and it's where the artistic people hang out.

On the other hand, Jess expressed interest in how the 'freedom' experienced in the inner city could affect one's identity, or perhaps, conversely, not affect one's identity: "Lack of inhibition is one thing. The people that [come here] are doing so on their own terms; on no one else's terms. The suburbs have been there for long enough; there are already preconceptions of how they should be". In line with there being a 'lack of inhibition' in the city – an ideal environment for creatives – Andile believes that alternative culture "works in the city because of the people that are in the city; the people that are [emotionally] invested in the city are also likely invested in alternative, more creative culture". This relates back to the discussion on why the city resonates with creatives in the first place and how having these types of people present is a driving force in itself in attracting more creatives. As evidence of this, Mike notes that "there's a much more community-led and independent movement of artists in the city – and by artists I mean musicians and designers, painters, photographers and stuff".

The aesthetic and emotive connotations of the inner city are also important features that breed alternative cultures. Describing the city as "really grungy" and "dark and dingy", Bassie believes that the lifestyle that is associated with alternative music fits accordingly with these traits of the city, saying: "it just makes sense". Both Andile and Jean-Michel drew comparisons with New York when explaining their thoughts on Johannesburg's urban aesthetics: "If you look at the city, it's a lot edgier than the suburbs – so that caters to an alternative crowd. The way people talk about the [Johannesburg] city now is that it's a gritty, edgy, creative hub. I feel that people talk about the city now how people used to talk about New York in the 80s – it's a creative, arty place where people, like, sell their cars to make art and stuff", claims Andile. Jean-Michel feels similarly: "I think creativity is always drawn to a more rough neck of the woods. If you look at New York it was always the city centre where artists and musicians congregated. Not because it was glitzy and glamorous but because it was real and rough and edgy".

Jacques Attali asserts that music is a mode of communication between man and his environment (2012 [1977]: 34). This is made visible in the way in which one chooses to fill and aestheticize space with music, at the same time expressing thoughts, judgements, imaginations, and ideals. Sound studies theorist Michael Bull believes that these expressions, communicated through music, allow for one's environment to become super-real or even animated. When spaces are charged with what Bull calls the "life of the music", objects and experiences in these spaces become more significant or poetic (2012: 197). For these reasons, music also has the ability to alter spaces and people's interaction with those spaces (Connell and Gibson 2003: 193). By choosing to fill the redeveloped pockets of Johannesburg's inner city with particular kinds of music, Johannesburg is being re-

animated, brought to life, and experienced in a certain way. In this chapter I have proposed that an important way in which this is being done is through alternative music – generated and consumed by the creative community – reinforcing the grungy aesthetic of the city, making it even 'edgier', and all the while reinventing this previously-unfamiliar gritty aesthetic into the 'new beautiful'. And while the murkier tones and musings of alternative music often match the cityscape, they simultaneously inject it with a new vibrancy, eclecticism, and energy that is being devoured by the urban-hungry youths of Johannesburg's suburbia.

Chapter *5*
The Soundtrack of Johannesburg: *Listening*

Just as a film's soundtrack emphasises, articulates, expresses or exposes the narratives of its characters, plot, and locations, the music around us and the music that we choose to listen to soundtracks our lives through space and time. Paying attention to Johannesburg's inner city's 'soundtrack', rather than its 'soundscape', entails a focus on its music and the ways in which music accompanies social life.[23] The soundtrack that I am interested in examining is that of the evenings and the weekends when, for many people, Braamfontein's, Newtown's, and Maboneng's highlighted role is to play host to social life and leisure rather than function as places of business and residence. The soundtracks of these neighbourhoods are 'alternative' – different to those of the suburbs – and while there are certainly occurrences of what one would call 'mainstream' music, the majority of the music resonating from these redeveloped pockets would unlikely be found elsewhere in Johannesburg on a consistent basis. Mike's statement that music events in 'town' are aimed at those with "a more niche taste in music" attests to this distinctiveness.

As with any scene, belonging to the music scenes in Braamfontein, Newtown, and Maboneng entails a sense of pride, and a comparison against the 'other' is an essential part of identification. While the social aspects of such 'othering' will be dealt with in detail in the following chapter, the discourse of comparison was inherent in conversations with my informants about music. Without any prompting, my informants were aware that detailing suburban music scenes as the opposing 'other' was necessary in discussions about inner city music scenes. For example, asking Jean-Michel about inner city music, he, similarly to many of the informants, began: "If you go to Fourways or Sandton…", that is, the northern suburbs heartlands of Johannesburg, and then proceeded with: "Whereas in town…". This comparison, formulated as a binary opposition, offers a whole perspective so that the parts are better understood. Therefore, discussion of music scenes in suburban Johannesburg is essential to this chapter in order to best conceptualise and articulate the inner city's own music scenes.[24]

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[23] 'Soundscape' is a term coined by composer R. Murray Schafer (2012) to explain the amalgamation of both natural and human-produced sounds in a given environment. The study of 'soundscapes' is gaining significance as fields such as environmentalism, architecture, healthcare, and musicology increasingly acknowledge the impact that sound has on an environment.

[24] I am aware of the issue of generalisation in the broad statements I make. In claiming the opposing differences between suburban and inner city music there are of course instances when it is not true of certain music or venues. However, I feel that the dichotomy between the suburbs and the inner city is noteworthy enough to make such generalisations. My peers, informants, and I all speak blatantly of this dichotomy without hesitation because of the truths it holds for us. It is worth noting, though, that the suburban areas of Melville and Greenside, just north of the city, often do not fit the claims made about general suburban sounds or 'scenes'.

KITCHENER'S CARVERY BAR

Kitcheners, as it is better known, is an institution in the Johannesburg music scene. Having opened its doors in Braamfontein in the early 1900s, its old world charm is contrasted by its forward thinking and progressive attitude towards music. Kitcheners is well known for hosting a variety of different genres at their almost-nightly events. In explaining their interesting music policies, Mike described that "each night is given to a different promoter who focuses on a specific genre and who has a specific following. Kitcheners thrives off its variety of music … making it less ordinary and less predictable". The venue, described as "super dirty and really grimy" by Andile, and "dingy, stuffy, dark, and smoky" by Saul, is a favourite amongst those who frequent the inner city. "Everything happens there. It's pretty eclectic. All of the music is alternative, regardless of the genre", says Andile. Jean-Michel, who describes Kitcheners' sound as an "anomaly", lists hip hop, electronica, grunge, and indie rock as some of the genres it is known for. "It is the one place that has always supported good, unknown acts. So you know that if you go to Kitcheners, no matter who is playing, it's probably good", claims Jess.

Connell and Gibson explain that there are always "cultural expectations of what music to encounter in particular places" because of the way in which we create associations between sounds and spaces (2003: 192). While there are a variety of specific 'subcategories' of associations between music and place – for example, where specific neighbourhoods are associated with a particular style of music – the overarching dichotomy between the suburbs and the inner city brought about many explicit examples from my informants as to what musical associations are bound up with their perceptions of place. For instance, with regards to suburban musical idioms, Saul describes there as being "straightforward DJing" and conversely describes the inner city's music as "contemporary" and "alternative". Jess associates the music of the suburbs with being "safe and reserved" and the inner city's music as being "very expressive". And while Jean-Michel defines suburban music as "commercial" he labels the inner city's music as being "left-of-field". In relation to the previous chapter regarding the connection between alternative culture and the urban environment, one can clearly see how the inner city has indeed been occupied with the music of those alternative cultures: "expressive", "contemporary", and "left-of-field". These markers of sound are descriptive of the nature of alternative culture and the music that comes with it. Sociologist Sarah Thornton illustrates that "one of the main ways youth carve out virtual, and claim actual, space is by filling it with their music" (1995: 19), and the creative, alternative youths in inner city Johannesburg make an audible statement by filling their newly procured urban playground with their sounds. In this sense, music can be seen as defining space without having literal boundaries (Frith 1996: 125). There is an air of difference between the two 'territories' of the urban and suburban; an imagined defining line of what musical and social experiences to expect in each place. For instance, Jean-Michel's expectation to hear "push-play DJs" in "jock clubs" in the suburbs as opposed to "DJs playing their own music" in "cool, edgy" venues in the inner city reveals one way in which perceptual boundaries are created by music.

Fertile ground

In addition to music's ability to create boundaries it also has the ability to break boundaries down. Johannesburg – and especially its inner city – is by nature a diverse and divided place where many immigrants from other African countries as well as people from other South African locales live alongside and intermingle with long-standing residents. These various cultures have meant that people in South Africa "really did grow up with weirdly different kinds of music", as Nas claims. In her paper on musical hybridity, Rebecca Draisey-Collishaw refers to Mary Louise Pratt's concept of 'contact zones': spaces where "disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other" and where "asymmetries of power and ideologies" create instances of "hybrid utterances, or products that include elements of combined traditions" (2012: 66). The suburbs' isolating, reserved, and slightly homogenous nature, as discussed in chapter 1, I argue, consequently inhibits the likelihood of such contact to occur, resulting in less hybridity and diversity to appear in its musics. By contrast the eclecticism of the inner city's soundtrack reveals the environment from which these sounds are born: 'exotic' and diverse, and full of such 'contact zones'. As an example, Nas explains that the general increase in the inner city's post-redevelopment popularity has allowed for more intermingling between people who would not normally meet, and subsequently has allowed for more exposure to diverse people and music. And while differences in language, traditions, and culture may hinder interaction or rapport, music can in part supersede these barriers and create a connection through shared appreciation and enjoyment. The inner city's music's traits stand as markers of boundary-breaking whereby hybrids of styles and traditions represent the coming together of multitudes of people; while also delineating itself from the suburbs through boundary-making and affirming its status as 'alternative' and 'different'.

Bassline

Newtown's Bassline has played an important role in Johannesburg's musical history. It began its life as a small live music venue in Melville in the 90s, predominantly hosting jazz and Afro-beat performances. In 2004 Bassline reopened on a grander scale in Newtown where its musical range expanded to include a variety of other local and international genres. Andile describes it as an "historic establishment" because of its substantial contribution to Johannesburg's music scene. Bassie associates Bassline with rock and indie music because of the concerts she has watched there. In fact, it was whilst watching Shortstraw, a local indie rock group, at Bassline in 2014 that I met Bassie and asked her to be an informant in my research. Jean-Michel listed dub, reggae, rock, and hip hop as music that he is familiar with being played at Bassline, while Andile was the only informant to associate it with its original style: jazz.

In my discussion of alternative cultures' connection to urban environments in the previous chapter I mentioned Connell and Gibson's claim that diverse places are ideal settings for alternative scenes to grow because of the range of cultures and people (2003: 102), and the idea of 'contact zones' in which the hybridising of culture can occur illustrates their claim. Connell and Gibson also pay attention to the idea of 'mobility' being present in such contact zones (11). Mobility offers an imagined travelling amongst various cultures as interaction with different

people occurs; where a journeyed experience of their music and styles is possible. The idea that "mobility runs parallel with new forms of internal diversity" (ibid.) also explains the way in which dissemination of different musics is heightened in such contact zones whereby new and permeable audiences are reached. Kitcheners, for example, which could be viewed as having one of the most diverse audiences in the inner city, has taken on in its music the eclecticism of its patrons. Promotional posts on Kitcheners' Facebook page offer insight into the profusion of genres and sub-genres performed at the venue as a result of the audience's diversity, including the increasingly popular and highly nuanced dance sub-genre of *gqom* (see figures below).[25] Connell and Gibson also state that the combinations of musical sub-genres are continually creating new scenes, new communities, and new fans in "otherwise widely different areas" (106). In elucidating this, Andile commented on his contrasting experiences of music in Cape Town and the Johannesburg inner city. In Cape Town one type of music had a tendency to "sit for a very long time" and "drive the city". "There's always just one idea that's like: 'this is what Cape Town is about'. But in Joburg that doesn't exist; Joburg is like: 'everything goes'". Once again, this 'everything goes' attitude is evident in the figures below relating to Kitcheners' events. The more heterogeneous social make-up of the inner city has allowed for this attitude where diversity in music is appreciated and an eclectic soundtrack has resultantly evolved. This can be further described in Andy Bennett's words where the mixing of sounds and styles provides a "series of 'snapshot' images of such shifting sensibilities of music tastes" (1999: 611).



[25] *Gqom* is a "post-Kwaito" genre born out of Durban, South Africa, and takes its name from the hollow sound a drum makes. Kwanele Sosibo describes it as stripping Kwaito of its "sheen and flat vocals" and reimagining it as "unruly, offbeat dance techno" that acts as a "soundtrack of a generation still trapped in the ghetto" (2015).



Figure 15: Posts from Kitcheners' Facebook page promoting events which claim to feature RnB, hip hop, bass, gqom, disco, funk, house, jazz, 'bubble gum' and 'old skool sounds'.

Dance music, of which much of the inner city's soundtrack is made up, could be envisaged as the musical version of a 'contact zone': relentless sampling in dance music, where sounds are "removed from their original contexts and reworked into alternative soundscapes" (Simon Frith [1988] quoted in Bennett 1999: 609). This reflects the mixing of people that one would find in the spaces deemed as diverse as the dance music that fills them. The same could in fact be said of hip hop which also often relies on sampling. The allowance for such diversity and variety in hip hop and dance music is perhaps one reason for its immense popularity in the inner city. "I think dance music culture has allowed people to be quite open about the fact that they actually quite like a lot of different stuff", says a 'rocker' in an interview with Bennett (2000: 79). This quality of dance music is also reflective of the mobility that one would find within the miscellany of the inner city. Not only are different genres or styles of music being transformed in the reworkings they encounter in the inner city, they are also being taken apart, reassembled, sampled, and given a new identity in the processes of appropriating the music and its numerous sub-genres.

Changing spaces = changing music

In outlining his 'urban ethos' theory, Adam Krims claims that transformation of spaces, buildings, and neighbourhoods contributes to a rippling effect of shifts at other physical and social levels (2007:

xviii). One effect is that the kinds of people that occupy and utilise transformed spaces will change: different residents, visitors, and workers will be attracted or deterred, and this results in different restaurants, shops, activities, and events being supported. Krims therefore believes that there will also be a "corresponding shift in musical life" (ibid.), adding that changes in the "physical space, flows, and pace of life" in a city will significantly transform its expressive culture (xix). Sara Cohen supports this idea, claiming that changes in the structure of spaces impacts how they are represented musically (2012: 157). When asked whether he believed Krims' ideas to be relevant to Johannesburg's inner city, Andile, in agreement, noted: "I think everything in Braamfontein and Newtown is radically different from what it was ten years ago, and I think the music is definitely a reflection of that. The music is super young and super alternative, and that's because the space is now super young and super alternative as well". Mike believes that the "rebirths" of areas like Braamfontein, Newtown, and Maboneng have brought with them "a whole host of new parties, new venues, new promoters, new genres, and new areas where people interact". An example of this could be found in Bassline's move from Melville to Newtown's Cultural Precinct as previously mentioned. The shift in its dominant music offerings of jazz and Afro-beat in Melville to rock, electronic dance music, and hip hop in Newtown, demonstrates the influence that space (and its people) has on music. As the redevelopment of Newtown, with the addition of Bassline, drew in a different crowd, the musical identity of the space changed too. Transformations of the inner city, as detailed in chapter 2, have spawned new musical profiles for many areas, to such a degree that the inner city has attained a new reputation of being at the forefront of musical trends and progressive music consumption.

As important as new, 'incoming' music is in the analysis of these situations, equally important to think about is the music that was replaced and forgotten. In Nas's words: "There are people who move out of that area who take with them a certain degree of what they like, and then that's no longer there". Since music's presence is dependent on "what kind of community populates an area at any given time", as Jean-Michel affirms, I asked my informants to imagine the types of music that would have been played and consumed in Braamfontein, Newtown, and Maboneng before they were redeveloped and before the young suburban community began populating the areas. Bassie, Andile, and Nas all imagined that local, traditional, "culturally-specific" or more "African" music would have been present because the residents in those areas were largely black. Saul, Nas, and Andile envisaged the music to be more commercial and radio-friendly, specifically with pop and dance music. Saul and

Town Hall and The Woods

Although both Town Hall and The Woods closed down in 2014, these two neighbouring clubs in Newtown played a significant role in the musical lives of myself and my informants. The two clubs supported similar styles of music and could both be described in Jean-Michel's words as "small and dodgy dive bars". According to Andile, Town Hall was "dingy, dodgy, crusty, gross, but fun". Nas recalls that around 2008 and 2009, Town Hall became a "big deal" and was *the* place to go to have a good time. Drum 'n bass, electro, indie rock, house, dubstep, hip hop, and trap are genres that my informants associate with the two clubs.

Andile also mentioned jazz, which has a significant history in Johannesburg and South Africa. Lastly, Andile added that he imagined "old-school" music and "stuff that my parents listen to" filling the city. Another interpretation, one could argue and which Bassie described, is that the overall musical change of the redeveloped inner city can be imagined as shifting from the "traditional" to "contemporary".

With the significant transformations in the inner city over the past decade, much of the music imagined to be part of the soundtrack of that time has faded.[26] As mentioned, the major contributor to this shift is the redevelopment of certain areas. The money invested in Braamfontein, Newtown, and Maboneng allowed for more upmarket and trendy spaces to open, which in turn attracted business from the middle-class and from more 'hip' consumers. In our discussions of Krims' urban ethos theory both Jean-Michel and Nas gave examples of how such changes impacted the spaces' music. Nas started by explaining that when he began socialising and partying in the city around 2007 and 2008 at venues such as The Woods, when the city was considered "fringe", the spaces were filled with the "original hipsters" or "indie kids" – the same "hipsters" that were the second of four social cohorts that Doug Barry used in his model of gentrification, discussed in chapter 2 (2013). Jean-Michel explained that the indie, disco and electro music that hipsters listened to dominated the music venues such as Town Hall and The Woods at the time. However, he continued to explain that as the spaces have become even "more suburban" in recent years, house music and hip hop have become more popular. In Barry's gentrification model this would be considered the "bourgeois bohemian" phase during which well-to-do suburbanites who are reassured about the new area by the presence of the hipsters take interest in the space (ibid.).

Great Dane

Situated next door to Kitcheners in Braamfontein is the eclectic and trendy Great Dane. Almost more popular than the music is the creative and unique décor, such as the floor made of copper coins, giving the venue an interesting ambiance. Andile describes Great Dane as being "really fun and upbeat" and having a "cool party feel". Saul, Nas, Bassie, Jean-Michel, and Andile all named hip hop as Great Dane's "sound", with other genres like electronica, house, and trap also mentioned. Jess and Andile were the only two informants to describe Great Dane as being quite commercial, saying that one can hear "catchy songs" or "easy to listen to" music. Jess also stated that of all the inner city venues Great Dane is least concerned with the music with its focus being on partying and drinking.

[26] Of course, this is from the perspective of young suburbanites who mostly only frequent the redeveloped pockets of the city. In the surrounding areas of the city, like in Hillbrow and Troyville, for example, where redevelopment has not occurred and where the population still remains almost entirely black, such changes in the city's soundtrack cannot be claimed.

Mainstream vs. hip

The characteristics of being 'fringe' and at the forefront of musical trends are again what reinforce the exclusivity of the inner city whilst also distinguishing it from the suburbs. In her 1995 book on club culture in the United Kingdom, Thornton contrasted the "hip" with the "mainstream", defining the mainstream as the "dominant mass" and that which follows "commercial formulae" (96). On the other hand, the "hip" or "underground",[27] as Thornton also calls it, are sites of "innovatory experimentation" (quoted in Huq 2006: 96). The musically progressive nature of clubs like Kitcheners and And Club provide an antidote to the mainstream's perceived unimaginative offerings. Jess uses an anecdote to describe inner city musical experience as being like having "a boozy lunch with your friends" where things are fun and rowdy. On the other hand, she considers suburban musical experiences to be like "having tea with your grandmother". The inner city's provision of a unique platform for producers and consumers of music is what Jean-Michel considers to allow for "new, creative music that you wouldn't hear anywhere else" to be experienced. He also believes that the support and opportunities that this environment offers to local artists and musicians is both invaluable and vital. Francois de Villiers' recent research on DJing aesthetics in South Africa noted that And Club in Newtown (which de Villiers used as a case study) acts as a platform for young, aspiring DJs to "break into the scene" (2015: 31). "There is a large pool of artists that each event draws on from week to week, to keep the musical part of the event fresh and interesting" (ibid.). Doing this not only benefits the DJs, but also the consumers who have the opportunity to hear many DJs, permiting them the chance to be exposed to more music of different styles and sub-genres. In contrast, de Villiers describes the typical lack of variety of DJs at the Tiger Tiger club in suburban Fourways:

> After four weeks of constant observation, I was only exposed to two resident DJs. [There was an] overlap of songs from week to week … In more than one instance I heard the same song being played all four weeks, and in some extreme cases heard the same song being played more than once in the same evening (ibid.).

Interested in how my informants perceived typical suburban club culture in Johannesburg, I asked them to describe their thoughts and experiences of it. The answers were entirely uniform and, one could say, almost 'historical'; in Stephen Evans' analysis of nightclub culture in Sheffield, England in 1989, he describes commercial club culture as taking place in "glitzy places" that play "top forty" chart music (quoted in Thornton 1995: 96). Evidently, the essential features of mass mediated culture include the attractiveness and ease that widespread appeal requires for its consumers. For example, the glitzy 'sexiness' of venues and the formulaic, conventional nature of music will always

[27] While the inner city's pre-redevelopment days could be described as having traditional 'underground' music scenes – especially amongst the gay community (see Harrison 2005: 59) – because of its political and social tensions, today's scenes could be perceived as 'underground' in the sense of having a particular ethos or mentality (Graham 2010). Thornton believes 'underground' is merely an expression that people use to refer to things subcultural (1995: 117).

be requisite for places that are appealing to the majority, whether in England in the 1980s or South Africa in 2015. Without any familiarity of literature on the topic, some of my informants' explanations of suburban popular music included: "DJs that play top forty hits – hits that people know and recognise and can dance to and sing along to" (Jean-Michel, author's interview); "super accessible radio hits" (Andile, author's interview); "you might as well be listening to the radio" (Mike, author's interview); and "top forty hits that appeal to westernised white kids" (Saul, author's interview), illustrating the widespread stereotypes of mainstream – or in Johannesburg's case, suburban – music. Conversely, the "darkly lit dives" and attention to the "newest developments in music" in alternative club cultures, as Evans describes (quoted Thornton 1995: 96), attract a niche crowd of 'hip' and alternative consumers who reject what they perceive to be the superficiality and homogeneity of the mainstream.

The crux of the difference, it seems, is that while the city's emphasis is on musical experience and appreciation, the suburbs' is not: "I don't care about the music when I'm in the suburbs. I'm there to see friends or get drunk or something", declares Andile. Jean-Michel and Saul expressed the same feelings, respectively saying: "You don't go to the suburbs to experience music" and "I'm not really listening to the music when I'm there. It's more social; I hang out with friends and have some drinks". Saul continued to explain that in suburban areas like Rivonia, Rosebank, Fourways, and Sandton (see figure 1) the club experience was more about dressing up nicely than anything else. He also gave the examples of the Stones club in Fourways having stripper poles throughout the club, and Tiger Tiger in Fourways as having three storeys of mega dance floors – the types of venues that Nas describes as "soulless mega-clubs". On the other hand, a venue such as And Club, which until recently existed in the basement of the Alexander Theatre in Braamfontein – and which is now located in an industrial alley in Newtown – emanates a not-so-glitzy 'underground' aesthetic, where, although still alluring, its unpretentious and modest setting provides an empty slate for the experience of the music to be the focus. For example, the figure below shows a Facebook post from And Club detailing their policy regarding music appreciation. Their request for patrons to put away their cellphones and not take pictures or videos whilst in the club, and to rather "be present" and "enjoy the here and now", demonstrates the value that is placed on music and the experience thereof. This sort of expectation is not at all prevalent in suburban clubs. These descriptions of the dissimilarities between what Thornton describes as "mainstream" and "hip" club culture will be discussed further in the following chapter in terms of how they influence aspects of youth social identity.

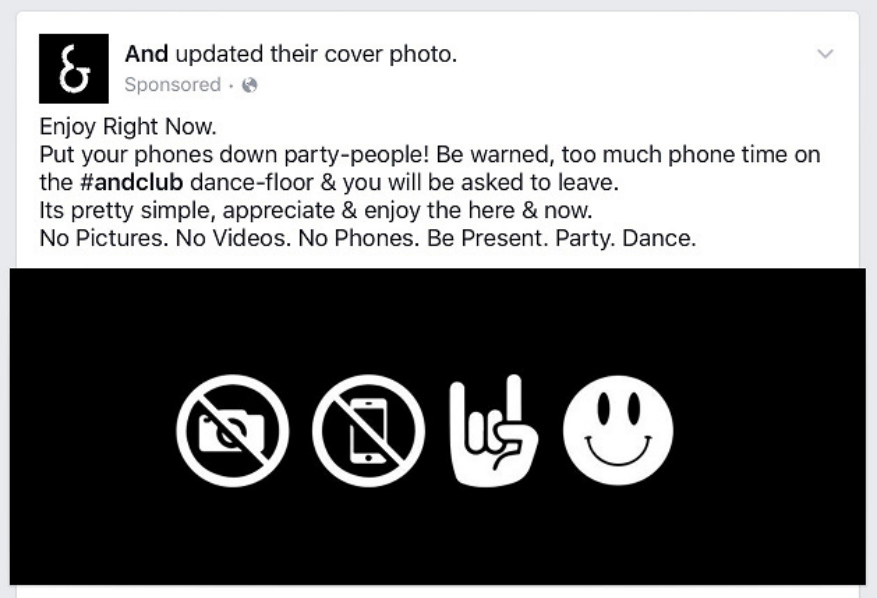


Figure 16: And Club promotes the enjoyment of music in a 2015 Facebook post.

What does it mean?

The inner city's soundtrack is significant to its identity. And if, as Attali states, music is a mirror of society, a tool for understanding a society, a way of perceiving the world, and a reflection of the "manufacture" of society (2012: 30), then I was interested in discovering what my informants believed the music of Braamfontein, Newtown, and Maboneng to be reflecting. Nas began by attempting to pinpoint the 'sound' of the inner city: "Who gets to say what the city is to everyone else? It's usually the people with the loudest voices, which, right now, is going to be a bunch of suburban kids who have moved into the city, and it's going to be what they like. And what they like is what's going to be trendy, and what's trendy is probably hip-hop and trap. So maybe that's what 'we' sound like". He acknowledges, however, that it is almost impossible to say what music could stand to represent Johannesburg; "but you know, that's just the nature of being in one of the most diverse cities". Bassie also believes that Johannesburg's diversity is clearly represented in how "eclectic the music is", and Mike echoes these sentiments claiming that "Joburg will never be the type of place that has a 'majority' music. I'd say that the sounds of Joburg are as varied as the people who participate in it and

And Club

And Club used to be situated in the basement of the Alexander Theatre in Braamfontein, but moved to a new location in Newtown in 2015 when the Alexander Theatre closed down. The new and modern club focuses on electronic music, or, as Nas describes it, "serious, crazy rave and heavy, trancey, ravey, crazy shit". Heard from its famous, top quality sound system is the likes of drum 'n bass, techno, and house music, and the venue also hosts regular events such as Science Frikshun, Toy Toy, and Addictshun.

make Joburg what it is". This difficulty in identifying the 'sound' of Johannesburg is in itself a reflection of the city's social identity: the diversity and expressive freedom that I have often referred to.



Figure 17: The unassuming and 'not-so-glitzy' entrance of Town Hall where, for many of my informants and other suburbanites, their journey into consuming alternative music in the inner city began (author's photograph).

Nas offers another reflection of the city's music: "The music is showing that we are desperate for new experiences and an attempt to escape what we think is a binding and constraining existence in the suburbs". The desire for freedom that the city permits, where one is able to be "more raucous" away from the suburbs, is also represented in the music, Nas believes. The hip hop and trap that he claims to have the "loudest voice" is also mentioned by Jean-Michel and Jess. The popularity of hip hop, Jess argues, reflects the obsession of materialism in today's youth: "It's all about 'booty'… it's all about who you know, what you are wearing, what you drive". Jean-Michel similarly states that there is a big focus on 'new money', with people being "very bling and very flash" in the "personalities that they are trying to showcase". To me, these sentiments are clear evidence of the increasing 'migration' of suburbanites into the city. Having personally experienced the progression

of the inner city's scenes over the past seven or so years, it is apparent that Barry's "bourgeois bohemian" phase has indeed been entered (2013). The obsession with appearance and status, for example, is 'suburban' in that the inner city always was – and still is in many places – a carefree and unpretentious environment. More importantly, the increase of 'mainstream' suburbanites and their materialistic attitudes will surely negatively impact on the unassuming and down-to-earth nature of the alternative scenes in the inner city, perhaps hastening a move away from the inner city and launching a new phase of the 'trend cycle'. On this matter, Nas described how the previously-popular and trendy Greenside became too familiar (and too full of 'jocks', in Jean-Michel's words) in around 2009, hence the move to the inner city, and he believes that this will happen to the inner city, too: "The hype will die down and people will start going to Melville or wherever else they see the new thing happening". While this is not yet entirely the case, it is interesting to note another of Attali's claims about music: that it has "always been in its essence a herald of times to come" (2012: 29). So, in addition to the remarks made by my informants regarding what Johannesburg's music says about its society, perhaps another thing to consider is its prophetic facility at hinting at another profound shift in the city's ongoing (re)development in the near future.

Cohen's statement resonates deeply with the topics covered in this chapter: "Music, music-making, and music consumption are mediated by material environments, a process involving the navigation of journeys and boundaries, and the forging of multiple relations along the way" (2012: 135). In short, the manifestation of the inner city as it has materialised in recent years has resulted in a specific soundtrack that could best be described in Bennett's words as a "technological dreamscape of reconstituted sounds" (2000: 81). This soundtrack has established its sound through the journeys it has taken with its multitude of different participants, and through the boundaries it has both built and destroyed whilst realising its identity. Its many relationships between various styles, sites, practices, and people has resulted in an exciting and multifaceted sound that ardently soundtracks the lives of suburban youths in the inner city.

Chapter 6
The Tin Roof Choir of an Old Train Station: *Experiencing*

My inspiration for this chapter came from reading Tricia Austin's article on design methodologies regarding culture-led regeneration. As I discussed in chapter 2, Austin claims that it is only in the way that spaces are "used, reported, and lived" that a sense of place is formed (2013: 2). With culture-led regeneration's focus on the experience of place – rather than place being a spectacle as such – Austin believes that one needs to "envisage … spaces as dynamic interactive experiences" (10). In order to realise this, she introduces the Actor Network Theory into her discussion which allows for "inanimate objects [to] have a part to play in effecting relations" between people, objects, and ideas (6).[28] Inanimate objects such as parks or buildings too have power to effect, as well as an agency which Austin takes to be a "constituent quality of the material world" (ibid.). In relation to its contribution to urban studies, Taylor Shelton defines the Actor Network Theory as "a distinct research program … founded on the relevance of such assemblage-orientated thinking", and adds that it is a "mode of thought" that views the city as an object being "relentlessly assembled" (2013: 575). What constitutes a city is, therefore, an assemblage of both living and non-living factors that create a network that is alive with relations and experiences working together to shape meaning.

Although Austin's work differs in that she uses the Actor Network Theory as a basis for allowing spaces to become 'characters' in a narrative – and using narratives as a method of transformation in culture-led regeneration – what I specifically want to focus on is the idea that the character or 'constitution' of a space contributes to experience, and particularly to musical experience. Austin defines 'experience' as a "subjective, intangible, and individualistic impression of place" and believes that the notion of experience also includes "cultural memories, social behaviours, practical functions, economic drivers, and the material world" (2013: 2). In my argument throughout this chapter I will employ this definition of experience to explore the ways in which these factors contribute to the individual stories and memories told by some of my informants about experiences of place in relation to music events in the inner city.

Michael Bull's claim that music has the ability to make an environment come to life and make "banal things seem more significant or poetic" (2012: 197) could also be understood conversely; just as sound can impact environment, environment too can impact sound. In Adam Krims' words, "the character of cities [or spaces] shape how we hear and think about music" (2007: ix). Supporting this sentiment is the claim that music is consumed and experienced differently in different locations and

[28] The Actor Network Theory is a strategy concerning social theory that was developed and made popular by Michael Callon, Bruno Latour, and John Law. The complex and multi-faceted theory posits that both material and semiotic 'actors' have the ability to create and affect meaning. I am only using a very small portion of the theory to support my work in this chapter, however, and there are many other features of the theory that I am not considering.

contexts (Connell and Gibson 2003: 193). This intertwined relationship of music and space, where each has the ability to effect the other, is significant in understanding why musical events and activities have proven to work well in culture-led regeneration: music is able to give new meaning to a space, transform points of views, and offer a unique experience of place to the participant. As an example of this, Sara Cohen, in her exploration of regeneration in Liverpool, describes how music and its consumers, producers, and entrepreneurs reappropriated and therefore revitalised spaces in the Liverpool city centre, and in the process transformed them into "distinct places that were associated with cultural vibrancy" (2007: 212).

This cultural vibrancy that Cohen speaks of is precisely what is being celebrated in the regeneration process of inner city Johannesburg. It not only intrigues but also fulfils participants, and makes them want to return to the city. Along with other brief examples, I will be drawing on two *5 Gum Experience* events held in Johannesburg to illustrate this. The first event, the 'train station party', was held in October 2012 at the old Park Station structure that sits barren and unused in Newtown. The party hosted both local and international DJs, including A-Trak and Hudson Mohawke. The second event, the 'highway concert', took place in April 2013 under a highway near Newtown, in a location that most people, including myself, are still uncertain of to this day ("It was just so cool to be partying in the city under a highway without even knowing where I was", recalls Bassie). This concert featured British band The Kooks along with several local acts, including my informant Jean-Michel who DJ'd under his moniker Half 'n Half. Both of the events hosted by the American chewing gum brand were indeed *experiences*, as the event title suggest. Just as the brand's catchphrase of "Stimulate Your Senses" hints at a comprehensive experience of their chewing gum, their events similarly aimed to tantalise all five senses in memorable and holistic experiences.

Part of the unusual and exciting experience of both events was having the venues kept secret. All attendees were transported to the secret locations by bus. The first event's meeting point was at a school in Milpark on the outskirts of the inner city while the second event organised for the buses to depart from the Oriental Plaza, a shopping complex on the western border of the inner city. "I will always remember the sight I saw as the bus came over the Nelson Mandela Bridge and we saw the lights emanating from the venue. It's a memory I'll have for the rest of my life", remembers Jean-Michel, whose words resonate deeply with me, as I too will never forget it. Having been an admirer of the structure for many

The Old Park Station

The Victorian structure was manufactured in The Netherlands in 1896 and was part of the original Park Station in Johannesburg, which was replaced by a newer development that exists to this day. The structure has been moved several times and was placed on its current site in Newtown in 1995. While there have been plans for the structure to be turned into a railway museum and tourist attraction for many years, its fate is still uncertain (Cox 2015). The commanding landmark has stood bare and desolate for decades, and one can only hope that this historical treasure is not left for ruin.

years, looking at it with awe every time I passed it in Newtown, the idea of being able to occupy its spaces whilst listening to some of my favourite music was remarkable. As Jean-Michel recalls, his bus filled with roars and cheers as the sight of the train station emerged on the right side of the bridge. On the bus, everyone's excitement was palpable. In an online review of the event, 'Yetunde' wrote something similar of his experience:

> The double-decker buses took us over the beautiful Nelson Mandela Bridge and just at the end of the bridge we could see flashing lights coming from the derelict train station. Everyone just started cheering on the bus and I wondered how many times the bus drivers were going to hear that sound. I don't know how *5 Gum* do it but they always pick the best venue (2012).



Figure 18: The old Park Station structure in its usual desolate state, with a glimpse of the Nelson Mandela Bridge on the right (author's photograph).

During the event I often found myself simply standing and staring at the different elements of the structure; examining the roof and beams and the Victorian details. Although I had seen the structure so often before, I was experiencing it from a new perspective – and a perspective that had a lot more meaning attached to it. Andy Bennett explains that audiences are 'active' participants in the "production and inscription of meaning in the products of cultural industries" (2000: 55), and every participant at the event that night contributed to the production of new meaning surrounding the structure. That night, the old Park Station went from being an old train station, an abandoned structure, a landmark, and a possible museum, to being an extraordinary music venue that will forever remain in the memories of approximately one-thousand young Johannesburgers.

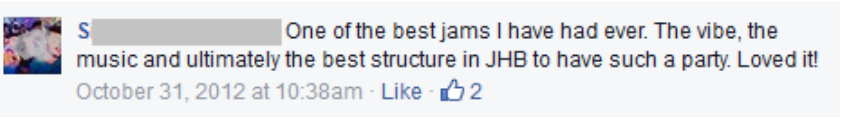


Figure 19: A comment on the *5 Gum Experience*'s Facebook page regarding the train station party.

The title of this chapter was inspired by this party. The metal structure of the old train station came alive with the vibrations of the loud music that was filling it. Every structural piece that had perhaps been worn down from the elements or slightly loosened over its years of neglect rattled and pulsated along with every drumbeat and bass note of the electronic music. Reviewer Yetunde recalls that "standing in there meant your whole world was shaking and it was incredible" (2012). Any consideration that the old structure could perhaps collapse under the feet of jumping and dancing partygoers was quickly quashed by the splendour of the experience. With this rattling and vibrating came a beautiful hum from what I imagined to be the tin roof of the structure, generating a choir of metallic kinesis that accompanied each electronic track played by the DJs. Jean-Michel mentioned that "the fact that the improvised venues are not acoustically treated added to the rawness of the night". The description of "rawness" perfectly encapsulates the experience, as it was a physical and aural bombardment of unsullied pleasure. It was a distinctive experience that I crave to encounter again – although over three years on, nothing has come close.

Ian Burkitt (2005) has stated that a place is an "arena of action that is simultaneously physical, historical, social, and cultural" (quoted in Parsons 2009). For those who experienced the party at the old train station, it was not only a physical, social, and cultural experience of space but indeed also one that contained a heightened and important element of history. As a young city that has often failed to properly preserve its past and its heritage, being able to experience an historical artefact such as the old train station in Johannesburg in such a vibrant and interesting manner held a lot of meaning for the participants. Italo Calvino asserts poetically that a "city, however, does not tell its past, but contains it like the lines of a hand" (quoted in Sara Cohen 2007: 23). As youths of Johannesburg took pleasure in utilising and enjoying the old train station, its past that was contained in every detail, scratch and etching – a past that could only come to life in our imaginations – was for a moment animated and given a dynamism that perhaps would not have felt as poignant if it weren't for the vibrancy of the event and its music. In addition, in Putter's words, "discourses and structures that belong to and represent the … past in South Africa cannot simply be erased and forgotten but should rather inform and merge with the memory of the present" (2012: 59).



Figure 20: A view of the crowd in the old train station structure (picture from www.facebook.com/5GumSA).

This task of merging the past with the present to elicit new narratives and meaning is one that culture-led regeneration projects often undertake, and is a task that undeniably gained measurable success from the unforgettable train station party. Although the train station itself has not been redeveloped, its location in the redeveloped area of Newtown (most of which was culture-led regeneration, sponsored by both the government and private sector) no doubt played a role in the event being realised. The practices of culture-led regeneration, which have not affected the train station except for the occurrence of several once-off markets and events, are perhaps what inspired the event organisers to think innovatively and host the party in such a way that distinctively meaningful experiences could be created. The ideologies of culture-led redevelopment were indeed present in the train station party even if they were not realised in a redeveloped space itself. And, as I have claimed before, any contact with the inner city can act as a stepping stone towards furthering a person's relationship with it. So while the venue may have been initially unknown and although

the event was held on the 'safe edge' of the city (refer to the mapping exercise in chapter 3), it may have influenced certain people, changed perceptions, encouraged a return to the area, and other such results that culture-led redevelopment projects aim to achieve.

The 'highway concert', as I mentioned, was similar to the train station event in that the location was kept secret and the attendees were transported to the venue by bus. Once again, Jean-Michel describes the experience by saying that "the massive sense of excitement experienced as you drive up to the venue is indescribable". This time the buses took us to a dark and unfamiliar part of town that definitely did not have as much of a climactic reveal as the train station party, but was no less exciting. The party was held beneath an elevated strip of highway – an area that I only found out from Jean-Michel during the interviews was in fact a mini-bus taxi rank or stand. "The unique location was the best thing about the event", claims Jean-Michel, proving again the impact that space has on experience. The industrial setting with giant concrete pillars surrounding us, along with the faint sound of cars passing above our heads and rain drops catching the light as they poured down either side of the protective highway 'roof', enlivened the senses and provided yet another inimitable experience. Jean-Michel reminisces about the effect of the event: "To this day it becomes a point of conversation, about where friendships were struck, memories shared and a great night had". His words remind me of Martin Stokes' observation: "The musical event evokes and organises collective memories and present experiences of place with an intensity, power and simplicity unmatched by any other social activity" (1994: 3). The example of this event again points to the success of music's role in culture-led regeneration projects where, again, despite the event not being held in a redeveloped space, the ideologies of collectivism, social engagement, and memory making were no doubt present. The event forced its participants to reimagine a taxi rank as a space of endless opportunities. And again, it may have changed perceptions of those who merely attended the event for the music. It did exactly what a food market in a parking garage (like the Neighbourgoods Market in Braamfontein) does: attract and transform.

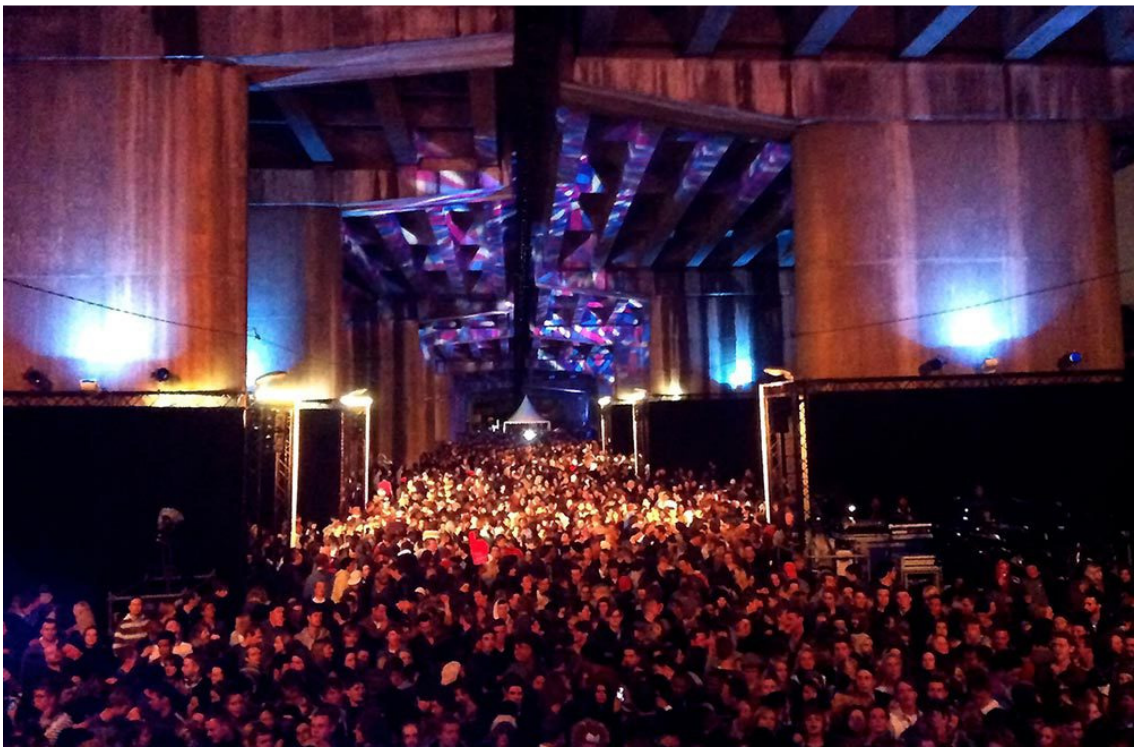


Figure 21: Partygoers enjoying the music under the highway (picture from www.formative.co.za).

Jean-Michel's involvement in the event as a DJ meant that he was able to meet and socialise with the British band members of The Kooks. He commented that such events are not only unique and exciting for concert-goers but also for the performers, recalling that The Kooks' musicians were just as enthusiastic about the event: "I mean, you could go around the world playing venues and arenas, but who can say that you've performed under a highway in South Africa?". Jess remarks that these kinds of distinctive events in "unorthodox venues", as Nas names them, are "quite magical" because of the "explorative process" that is involved. Jess used the example of "driving to a sea of empty warehouses in an industrial space and happening upon a club … it's gritty and it's raw and it feels like nineties London".[29] Unusual and different experiences like these would be significant for anyone; however, the limited possibilities for urban exploration and escapades for Johannesburg's young suburbanites means that experiences such as these are all the more valued and meaningful.

"For a promoter to take something familiar and enhance it through performance and lighting is truly genius", Jean-Michel says in regard to the train station party. He continues that "with the limited amount of venues in Johannesburg", promoters need to think more "outside the box" and find innovative ways to "activate" venues. Jean-Michel offers the example of a series of parties hosted by

[29] It has been common practice in major cities in the western world, especially since the rise of electronic music in the 1980s, for parties of this kind to be held in industrial and neglected areas. This was also true for Johannesburg in its pre-redevelopment days when raves were commonly held in industrial areas such as Yeoville and Doornfontein.

Puma that were held in an old building on Commissioner Street in the city centre. For a week, different concerts and parties were put on in the building each night.

> It was interesting going to Commissioner Street at night on a Wednesday and going to the tenth floor of a building that you knew was pretty much empty, and opening the elevator doors to find a space that was completely revamped and interesting and fun.

It is difficult to know whether similar concepts as the events I have discussed would have as much impact in a suburban environment in Johannesburg. But there are several indicators suggesting that the power of such experiences only exists due to their location in the inner city; and hence the prevalence of such events in the city. The main factor is the 'forbidden' element that entry into much of the inner city still contains. This offers a dimension to an experience that is often subconscious but which is impactful nonetheless. The setting of the event is another important factor; the kinds of environments such as abandoned buildings and derelict warehouses are often exclusively urban, and cannot be replicated in suburban settings. In Jean-Michel's words, "a dilapidated building in the suburbs would be bought and made into a residential area or something, whereas in the city it still has the freedom to be a weird, abstract space". Mike believes that "the venues in town do have a lot more character … everything looks a bit more extravagant and slightly more bohemian". The character of the city's spaces that Mike speaks of is what promoters and event organisers capitalise on. This not only promotes the inner city but also offers unusual, extraordinary, and memorable experiences. "Despite fabricated geographies and elements of globalisation, places continue to give meaning to people's lives and music" (Connell and Gibson 2003: 70), as my informants' recollections of stand-out places and music events in the inner city have suggested. The influential power of space and place has also been made evident, and "thinking outside of the box", as Jean-Michel suggested, or transforming spaces into one-of-a-kind experiences are therefore incredibly effective in offering unforgettable and significant moments in our musical lives.

Experiencing the city at different times

In the chapter on 'Reimagining the City' I alluded to the city's contrasting characteristics of being experienced as both a lively hub and a desolate vacuum. In the context of that chapter I was exploring the preconceptions that my informants held of the inner city before their involvement in it. The city's empty and quiet times, identified as being during weekday nights, Saturday afternoons, and Sundays, were perceived that way when the informants were thinking of the city as a city: when businesses were not open and people were not travelling through and around the city streets. At a different stage in the interviews I asked my informants about their experiences of the city in relation to socialising and music consumption. Here, the city's spaces were conceived as a 'playground' rather than a place of work, and the weekday nights – at least some, not all – as well as Saturdays and Sundays were then seen as busy times when the city was a 'bustling hub'. Music, then, animates the

city when it is 'dead'. Hours after residents retreat to their abodes and businesses shut their doors, the city becomes spotted with hives of activity, loud music, and young people intermingling in the midst of the city's soundtracks. In these moments, they experience the city in their way; the 'young' way where homes, traffic, and businesses do not matter. The "relentlessly assembled" city (Shelton 2013: 575), affected specifically by patterns of day and time, transforms into something else. Within the redeveloped areas of Braamfontein, Newtown, and Maboneng, once lectures are done, work has ended, and dinner eaten, middle-class youths assemble within the trendy hubs and activate a new identity for the inner city; an identity that exists around music, amongst other things.

As a leisure activity, music consumption occurs mostly during leisurely hours (night time) and leisurely days (weekends). In describing patterns of behaviour, my informants illustrated when, why, and how music is consumed differently at different times, specifically within the redeveloped hubs. Speaking of Braamfontein, Saul explained that people usually go out on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights, with Friday nights being the busiest and offering the "biggest mix of people". Jess echoed this, stating that Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights are busy because of places like Kitcheners and Great Dane which most often host parties on these nights. Andile, Saul, and Mike all noted that weekday nights are very student-oriented because of the abundance of student accommodation and residences in and around Braamfontein. Andile called these weekday night times of socialising and music consumption "normal" with Saturday becoming more "flashy" because of the influx of suburban visitors: "If I could imagine it, it's like very normal during the week and then it becomes a bit like a weird zoo on the weekend". Saul also alluded to this, saying that Braamfontein becomes a "bit touristy" on a Saturday, mainly because of the Neighbourgoods Market. Regardless, Mike described Saturdays in Braamfontein as being "absolutely packed, day and night". Saul, Andile, and Mike also pointed out that Sundays are usually Braamfontein's quietest day because of the popularity of Maboneng, with Jess describing Sundays as being Maboneng's "big day" because of its Arts on Main market. Lastly, Jess says in a somewhat despondent tone that, because of its disregarded potential, Newtown "only buzzes when there's a big concert".

Music, therefore, can not only transform spaces' character but also the time and the manner in which they are used. Redevelopment in the inner city has brought life into a city that, say ten years ago, would typically have been 'dead' at night and on weekends (from a suburbanite's perspective, if not for its residents). As people continue to experience the city in different ways, the relationship between music and space continues to impact on how such experiencing happens.

A walkable city

Experiencing the city rather than travelling through it or merely visiting it for a night out, for example, is what culture-led regeneration projects aim to achieve. People forming a connection to urban spaces elicits the relationship required for positive, meaningful transformation. Walking, then, is perhaps the most effective way for one to connect to and properly experience the city. However, due to the closed-off nature of suburbia in Johannesburg, the city's lack in infrastructure such as wide and clean pavements, as well as the high levels of crime, Johannesburg as a whole is not considered a 'walkable' city. While for multitudes of the city's poorer residents walking is common, many other Johannesburgers' perspective of the city is from the vantage point of their motor vehicles. Particularly for middle- and upper-class Johannesburg residents, walking in an urban environment is a novelty and something they do not experience often, if ever. Architect and heritage consultant Brain McKechnie described that his experiences in places such as New York and London made him realise the importance of being able to "tangibly experience" a city by foot ("Death and rebirth of Johannesburg"). He also believes that many Johannesburgers are disconnected from the city because of being "bound by motorised transport", stating that there is a vibrancy from on-foot interaction that is lacking in Johannesburg (ibid.).



Figure 22: Walking between attractions in Maboneng (image from www.heritagecollection.co.za).

The redeveloped areas of Braamfontein, Newtown, and Maboneng, however, have offered Johannesburgers opportunities to walk. Because of the hub-like formations of the areas, as well as the increased security and safety, walking on the streets between different attractions is possible. Of course, there is also safety in numbers, and the presence of such attractions draw in enough people to allow for an assurance in walking the streets. An example of this is of the First Thursdays initiative that I discussed in chapter 2, which is "as much about experiencing art and culture as it is about exploring the city on foot" ("First Thursdays Johannesburg"). As hundreds of people descend on the inner city to take advantage of First Thursdays' offerings, the "relentlessly assembled" (Shelton 2013: 575) urban spaces that are affected once again take on a new identity; a confidence and maturity where people walk its streets with ease and nonchalance. Popularity in guided walking tours of the inner city is also increasing as people realise the enjoyable benefits of urban walking. One of these benefits, according to Saul, is increased confrontation – the kind that one would not normally experience in the suburbs: "Psychologically and physically you are closer to people in the city". This confrontation and closeness to people that Saul enjoys is part of the reason Anne Putter supports the idea of walkability in Johannesburg's inner city: she asserts that walking is an empowering activity, that it encourages individual agency, and that it gives a sense of independence, freedom, and access (2012: 65-66). In addition, walking renders one to chance, opens one up to possibilities, and makes one vulnerable (Wright 2015).[30] Being able to experience Johannesburg's city spaces in this manner is imperative to its success and the connection that residents and visitors feel to it. After all, as Michel de Certeau believes, the intertwined paths of footsteps shape spaces and "weave places together" (1984: 97).

[30] The same could be said for cycling which is also gaining popularity amongst suburbanites in Johannesburg's inner city. In the past year cycling lanes have been constructed in and around Braamfontein, and the globally successful Critical Mass events have also reached Johannesburg's streets, at times attracting thousands of mainly suburban participants. Critical Mass rides in Johannesburg pass through Braamfontein, Newtown, and Maboneng, amongst other inner city areas, creating the safe passages between the hubs that many feel is lacking (and which, because of distance, is not always achievable by foot).



Figure 23: Confronting the streets: cyclists taking part in a Critical Mass event, with the Nelson Mandela Bridge in the background (image from www.jhb.criticalmass.co.za).

Suburban youths' music consumption has also been transformed by the ability to walk the redeveloped hubs. While in the suburbs one typically drives to a stand-alone club, parks in a lot or garage, enters the club and remains there for the entire evening until one drives home, inner city clubs that exist in hubs or clusters, such as in Braamfontein, Newtown, and Maboneng, allow for people to park on the street and walk between different clubs and venues. In Braamfontein, for example, it is common to move between venues such as Kitcheners, Great Dane, Anti Est., and The Bannister Hotel. In Newtown one can move between And Club and Carfax, just as people used to move between The Woods and Town Hall when they existed. This possibility of easy movement enables people to have access to more music in one night, more chance of social interaction, and more experiences and interactions with the inner city. While walking between these redeveloped hubs is still not considered safe, the ability to confront the city by foot on a smaller scale is at least a step in the right direction.

Chapter 7
We Are Who We Are Because We Are Not Them: *Socialising*

Accompanying the distinctive musical enjoyment and appreciation that participants experience in the redeveloped areas of Braamfontein, Newtown, and Maboneng is a highly valued manner of social interaction that adds significance, they attest, to their overall experience. Socialising plays a major part of one's identity formation, and conversely, one's identity impacts how, and with whom, one socialises. Music, and the fashion, attitudes, and ideologies that go with it, also largely influence one's identity. Music taste goes hand in hand with socialising not only because of the 'contact points' that music concerts and parties, for example, offer, but also because of the desire people have to surround themselves with those similar to them; the "familiar strangers" to which Sarah Thornton refers (1995: 111). Ethnomusicologist Thomas Turino states that social groupings form "along the lines of specific constellations of shared habit" (2008: 111), with Thornton echoing that dance club crowds congregate on the basis of their shared tastes in music (quoted in Huq 2006: 103). For this reason, Thornton claims that club cultures are in fact 'taste cultures' (ibid.), and the musical tastes that one possess forms an "important statement of our values and attitudes" as well as acting as a "resource for developing other aspects of our individual identities" (Hargreaves *et al.* 2002: 1-2). An example of this can be found in Saul's description of the effects that socialising in the inner city has had on him, and demonstrates how existing within a taste culture can drive further identity formation: "There's an influence on each other in terms of the music that we listen to, the way we dress, and also just the kind of community there. I think we influence each other with the different things that we bring to it". In Cohen's words, "music provides an occasion" for social mixing and the exchange of styles and influences (2007: 38).

To clarify terminology: I conceptualise both musical and social occurrences in the inner city as a collection of music scenes that form around, and are made up of, 'taste cultures' where participants are brought together by their common interest in particular styles and genres of music. Holly Kruse claims that 'scenes' can be imagined as both sites of local music practice as well as the economic and social networks in which participants are involved (2010: 625). Likewise, Andy Bennett describes 'scenes' as being the cluster of musicians, fans, promoters, and so on who assemble around specific genres of music (2004: 223). Within such scenes, in which strong similarities and mutual tastes are found, occur distinctive neo-tribal bonds, I believe, that are fortified by the marginal and 'edgy' spaces (both literal and figurative) that they subsume. Neo-tribes are social groupings that are fluid, fragmented, and momentary in nature, avoiding the rigid binding that concepts such as subculture are believed to possess (Bennett 2000: 79).[31] Personal and social identities are both realised and

[31] French sociologist Michel Maffesoli developed the theory of neo-tribalism throughout the 1980s, culminating in his work *The Time of the Tribes: The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society in 1996.*

expressed in and through neo-tribal participation, and due to the flexibility that neo-tribes allow for, one can assume and "live out … selected, temporal" identities in different "sites" without the boundaries and restrictions previously thought to inhibit such expressions (Bennett 1999: 605).

There are two influencing factors in the contemporary world worth noting in this discussion of personal and social identity. First is the 'individualisation' of society in which identity is no longer defined by restrictive concepts of class, gender, locality, and so on (Bennett 2000: 80). Bennett writes that 'late modern' identities are now rather 'constructed' and 'fluid' instead of 'given' and 'fixed', allowing one more autonomy in the creation and expression of the self (1999: 599). This is particularly true for youths who, at this stage of their lives, have generally "loosened ties with family but not settled down or established themselves" (Thornton 1995: 102). By not being "anchored in their social place" (ibid.), youth have the opportunity, particularly through music and its related styles, to experiment with taste cultures, take part in different scenes, and discover themselves as they move between different 'sites' of interaction and personal expression. Importantly, involvement in scenes that one rates highly, and distancing oneself from less valued music genres, is a way in which one establishes "favourable social and personal identities" (Hargreaves *et al.* 2002: 9), while at the same time, this involvement "both identifies … and differentiates" one from other groups and communities (Kruse 2010: 628). The second factor impacting on the contemporary construction of identity is the rate at which the "cycle of production and consumption" moves (Petridis 2014). Ruth Adams recalls:

> When I was a teenager, you had to make more commitment to music and fashion, because it took more of a financial investment. I had a pair of gothy stiletto boots, which lasted me for years: I had to make a sort of commitment to looking like that, because I wasn't going to get another pair of alternative shoes any time soon, so I had to think about which ones I wanted. Now, it's all a bit more blurry, the semiotic signs are not quite as hard-edged as they used to be (ibid.)

"I think [today] it's a lot easier to be promiscuous, subculturally speaking", concludes Adams, referring to the rapid 'turn over' of genres and styles in modern, technologically-led consumption. It is because of this that Alexis Petridis upholds the validity or success of neo-tribal groupings where such fleetingness is recognised and permitted (ibid.).

The 'in-group' and the 'out-group'

Chapter 5's discussion of Johannesburg's soundtrack illustrated the 'overarching dichotomy' between the suburbs and the inner city whereby inner city participants conceptualise the suburbs as a binary other against which to compare and uphold their musical styles and tastes, with Thornton's "hip" versus "mainstream" opposition (1995: 96) characterising the different areas of Johannesburg. Just as suburban music and club experiences were criticised or downplayed by my informants in that

discussion, the social and personal aspects of such experiences were also a topic of scrutiny, clearly displaying Johannesburg's spatially-framed dichotomies once again. Making such distinctions is common practice for individuals in order to "maximise the differences" between their group (the 'in-group') and other groups (the 'out-groups') in order to maintain a "positive social identity" as well as to boost the "value of the in-group's attributes" (Henri Tafjel [1978] quoted in Hargreaves *et al.* 2002: 9). Thornton argues that making such comparisons are the "means by which many youth cultures imagine their social worlds, measure their cultural worth and claim their subcultural capital" (1995: 96).

In the discussions with my informants of the kinds of people that could be found at clubs in different areas of Johannesburg, another of Thornton's claims rang true: "Although most clubbers … characterise their own crowd as mixed or difficult to classify, they are generally happy to identify a homogenous crowd to which they don't belong" (1995: 99). What may be an exception in Johannesburg's case, however, is that participants of the inner city's music scenes frankly are "mixed or difficult to classify" because of the eclectic and diverse nature of the city. For example, Andile believes that "it gets everyone from the poorest dude to the richest guy in one space". Mike claimed that "there are people from various backgrounds, from super wealthy to struggling artists, and everything in between". He also described the age range of music consumers in the city as being from "sixteen to forty". Jean-Michel spoke about socialising at Kitcheners and being able to mingle with "people from impoverished kinds of backgrounds to people from affluent backgrounds, all coexisting in the same space". Will Straw's (1991) statement that the makeup of audiences at clubs is "likely to reflect and actualise a particular state of relations" amongst populations (quoted in Bennett 2000: 84), illuminates the way in which redeveloped pockets of the city such as Braamfontein, Newtown, and Maboneng have created a culturally mixed and accepting platform for assemblies of different people to intermingle, exchange ideas, and create amalgams of cultural inscriptions on the city.

The "homogenous crowd to which they don't belong" (Thornton 1995: 99) that inner city participants define themselves against, however, elicited fairly straightforward descriptions from my participants. "Middle-class", "young", "jocks" were some of the adjectives Bassie used to describe them, sarcastically adding that they "probably work in a gym or party for a living". Jean-Michel observed that suburban clubs he has been to usually consist of a "white populous"; and Saul explained that most suburban clubs, particularly in northern suburbs such as Rivonia, Sandton, and Rosebank, comprise of "people coming from private schools and wealthy backgrounds". This is made evident, Saul believes, by the R100 to R150 entrance fees attached to such clubs ("I mean, at Kitcheners you'd never pay more than R40 to get in"). Along with the types of people who attend suburban clubs is a reminder of their interaction with, and consumption of, music that was discussed in chapter 5: as opposed to the importance placed on musical experience and appreciation in the

inner city, suburban clubs are often more about socialising and 'exhibiting' oneself, with music acting as a secondary consideration and often a mere background accompaniment. In his aforementioned research on DJing aesthetics in South Africa, Francois de Villiers notes such differences between his case studies of Tiger Tiger in Fourways and And Club in Newtown:

> In a commercial nightclub, the bar represents a place for people to meet, exchange information or stories, or make new (potentially romantic) acquaintances. As such, the bar is littered with people throughout the course of the night, to the point where some people will spend the entire night at the bar. It is at this point that the musical entertainment for the evening takes second place … From the first Addiction [weekly drum 'n bass event at And club] I attended in 2012, until the most recent in late 2015, I noticed that the bar holds much less of a functional role. The bar in musically transgressive venues is reduced to a point of alcohol consumption, in that on average people spend distinctly less time purchasing drinks or socialising, and more time on the dance floor (2015: 30).

To further illustrate the nature of such clubs are screenshots of Facebook posts from Tiger Tiger in 2015. The clear lack of focus in the marketing of music, along with the emphasis on alcohol and sex, is a typical trait of Johannesburg's suburban club culture.

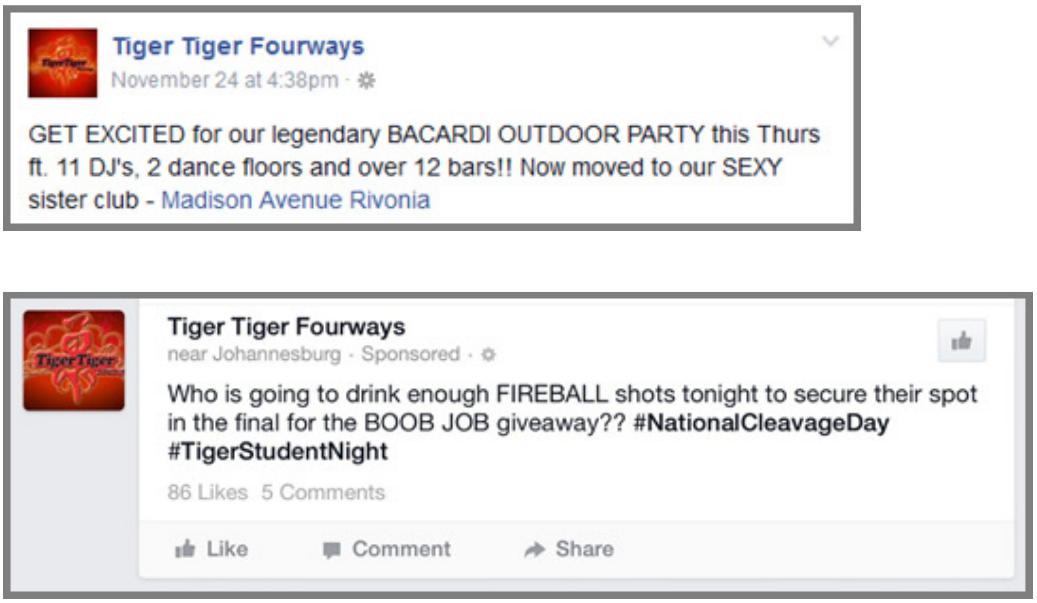


Figure 24: Two posts from Tiger Tiger Fourways' Facebook page.

Giving away a cosmetic surgery prize to whomever drinks the most, or promoting an event by advertising its eleven DJs and 'over twelve bars' is a stark contrast to the typical posts found on Kitcheners' Facebook page where importance is placed on the music and artists appearing at the club. With phrases such as 'fanatics' and 'vintage vinyl records club', along with names of DJs and genres of music being played, music's central role is made clear.



Figure 25: Two screenshots from Kitcheners' Facebook page, promoting events at the club.

John Connell and Chris Gibson comment that dance 'subcultures' or alternative scenes always measure the success of events or parties in terms of the music played, the venue at which the event is held, as well as the 'transformation' that it elicits within and amongst the attendees (2003: 204). For example, And Club's highly specialised sound system designed by Void Acoustics has become a marker for their events, "separating them from a number of their peers, and growing the promoters' reputations for being sound conscious" (de Villiers 2015: 23-24). However, as previously demonstrated, aspects such as these are not of primary concern for 'mainstream' or 'commercial' clubs. Blogger Lwandile Fikeni perfectly captured the essence of the contrast: "Where interactions in the more affluent suburbs of Joburg are mitigated by a bit of bling, Braamfontein interacts with bodily immediacy" (2015). My informants interpreted the suburban "bit of bling" as follows. For Andile partying or clubbing in the suburbs is a lot more "status driven" where one needs to "consider a lot of things you don't normally consider, like what you're drinking, how you're dressed, how you interact with people". Saul describes it as being "a much more expensive night out and much more extravagant". Lastly, Jean-Michel related a story of attending an event at Kitcheners featuring Cape Town producers and DJs Christian Tiger School after which he collected friends from Tiger Tiger in Fourways. "When I left Kitcheners everyone was having a good time, smiling, talking, having conversations … And when I got back to Tiger Tiger there were drunk people making out – it seemed like a place you go to just hook up. It wasn't really a place to experience music; it was a place to get laid and get drunk".

Visual displays of the self

In the 1960s and 70s the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies pioneered research that showed how musical taste and visual style together serve as a medium for the articulation of one's 'subcultural' values (Bennett 2000: 78). Visual style, or the way in which one chooses to present oneself (or selves), is fundamental in upholding one's identity as well as one's attachment or affiliation to specific scenes.[32] Here I consider briefly how clothing and dancing illustrate the differences between 'suburban' and 'city' manners of visual display and personal presentation. In asking my informants about the general differences between city and suburban clubs many of their answers raised the subjects of clothing and dancing styles because of the importance they hold in affirming certain sensibilities. For example, when discussing suburban clubs, Bassie observed that "all the girls wear, like, stripper dresses and if you're wearing pants people look at you funny and you stand out". She contrasts this with examples of the city's clubs, saying that she could wear whatever she desires – "I could go in my pyjamas. The places are alternative and alternative people are chilled out and it doesn't matter what they wear". Jean-Michel explained his dislike for the dress codes attached to most suburban clubs – ones that usually dictate that men wear smart shoes and collared shirts – and says that he would "much rather go to a place where I can wear jeans and sneakers … and party the way I want to". Similarly, Andile finds suburban clubs to be more "'showy' and 'show-off-y'" while city clubs allow for people to "let loose" and dress however they want. While participants of inner city music scenes do indeed 'dress to impress', their style, I would argue, is alternative, trendy and fringe fashion, rather than being focussed on the mainstream representations of sexiness and conformity found in suburban clubs. In addition to this, as Bassie mentioned, there is a higher degree of acceptance in the inner city where those who choose not to 'dress to impress' are not stigmatised.

Another manner in which people express themselves visually is through the act of dancing, which Bennett describes as the articulation of "non-verbal statements" (2000: 93). Turino finds the significance of dancing in its ability to create feelings of oneness when people move together in synchrony (2008: 2-3). These feelings of oneness through dancing are indeed important social aspects in club experiences, and they can be actualised in differing ways. While dancing is mostly always a personal manifestation of ability, confidence, and connection to the music, the nature of suburban clubs also often places importance on "being cool" whilst dancing, as Jean-Michel attests. His experience of dancing in suburban clubs is that there are "a lot of eyes on you and a lot of pressure to be cool", illustrating how the requirement to conform to the norm is what creates the feeling of 'oneness' that Turino speaks of. Jean-Michel goes on to say that such pressure "doesn't really exist in the city. You can dance like a crazy person and no one will judge you". Bassie

[32] Sarah Nuttall's (2004) work on the youth in Rosebank, Johannesburg, and the ways in which they 'stylise' themselves may be of interest.

similarly said that one can dance in city clubs "however you want to and you don't have to be sexy". The 'sexiness' that Bassie refers to in examples of both clothing and dancing in suburban clubs is an illustration of what Bennett noted as the "exhibitionist" behaviour and style of dancing present in "commercial" instances of music consumption (2000: 92). Bennett contrasts this with "underground" dancing styles where there is a "total engagement" with the music (ibid.). A total engagement with the music results in less focus on individuals, less concern for what others are doing, and a sense of 'oneness' that does not stem from mimicry or conformity, but rather from the collective appreciation and embodiment of the music through movement.



Figure 26: Dancing at And Club (photograph by Chris Preyser).

Community ties and neo-tribal bonds

The 'bodily immediacy' that Fikeni described as characteristic of Braamfontein, I believe, is a result of the energy and dynamism that creative youth occupying the spaces – such as the music venues discussed in chapter 5 – are injecting into the redeveloped pockets of the city. Their attitudes and ideologies are also what appear to create the distinctive community-like connections, which are a far cry from the seclusion of suburban life as detailed in chapter 1. Jess believes that these connections amongst people exist because everyone in the inner city has a "similar goal or a similar mind set, and that brings the community together". She contends that Maboneng exemplifies this: "If you look at the people that live there, they're all very similar. It's basically given everybody a space or platform

where they're able to collaborate". Jess illustrates the connectedness of inner city communities further:

> The communities that the [redeveloped] spaces have created are very tight. For example, if anything happens in Braamfontein we know about it. We have a Whatsapp group and email groups. We all talk to each other and we're all [emotionally] invested in the area. Same with Maboneng: if anything happens in Maboneng it's a community thing. It affects everyone so everyone has an interest in it. You end up talking so much because there's so much to talk about. You share ideas constantly with people. Essentially it starts becoming not about the individual but about the community, and that's really nice. I've never felt so un-lonely.

If the social and the spatial are "inextricably realised one in the other" (Bennett 2000: 63), then the spatial realities of Johannesburg's inner city – such as it being a migrant city, it not having the secluding (and excluding) features of suburban living, and it having two major universities in close proximity – all contribute to, and are realised through, the social realities of the city. Most of what Jess detailed above about the community feel of the inner city is therefore a direct result of not only the nature of redevelopment and gentrification, but also of Johannesburg's fundamental make-up as a whole. From discussions with my informants it appears that the diversity of people in the inner city, as opposed to the often homogeneous makeup of suburban areas, is what is both necessary for, and valued about, interactions in the city. Jean-Michel expressed that "it's a very intermingled kind of community of people and everybody gets along. It doesn't matter where people come from or who they are. There's no stigma; it's a free space". Saul similarly explains: "The city is such a melting pot of cultures and I feel that it is a place where the new generation of black kids and white kids and all different demographics can really get along. I'm meeting guys from Soweto, guys from the city, and from the south and the west; and me coming from the north". And in and amongst all of these relationships, it is important to remember that the diversity and hybridity of the inner city's music is what is allowing so many different people to come together and is what is often holding together these bonds.

In addition to the diversity of people and the 'stigma-free' space that the city offers for such interactions, one might question the frequency or ease with which community bonding occurs in the inner city. Bennett's work on music scenes in Newcastle suggests that when a scene is "at the edge" or "occupying a precarious space", as the inner city's music scenes do for many young suburbanites, particularly strong and distinctive neo-tribal bonds transpire (2000: 87). Connell and Gibson similarly found that a mutual opposition to mainstream culture "heightened the sense of collective unity and exclusivity" amongst electronic dance music participants (2003: 207). I questioned my informants about this, asking whether they believed that the city offered fertile ground for neo-tribal bonds. Nas's response was that "nothing speaks to neo-tribalism quite like going to a club. The integration is so temporary and limited to one club experience for one night". While, of course, it is possible for friendships and affiliations to extend past the club experience, the temporary and limited

connections that Nas speaks of are not futile: Bennett claims that neo-tribes are not "so fluid and transient as to cancel out any form of meaningful interaction" (2000: 84). The experience of "ad hoc communities" (Huq 2006: 103), the allowance of "multiple identifications" (28), and the ability to express oneself in "idiosyncratic and plural ways" (Stokes 1994: 3) all positively impact any social experience.

Andile relayed a story of what he believed to be a prime example of neo-tribal interaction in the inner city:

> On Saturday I was at a new record store that has opened in Braamfontein and it attracts quite a rock-orientated crowd, and they have bands that play there. So my friend and I were there listening to a bunch of bands, and then we moved to Great Dane where it was quite commercial music and we were hanging out with a totally different group. And then we moved to Kitcheners where they were playing electronic music and we were hanging out with another different group. This is all in a radius of like one hundred metres and we've had three different experiences with three totally different groups of people, and all in one day, without even thinking about it.

Andile's experiences are not uncommon for places like Braamfontein, Newtown, and Maboneng where the hub-like designs that redeveloped areas hone offer diversity with immediacy. The architectonics of these redeveloped hubs is mostly absent in suburban areas, leading me to question whether my informants believed that such neo-tribal bonds could occur in suburban spaces. Nas believes that they cannot occur as easily as they do in the city because "there aren't as many 'touch points' for us to come together intentionally and enjoy something collectively in the suburbs". Andile is of the opinion that "the problem with the suburbs is that they're a lot less fluid than the city. The city brings all different people from the suburbs together to one smaller space. So I think it only really works in a place like the city". Mike also added that he found most of his social interactions in suburban areas to be "very 'on the surface' or barely even scratching the surface". And while some of my informants, like Jean-Michel and Jess, sagely defended the possibility of neo-tribal bonds occurring anywhere – "You come together as a diverse group of people with a common taste, regardless of whether it's in Parkhurst or town" – the majority of the informants agreed that it was indeed more probable to form deeper and more meaningful bonds in the city because of people's mind sets and the openness and acceptance that comes with such thinking.

The nature of the inner city's music scenes, in which alternative, 'underground' genres thrive, can be conceptualised as a direct reflection of the social relations it fosters. Or rather: the neo-tribal bonds prevalent in inner city clubs could mirror the hybrid styles of music consumed. Nevertheless, there is a significant link between the hybridity of both the crowds and the music. Bennett claims that the characteristics of neo-tribalism are "well illustrated" by what he labels as urban dance music. "The increasing eclecticism of contemporary music and sampled soundtracks of dance mixes", he states, are redefining conventional notions of musical taste (2000: 81). This attribute of such music

emulates the way in which "music tastes, in keeping with other lifestyle orientations and preferences, is rather more loosely defined" than previous conceptions of the likes of culture and sub-culture (Bennett 1999: 611). Therefore, the fluidity and temporariness of neo-tribal bonds, where idioms of participation and belonging are 'loosely defined', can also be realised through the styles and practices of the music associated with, and constructive of, neo-tribes. This, Kai Fikentscher believes, is the "ritual through which" marginality and alternativeness is "affirmed and celebrated" (quoted in Huq 2006: 105). And this in turn, in a reciprocatory cycle, reinforces the bonds between the diverse crowd.

The metaphor of migration

In reading Sara Cohen's work on Liverpool's music scene, I became interested in her discussion of music's role in the lives of migrants in the area. As she described how music contributed to the migrants' adjustment to new surroundings as well as to their creation of a sense of place, identity, and belonging (2007: 15), I realised the overt similarities of such instances to those of myself and fellow suburbanites who travel to the city to socialise. The movement from one part of Johannesburg to another part of the city by a specific demographic may seem inconsequential (by comparison to the grave realities and difficulties that migrant populations face) but in the context of this thesis this movement can be considered significant, I argue. I began conceptualising our movement between the suburbs and the city as a series of metaphorical migrations, or 'snapshot' migrations, characterised by the unfamiliarity of the environment, the encountering of new people, the need for social (re)integration, and our use of music to facilitate this. When I posed this idea to my informants and asked for their thoughts on the comparison, the responses were mixed. Nas felt that describing the regular movement of suburbanites to the city as a kind of migration "lends itself an importance that it already has and doesn't need more of. I'd just call it another fleeting moment in our ongoing transformation and history". However, Nas then added: "But one day when we're contextualising our history and looking at how things have changed in the city, it will probably be very significant".

Mike, Jess, and Jean-Michel thought that the label of 'migrant' was unfitting. Mike noted that "migrancy is something that's a bit more permanent than going out for a night. It's about leaving something behind from the past". Jean-Michel also felt that the term was inapt because of the fact that suburbanites "ventured back" to the suburbs, and Jess suggested that instead of conceptualising the movement as a migration, it should be envisaged as "dipping a toe into the pool", referring to the (re)introduction of previously-absent suburbanites into the city, mostly achieved through culture-led regeneration 'stepping stone' projects.

Bassie, on the other hand, remarked that she felt like a migrant in the city because of the city's unfamiliarity and her need to adapt to its surroundings; "forever exploring and learning new things". Similarly, Andile felt that he "absolutely" was a migrant, noting that "the entire city at its core is a migrant city". "Everyone here is from somewhere else", he added. While much of Johannesburg's population is indeed made up of foreign Africans and South Africans from other locales, Andile considered himself and his fellow suburbanites as people from "somewhere else" – as did I – once again illustrating the disjointed and fragmented nature of Johannesburg. By way of comparative explanation Andile refers to his experience of living in Cape Town:

> In Cape Town, where you work, where you socialise, and your home base is one thing. In Joburg you have to live a bunch of different experiences – you have to be a 'migrant' to survive in Joburg … We might not be worthy of being called migrants but our behaviour is 'migrant-y'.

Despite the explanatory usefulness of the migrant idea to account for suburban youth's experiences of the city, when considering claims about music's role in the lives of migrants, such as that outlined by Cohen, it is evident that the same can be applied to anyone finding themselves in a new situation or setting, permanent or temporary. Whether partying in a club in an unknown part of town for the night or experiencing a new city as a hometown, music's abilities, such as "soothing new interactions", as Bassie described it, are far reaching. In line with Bassie's claim of feeling like a migrant in Johannesburg's city, as well as Andile's assertion, mentioned in chapter 4, of experiencing the city "still very much as an outsider going in", I asked my informants to comment on ideas expressed by Cohen and Turino regarding music's role in migrants' lives, specifically if they could identify with the sentiments as a participant in the previously or continually unfamiliar territory of the inner city – that is, as metaphorical migrants. For instance, in response to Turino's claim that musical participation is valuable for the processes of personal and social integration (2008: 1), Nas offered the following:

> There is a certain degree of discomfort that comes with being in any new place. Music definitely plays a key role in making people feel at ease internally, and that makes them more pliable and more open to being integrated in whatever sense it is. Going into a bar that I knew nothing about and finding music that I knew made me feel like: these are my people, even though I didn't know anyone there. But these people like what I like and whether or not we agree on everything doesn't matter, as long as we agree on this [the music] to start.

Jean-Michel recounted attending his first concert in the inner city to illustrate his experience. He had won tickets to see American punk band Mad Caddies perform at Bassline in Newtown and believed that being around other punk music fans allowed him a sense of security as a new and young participant in the inner city. "I didn't feel out of place because, even though I didn't know many of the Mad Caddies' songs, I felt comfort in the fact that I knew that there were people of a similar mind-set in that space", he explained. Jean-Michel also added that having a common purpose amongst a group is comforting, echoing Turino's statement that the performing arts allow people the feeling of being part of a community "through the realisation of shared cultural knowledge and

style" (2008: 2). The idea of establishing bonds or forming part of a community through music participation and consumption, as Turino attests, is again a concept that can easily be applied to both 'real' and metaphorical migrants. Andile expressed, with an almost palpable gratitude, how "music has helped me find people that I can relate to. My entire social circle and all of my closest friends are all relationships that are built from similar music tastes and being part of the same scene".

Loren Landau and Iriann Freemantle's research on African migrants living in Johannesburg (2010) offers another striking similarity between the ways in which migrants and the suburban youth as metaphorical migrants deal with issues of "insertion and self-exclusion" in Johannesburg. Landau and Freemantle's concept of 'tactical cosmopolitanism' demonstrates ploys by foreign migrants to be both partially included in, but remain unbounded by, Johannesburg's city (375-376). By drawing on a "variegated language of belonging", migrants make "claims to the city while positioning them[selves] in an ephemeral, superior and unrooted condition where they can escape localised social and political obligations" (380). For a large percentage of young suburbanites who socialise and consume music in the inner city, maintaining a distance from the city and its issues and responsibilities is a major factor in their enjoyment of it, and, as Andile previously described in chapter 3, is possibly one of the reasons that the city remains so attractive to young suburbanites: "I think it's different when you're really bound to the city and have to deal with all of its problems. The people that talk about the city and that are really excited about the city will always look at the city from the outside". This stance, Landau and Freemantle believe, allows for people to "live outside of belonging [to the city] while claiming the benefits of it" (381). Whether such desires to remain unbound are a result of bourgeois complacency (as for the suburban youth) or of an allegiance to another nation (as in the case of migrants), the parallels between the behaviour of 'real' migrants and metaphorical migrants who continuously cross imaginary borders between Johannesburg's fragmented sections are perhaps significant, and at the very least interesting to contemplate.

Chapter 8
The Blank Canvas: *Rewriting*

The changing city

"If you're in South Africa and you want to actualise some kind of dream, this is the place you come to", says poet Lebohang Masango of Johannesburg's inner city (Ferguson 2015). Speaking as a young creative, Masango reveals the hope and optimism that many feel about the city in its 'reborn' state. With the inner city having undergone almost two decades of, what many consider, decline until the early 2000s, this upbeat narrative about the city is refreshing; and it is one of many transformed narratives about the city being retold by its people. The transformation of the inner city as its story is being rewritten certainly includes many positive developments; however, there are other realities that constitute the city's story too, ones that often create an ambiguity, both social and spatial. For example, approaching issues such as gentrification and the exclusion and inclusion of peoples, along with a pocketed city still containing areas of crime and decay, presents an internal quandary about the city's regeneration for myself and my informants, as detailed in chapter 3. In redeveloping and reimagining itself the city still grapples with the multitudes of its inhabitants living in squalor and despair. In narratives of redevelopment these challenges are often noted only in passing, and focus is placed on smaller positive aspects that litter the streets of the 'rebirthed' city – in justification and validation of 'progress'. However, despite these issues, one cannot deny the interesting time and space in which the inner city currently exists: where the ambiguity of its people and places as well as its malleable constitution is presenting an opportunity (to those interested) to remould and manipulate its narrative. In many ways, it is offering its people a 'blank canvas'. Martin J. Murray writes that

> Johannesburg is a place that cannot truly be grasped in its entirety as some kind of fixed or stable whole, since its morphological form, its places, and its people are in constant motion, continuously changing and evolving in ways planned and unplanned, anticipated and unanticipated (quoted in West-Pavlov 2014: 13).

Johannesburg's spatial, sonic, and social elements are all presently being impacted on, I believe, by this 'blank canvas' nature of the inner city. Like the suburban youth occupying its spaces, the inner city – as a young, unbridled organism – is working to establish its identity. However, considering Landau and Freemantle's claim that Johannesburg, like all cities, "is a site of imagination, of collectively enacting shared or individual visions" (2010: 387), it is perhaps better rather to conceptualise the city's identity as a culmination of each of its people's visions – which in turn affects its spaces and its music too. An influencing factor in the way in which Johannesburgers are imagining and envisioning their city is their search for finding meaning (for themselves and their environment) amongst the sprawling and chaotic city. This, I propose, entails the realisation of both

what it means to be a 'local' as well as understanding what the local in fact is. The idea of the local – which I simply conceptualise as the 'Johannesburgness' of Johannesburg – has found renewed importance globally, says Cohen, despite globalisation's stronghold on major cities around the world (2007: 36). Cohen continues that since the turn of the century, social theorists have noted the new significance placed on "quests for local identity, the emergence of new expressions of local attachment, and thus a reimagining of the local" (ibid.) in an almost contradictory result of the embrace of the 'global village'. By virtue of Landau and Freemantle's previous statement, the interpretation and realisation of the local is therefore "crossed by different forms of collective life and competing sensibilities" (Bennett 2000: 52-53), demonstrating the profusion of reimaginings that work to define Johannesburg.

Bennett suggests that, for the reasons given above, the local should therefore not be thought of as a "definite space" but rather as a "series of discourses", where it becomes apparent that the 'local' is then in fact "both real and 'fictionalised'" (63). Spaces, Bennett thus believes, can have multiple identities. In addition to the discourses of the inhabitants of the inner city, visitors to the inner city such as myself and my informants – the metaphorical migrants I discussed in the previous chapter – are also creating unique and personalised discourses to match our experiences and thoughts. Landau and Freemantle note that the way in which migrants integrate themselves into other cultures is through looking, listening, intuiting, and reflecting, as well as by navigating "through systems of meaning and obligation" (2010: 387). Processing all that is experienced and learned from the looking, listening, and so on results in the manifestation of different personal narratives. What interests me is how discourses and narratives of the inner city are constructed from the "looking, listening, intuiting, and reflecting" of suburban youths in these spaces. Before detailing my informants' accounts of their constructed narratives, Nas reminds us that suburban youths involved in the inner city may not always be fully aware of their involvement as "urban agents of change" (Pitock 2014[a]) and therefore overlook aspects of their participation that could potentially make their experiences more meaningful or integrated, but which also undesirably hold the potential to construct skewed or incomplete discourses regarding the inner city.

> When you just go to the city to dance and listen to music you don't really interact with the spaces that much. You don't interact with the history so much. Or you do incidentally. But now I'm trying to do it more actively. I'm trying to find places that have been there forever that I haven't *looked* at properly.

Nas comments that suburbanites' tendencies to stay within the safety and comfort of the redeveloped islands such as Braamfontein, Newtown, and Maboneng is another harmful act: "For you to really understand the environment you have to cross that 'imaginary line' – there is no line". "It's a sad element of our psychology", he continues, "that we require these 'islands' to feel comfortable. It doesn't facilitate the transformation that it thinks it facilitates". He concludes rather sombrely that "one of the most negative things about the city is that people want to 'possess' it more

than they want to interact with it". Despite the half-hearted attempts by many suburbanites to fully immerse themselves into the inner city, for most of my informants, who were asked to partake in my research on the basis of their frequent involvement with the inner city, a greater familiarity with the whole city – including those areas not yet redeveloped – is valued. So while my informants' narratives of the inner city may be more comprehensive than those of most suburbanites, it is necessary to remember that these are still the narratives of 'outsiders', 'passenger consumers', as I referred to them in chapter 2, and those who migrated to the inner city only later in their life.

In presenting a selection of my informants' thoughts and opinions on the inner city, a unified and cohesive overarching narrative is observable amongst the differing personal stories. This characterises the inner city as offering each person something different whilst still maintaining its overall essence – at least this is the case for my group of storytellers. For instance, Saul feels that the city's current narrative is one of openness where its people "just want the city to be used". "And the people that are using it", he continues, "are enjoying it, and they want everyone to see that". Jess describes the inner city as presently being a "challenging space that is still in the process of developing its own identity", and that this characteristic has resultantly attracted many people, especially creatives, who wish to develop "their own identity alongside the development of the city". In Mike's opinion, existing in the inner city "is just about getting along with a constantly changing environment and being able to stay on top of all the chaos". He adds that there is "a resilience about being in the city and trying to make the best of it". In a more ideological sense, with a sentiment already mentioned in a previous chapter, Jean-Michel sees the inner city itself as having an autonomy unmatched by any other parts of Johannesburg. As an example he describes the life of a dilapidated building in the inner city as having the "freedom to be a weird, abstract space" which, if it were located anywhere else in Johannesburg, would instead be bought and turned into a residential or business site. These varying narratives speak to the principal features of the inner city that have been detailed throughout this thesis: the freedom it both contains and gives to its people; the processes of change that it is undergoing; and both the interesting and rewarding experiences it offers people. Tricia Austin proclaims: "As people tell and retell the space, the story will evolve" (2013: 10). It is clear from the few 'retellings' by my informants that the inner city's story is indeed evolving, slowly abandoning its previous reputations and transforming into a 'new' space.

The changing people

I want to pursue further Jess's earlier statement that personal identities are being developed alongside the inner city's identity. Here, identity formation in youth is particularly relevant because, as Bo Reimer describes, "it is during the restless and mobile period of youth that the need and desire to test the new and carve out individual identities is strongest" (1995: 128). Of course, existing and

participating in Johannesburg's inner city – as is the case with any place – highly influences one's identity. If it is true, as Austin states, that "interaction between people, places, objects and images produce, reproduce, maintain or shift, critique or undermine identity" (2013: 6) then spending time in Johannesburg's inner city with its people, places, objects, and sounds no doubt impacts on the formation of my informants' identities. As the previous discussion of neo-tribalism attested, individuals have multiple, shifting identities determined by their setting and circumstance, therefore, I must note that the following accounts of identity and personal narratives are specifically told from the perspective of young suburbanites who spend time exploring and utilising the inner city in its post-redevelopment state, where music consumption and socialising is a focus. In the very act itself of my informants discussing their identities and personal narratives can be found another level of identity formation: "We 'make ourselves' and our identity" through the "stories about ourselves that we tell others and indeed ourselves" (Jerome Bruner quoted in Hargreaves *et al.* 2002: 10). Thus, the stories that my informants chose to communicate about themselves in our interviews was part of the way in which they wished to 'make themselves' or communicate themselves to me.

As a freelance visual artist and a member of the music industry, the city has offered Jean-Michel influence and inspiration "for new projects, new music, and new art". Meeting other creatives with whom he can "discuss new, interesting ventures and ideas" is of great importance for him, illustrating how the inner city has fed into his desire to collaborate, build new relations, and create new things. The 'creative' Jean-Michel is who he wished to communicate to me, clearly due to the creative link between himself and the city. Nas, on the other hand, who throughout our interviews often focused on the concept of cities and the idea of knowing and exploring one's city, explains the inner city's impact on his identity thus:

> An exploratory part of growing up is trying to find new places and going to new places. I was drawn to the city to go and see a city! To go and stand around tall buildings and look up. And stand around thousands of people moving in every direction. Going to the city was this completely different experience of Joburg. Yes, I'd done it as a kid. But it's something different when you actually experience it actively and you walk around and you order food there and hang out there and spend time at the bars there… That had a transformative effect on me. It definitely made me more open to new experiences and in South Africa specifically I think it makes you open to different cultures.

The 'explorative' and 'patriotic' Nas came through in his response, perpetuating his wish for other Johannesburgers to be less apprehensive about the city and rather embrace *all* of its parts, peoples, and their cultures. While Mike believes that the diversity of the city is something that inspires him and which he tries to cultivate within himself and his interests, Bassie explains that as a young person who is still trying to 'find' herself, she purposely surrounds herself with diverse people because she finds that "they challenge me and are interesting to be around". Of course, Bassie says, it is in the inner city that that she encounters these diverse and interesting people. When considering

what it means to be a young suburbanite in Johannesburg's inner city, what stood out for Andile were the prospects it fosters:

> I think what's quite cool these days is a lot of people have the opportunity and are just doing what they want – not as a reckless thing, but as in controlling their lives, making the choices they want to make and being the people they want to be … a lot more than ever before. It's the opportunity to control our own lives a lot more.

This statement recalls the control apartheid Johannesburg had over people's lives, but Andile refers to an attitude found amongst the youth of the city – primarily what some commentators have called the 'born free' generation[33] – who fully embrace their liberties and who believe that anything is possible and achievable. "South Africa's post-apartheid generation agree there is no better time to be doers and implementers than now", says Charlise Ferguson (2015), resulting in a profusion of "go-getter attitudes" in the inner city. Detailing this attitude is blogger Lwandile Fikeni who describes that "being in Braamfontein … is not unlike stepping inside a big Nike commercial. Everything here is possible and everyone has the balls to 'Just Do It' – whatever 'it' may be" (2015). Similarly, poet Lebohang Masango says of the inner city: "This is where people are thinking of new ways to move about in the city and new ways to articulate themselves" (ibid.). Likewise, Jess told me that "you've got open-ended options, really, so I think as a young Johannesburger you can make and build your own future with very little hesitation. A lot is open to you". The autonomy and independence that inform Andile's and Jess's ideas about the city is also a result of the growth of 'individualism'. As a social concept individualism proclaims that traditional ties with class and family are no longer as important as previously considered and that individuals have the possibility and responsibility to 'make' their own lives (Reimer 1995: 122). Rupa Huq describes the concept of individualism as allowing youth to be more "active in making decisions that affect their lives", no longer having to "reproduce their parents' life courses" (2006: 30). For creative and 'alternative' individuals, self-creation and experimentation is an especially important quality, allowing for the emergence of distinctive traits to define them. Having given an account, in chapter 4, of Johannesburg's inner city as being a hub for creatives and 'alternatives', these emerging narratives of the inner city offering independence and scope for exploration will continue to attract people to it who desire to mould their identities in such a way.

A noteworthy narrative raised by Nas was that of the parallels between Johannesburg's spatial identity and its people. He started by explaining that while old, historical buildings in the city should ideally be preserved, the fact that they are left for ruin "is kind of great because it speaks to how maybe we don't need to have attachment to those things". And by "those things" he means the arsenal of apartheid's and colonialism's controversial pasts. New identities are therefore being formed, Nas believes, with a renewed future in mind, where reminders of the past are possibly better

[33] This term refers to South Africans who were born post-apartheid and are therefore seen as being free of its limitations (in spite of obvious residual effects still being experienced).

left alone. Perhaps a reason redeveloped areas are so embraced, then, is because they are indeed 'blank canvases' upon which history can be rewritten. Perhaps locals require that fresh start to feel comfortable in the city again, knowing that they can inscribe new meaning upon these 'new' spaces. In another example of the parallels between the city and its people, Nas pointed out:

> I feel a strong attachment to the fact that Joburg is put together so haphazardly, that it doesn't seem planned; it feels messy and wrong. I think that's a reflection of most people and it reflects a great sense of what South Africa is like as a whole: it's confused and confusing.

The issues of ambiguity and 'unsettledness' that I discussed earlier in this chapter are again evident. There is an uncertainty that is difficult to escape; the "confused and confusing" that Nas speaks of. However, by acknowledging, discussing, and challenging such issues, as my informants and I attempt to do by continuously interacting with the inner city, progress is possible. Letting go of suburbia's 'order' and limitations and embracing the putative disorder and chaos of the inner city provides opportunities to make sense of the confusion and to potentially rewrite narratives regarding such issues. The city's character and our grapple with it will no doubt influence our identities and change us as people in the process. Nas concludes:

> I just know that I want to keep being part of the discourse of how the city transforms and hopefully have whatever impact I can … to make things better for as many people as possible that occupy the city – not just a few suburbanites. I was never interested in the city to make it cool for suburbanites even though that's what we ended up doing.

The changing music

Man creates ideal soundscapes for the life of the imagination, claims Raymond Murray Schafer (2012: 96). And just as one's music may reflect one's imaginings, music (and therefore one's imaginings) too reflects the society in which one exists – as "a play of mirrors", in Jacques Attali's words (2012: 31). The 'soundtrack' of Johannesburg's inner city, as discussed in chapter 5, has the same abstruse qualities, I suggest, as the city's spaces and people. However, the complexities of the music are more easily understood and embraced than the complexities of the city's spaces and people. Eclecticism, diversity, hybridity, and variety are the attributes, according to my informants, that have arisen from Johannesburg's 'confusions', and these qualities prove especially fruitful in an 'alternative' music environment in which difference is valued. Music, too, contributes to how the inner city is (re)imagined and 're-storied', with Bennett describing that music's cultural significance is that of its "role in the construction of particular narratives of the local" (2000: 2). However, the inner city is not merely a "container or inert setting for musical activity", as Cohen proclaims (2007: 35). Rather, in John Shepherd's (1993) words: "Affect and meaning have to be created anew in the specific social and historical circumstances of each instance of music's creation and use" (quoted in Bennett 2000: 60-61). As the inner city music scenes evolve around the desires of their consumers,

so the consumers create meaning anew, taking the "cultural resources around them" and infusing them with "distinctive knowledges and sensibilities" tied to the local (Bennett 2000: 27).

Shepherd's claim that meaning is created anew in instances of its use suggests that music can offer a 'blank canvas' upon which one can ascribe significance. Conversely, music also plays a role in ascribing significance upon the malleable identities of the people within the inner city. Music's impact on people's identities has long been acknowledged. Connell and Gibson uphold that "music is an important cultural sphere in which identities are affirmed, challenged, taken apart, and reconstructed" (2003: 117). Speaking of music's influence on his life, Andile described that the music he listened to as a teenager, such as hip hop and punk, "influenced the way I dress, the way I talk, the way I look at life, the way I behave". He then added: "The only other reference I had outside of my home and school was the music I listened to. It was the only other world I knew. Music is how I got introduced to other worlds; totally different worlds that I wasn't involved in". Being exposed to these 'different worlds' through music – particularly within the kaleidoscope of musics found in the inner city – has a transformative effect on people; not only opening their minds but also manipulating their identities. Turino further explains music's significant role in identity formation as being due to the fact that music and dance are "often public presentations of the deepest feelings and qualities that make a group unique" (2008: 2). There is a vulnerability when consuming and dancing to music where, as Turino believes, an intimate feature of the self is being asserted and put on display. This revelation of an aspect of one's identity, however, is often what makes the aspect real and therefore 'credible'. The mere act of consuming music in a particular area of Johannesburg, for example, already asserts part of one's identity; choosing to consume music in the inner city is a statement that alternative culture is valued, that the mainstream or commercial is possibly shunned, and that the person has an openness to the phantasmagoria of the inner city's offerings.

With regards to music's mirroring quality, Andile believes that much of the current local music being made reflects the sorts of 'rediscoverings' taking place amongst the "young nation" and its "young people".

> If you look at the kwaito and the hip hop that's coming out, it's very much an entire reinvention of who… – I think young South Africans are pretty much questioning who they are and that's reflected in the music. It's a little bit rebellious, it's a little bit like taking pieces of the past and reimagining things entirely. So the interesting thing about the inner city is that it's a big challenge to preconceived notions of what young South Africans are. It's just a bunch of kids who are highly multicultural, very diverse, curious, outward, and that's normal. And I think that's quite cool. I think the music reflects this renegotiating of South African identity.

In addition to the qualities that Andile suggests the local music he listens to possesses, the music that soundtracks young South Africans' lives – such as hip hop, electronic dance music, kwaito, and alternative rock, for example – is also accommodating the increasing influences of globalisation.

While genres such as these grapple with the influences of western popular culture, audiences are continuously being introduced to new worlds and new styles.[34] According to Connell and Gibson, modernisation has resulted in a "'borderless' world" (2003: 10), where the lack of 'boundaries' has exponentially impacted on the hybridity of music.[35] In Maboneng, The Living Room's events such as 'Bali Beat Boutique' and the 'Caribbean Edition' of their 'Strictly Vinyl Saturdays', as detailed in chapter 3, is one example of the way in which different musics are permeating the inner city and influencing its people. Another instance is of the prominence of hip hop in the inner city, which Nas claimed in chapter 5 to have the "loudest voice" in reference to its popularity, and the way in which it is being appropriated. An example is popular local artist and Braamfontein frequenter OkMalumKoolKat who is fusing American-styled hip hop and rap with local sentiments to create a unique sound. In an interview with The Fader he had the following to say about his music in response to the question:

> **Do you often meld traditional African music with more contemporary Western Sounds?** I'm down with that; I've been doing it for a while. It's quite a complex thing – a lot of the kids that are making electronic music from here are more attracted to that than roots music or 'world music'. I'm more interested in the contemporary electronic stuff that's coming out of South Africa and Africa, that's maybe not boxed in as African music. I like finding new sounds that you haven't heard (McDermott 2014).

OkMalumKoolKat's response to the question is testament to the kind of experimentation that local music is experiencing, whereby the dissatisfaction with the 'ordinary' which is experienced by many creatives in Johannesburg (and around South Africa) is resulting in boundaries being pushed and innovation being celebrated. It is ironic, however, that areas such as Braamfontein, Newtown, and Maboneng are viewed as offering 'borderless' and diverse experiences when in fact they are so defined by borders (as illustrated by the mapping exercise in chapter 3). Despite this, the 'borderless' music one can experience in these redeveloped areas is creating an "internal diversity" that Connell and Gibson believes to question and transform "cultural identities" (11). The "kaleidoscopic mutations" (110) of sounds that result from the internal diversity in these areas mirror the possibility for "kaleidoscopic mutations" of identities to also occur in these 'borderless' spaces.

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[34] For detailed accounts of how select South African music genres have historically interacted with and developed alongside western musics, see Muller (2008) and Erlmann (1999).

[35] It cannot be ignored, however, that South African music has historically been influenced by other musics, dating back to the early colonial period. Thus, for over one hundred years a defining feature of South African music has been its hybridity.



Figure 27: A transformative experience: the exotic interior of Maboneng's The Living Room (image from www.gautengfilm.org.za).

Yet another influencing factor on the inner city's current musical identity is the city itself. While alternative music's attraction and close relationship to urban spaces was discussed in chapter 4, noteworthy is the actual spatial implications that redevelopment in the inner city has had on music. For example, Jess notes that "any scene can grow when there are enough platforms to play". She believes that the prominence of music scenes in the inner city is due to redevelopment's creation of new venues: "If you're a band or a DJ and you have ten new venues that are available, suddenly you have a lot more opportunities to play to more people and grow your crowd. The city has allowed for new venues, so that allows for a scene to happen. Without these new venues… – who knows what would've happened". Many of my informants reported that being bored of the 'same old' venues that they would frequent prior to the city's boom was an influencing factor in seeking out new places – new places that happened to be in the inner city. By providing new venues and opportunities for musicians and audiences, Johannesburg's inner city redevelopment changed the city's soundtrack, which in turn impacted on the identities of the people consuming its music. For example, the development of the trendy Maboneng Precinct allowed for a place like The Living Room (pictured above) to open – where the quirks (and expenses?) of having a chic 'rooftop jungle' with sprawling city views was a possibility. The creatives involved in The Living Room believed in the effect of 'difference' and 'culture' in attracting audiences and offering them distinctive, memorable experiences. As a suburbanite going into the inner city, being amongst the refreshingly unique

design of the venue, and hearing Bali- and Caribbean-inspired music played on vinyl, for example, is bound to have an impact on one's experience of the city and subsequently on one's identity. This illustrates once again the interlinked relationships that the identities of the social, spatial, and sonic have.

Conclusion

Michel de Certeau's sentiment about New York in the 1980s reminded me of Johannesburg today: "Its present invents itself, from hour to hour, in the act of throwing away its previous accomplishments and challenging the future" (1984: 91). It is a common enough comparison, made also by my informants (see chapter 4). Johannesburg's inner city, for many, is an exciting place to be. Of course, for others it is not: it is part of the mundane, of people's everyday lives, or still shunned by suburbanites' fears of the unknown. However, it offers the opportunity for one to be immersed in fundamental discourses concerning present-day life in South Africa. Fashionista and writer Maria McCloy says of this: "If you go to Maboneng or Braamfontein, whether in a shop or at the market set-up, you see young people expressing their South Africanness in so many interesting ways" (Ferguson 2015). Young people taking hold of both the inner city and their South Africanness – their personal and collective identities – is, as I have argued in this thesis, one of the defining features of Johannesburg in the early twenty-first century. As young South Africans we partake in the city to discover, learn and find meaning amongst its tempestuous past and its sometimes chaotic present to make sense of our own lives; and we confront this task mainly through culture and community.

Expressing dissatisfaction with the restrictions and mundanities of suburban life, my informants appreciate the warmth and vibrancy that the inner city offers them. While the suburbs and the inner city continue to act as separate entities – a cell in discord with its nucleus, as I imagined in chapter 1 – my informants and other young suburbanites are challenging this fragmentation, attempting to normalise the relationship between Johannesburg's two elements by regularly moving between them as people typically do in other cities. However, as young suburbanites occupy the inner city's spaces, another, new divide plays out: between the youth who occupy newly gentrified spaces and the poorer, struggling residents. The redeveloped hubs that my informants and I frequent are far removed – yet directly adjacent to – the hardships of everyday life in the migrant city. A guilt and awkwardness about this was expressed by all of my informants. Amongst the solutions they suggested to tackle this divide was a need to create safe and accessible passages between the redeveloped hubs that aren't exclusionary, and the need to provide 'mixed rentals' were a wide variety of residents can live amongst each other. Nas offered the example of Ponte Tower in Hillbrow to explicate the success of this model of living where the integration of diverse people has resulted in a tightknit community of residents helping and supporting each other.

In chapter 2 I detailed the impact that culture- and art-led regeneration has had on Johannesburg's progress: not only have new, large audiences been attracted to the previously disregarded spaces of the inner city, but local artists and entrepreneurs have also benefited from the opportunities that

these new spaces have provided for them. Culture-led regeneration initiatives can be viewed as the main factors in the reinventions of Braamfontein, Newtown, and Maboneng, and have enlivened Johannesburg's inner city (for certain groups, of course). However, there are unavoidable complexities in the processes of such reinventions. In reference to American examples of gentrification, Doug Barry fervently claims that 'hipsters' (or, for my purposes, creative and alternative youth) – those who are most often involved in or attracted to regeneration and gentrification projects – are typically the only ones to benefit from such initiatives, and that they impose an "ironic brand of cultural homogeneity on the 'authentic' urban neighbourhoods they flock to" (2013). But as illuminated throughout this thesis, the redeveloped areas of Braamfontein, Newtown, and Maboneng are by no means homogenous. Instead, as a diversified and mixed migrant city, the city's spaces burst with kaleidoscopic assortment and celebrate a plurality of uniqueness and individuality. While the redeveloped spaces may only cater to certain groups (middle- and upper-class citizens, for instance), those groups are constituted by a great variety of cultures, lifestyles, and attitudes. And that diversity has satisfied a long history of 'misintegration' within Johannesburg's inner city where people of difference have historically been separated. Therefore, cities contending with clashing cultural ideologies (as opposed to the 'richer residents' versus 'poorer residents' that I believe Barry refers to in his example from the U.S.) may find inspiration in the example of Johannesburg's redevelopment projects: a previously divided city with a troubled past slowly attempting to rebuild itself and its people through music, art, dance, socialising, and most importantly, *experience*.

In discussing how my informants' perceptions of the inner city have shifted over time, it was clear that, in addition to the positive impact that redevelopment has had, spending time in the city and familiarising themselves with it has indeed transformed their opinions of it. From being a frightful and unfamiliar place for them, it has now become a 'second home' or 'the place to be'. Importantly, what was also notable, and made especially clear in the mapping exercise discussed in chapter 3, was that these new perceptions and narratives of the inner city are often only informed by their (musical) experiences of the redeveloped hubs and the city's 'nice' parts; its harsher realities, on the other hand, are forgotten in these constructs. As Andile pointed out, suburbanites possibly only enjoy the city as much as they do because they have the choice or ability to leave. Thinking of the city as a whole in order to avoid the perpetuation of one-sided narratives is thus important. And, as with the issues of gentrification discussed above, finding solutions that benefit and include everyone is imperative in successfully rebuilding and reimagining Johannesburg, and consequently furthering shifts in people's perceptions of the city.

Sara Cohen, drawing on Martin Stokes' work, has said that in the case of migrants, place is "constructed through music with an intensity not found elsewhere in their social lives" (2007: 15). Music, as I have shown in chapter 4, indeed helped familiarise suburbanites, whom I called the inner

city's metaphorical migrants, with the city's unfamiliar spaces. As it was certain types of suburbanites – those who would identify as being 'alternative' and creative – who were particularly drawn to the city's alternative music scenes initially, I examined the relationship between creative people and urban spaces. Using Richard Florida's (2012) idea that creatives are "open-to-experience" people who are more curious and resourceful, I found that the city's offerings of 'blank slates', as it were, in comparison to the suburbs' ennui was a major factor in the presence of such people in the city. As creatives themselves, my informants expressed a great appreciation for being surrounded by other creatives alike, forming a community of influence, support, collaboration, and sharing. However, as the city has become increasingly alluring and familiar to outsiders, it has also become more than just a playground of alternative music scenes and artisanal markets; it has become a space in which young South Africans are at ease with living out their lives and playing out their stories; as is the case with my informants, two of whom are now inner city residents. In addition to this, in Lindsay Bremner's words, Johannesburg is a stage "on which many different plays are running simultaneously" (2004[b]: 10), demonstrating the freedom that the city allows people. While some, like Andile and Jess, for example, have moulded it into their new home, others like Saul and Jean-Michel imagine it as a melting pot of creativity that feeds their needs for inspiration or wishes to collaborate with other artists. For many, too, it is the only place in Johannesburg where their musical desires are fulfilled.

In analysing the inner city's 'soundtrack' I elaborated on the division between the mainstream, commercial nature of the suburbs' consumption of music and culture and the alternative, progressive nature of the inner city's – apparent in not only the music but also in fashion, retail, lifestyles, and attitudes. As with belonging to any scene, this brought about significant comparisons of 'us' and 'others'. The diversity and hybridity of the inner city's alternative music is what is so valued by my informants, and in their view this is viable because of the nature of the city itself: a place teeming with 'contact zones'. Contact zones (Draisey-Collishaw 2012: 66) are spaces where disparate audiences meet and mix – common in a migrant city like Johannesburg – and where musics are shared, mixed, sampled, appropriated, and often resultantly formed into sub-genres, perpetuating the hybrid nature of the music. Another instance of the dichotomy between the suburbs and the city was brought up in examining the manners in which music is consumed: while music takes a backseat in the suburbs, with the focus being on socialising and drinking alcohol, for example, the city places value on the music and the experience of the music itself. Musical production and consumption in the inner city is also a means through which South African youth culture is being expressed and identities being worked out (as I noted at the start of this Conclusion). The tendency that young people have to challenge and question is therefore a common theme in the subjects of locally-produced music. Therefore, music's role in these contested and complex inner city spaces is integral in not only providing entertainment and satisfaction to the audiences but in also allowing them to express themselves adequately. The use of music and musical activities in redevelopment is a

powerful tool and should be considered with great care and importance in the revitalisation of spaces.

In the second decade of the 2000s, the youth in Johannesburg and throughout South Africa are showing a restlessness; a dissatisfaction with the (sometimes imagined, often real) divides and restrictions with which they grew up. Local youth culture is demonstrating a desire to challenge, for example, the parental generation's perceptions of and engagement with the city. This is evident in the youth-led involvement in the redeveloped hubs of Braamfontein, Newtown, and Maboneng, and in the new narratives told by youth of the city I outlined in chapter 3. Other spaces in the city and the country could take advantage of this fired up youth culture; and involve young imaginations in the reimagining of places. As Todd Pitock claims, the youth are indeed the best "urban agents of change" (2014[a]). And while the youth transform the city, the city, too, transforms them. For my informants and myself as suburban youths, participating in the inner city has had transformative effects on our identities: there is a 'go-getter' attitude inspired by the energy of the city where optimism and confidence is palpable. "We're finding our own mission and fulfilling it", says Bheki Dube, a business owner in Maboneng. Nor we should forget, as John Connell and Chris Gibson claim, that "identities are multidimensional, constantly being renegotiated, but never divorced from place", (2003: 281). Therefore, the influence of the inner city (and its music and culture) on our identities – and thus lifestyles and attitudes – is undeniable, whether it be finding new business opportunities with likeminded people, or making friends with people you would not normally meet. Evident is a cycle of influence, where the transformation and bettering of the spatial through culture-led regeneration positively influences the social. And with the increasing hybridity of cultures across the globe, undoubtedly often resulting in problematic social (mis)integration, Johannesburg could be turned to as an example of how culture-led regeneration can facilitate one type of resolution to such issues. In the case of Johannesburg's present moment of inner city redevelopment, as this thesis has explored, the impressionable and determined youth, whose identities are still 'under construction', have proven to be significant "urban agents of change" (Pitock 2014[a]).

Previously I explored Andy Bennett's claim that one of the ways in which individuals create new narratives is through "appropriating and reworking" spaces (2000: 66). As young suburbanites embrace, what is for them, the newly discovered city, so the appropriation and reworking of its spaces transpires. For many young suburbanites, including my informants and myself, the appropriation of the inner city importantly involves filling it with our music and dancing amongst its impressive hold. As we walk or cycle the streets for the first time too, we are making the city our own and knitting its presence into our identities, claiming its spaces as part of ourselves. These types of *experiences* are what the youth desire; they seek out *difference* and unique encounters that remain in their memories. They want transformative experiences that will constitute their 'finding'

themselves as they navigate through the construction of their identities. And in Johannesburg's case, for my informants and myself, we can say this: the city changed us, its music changed us, the music itself is changing, and we (together with the music) are changing and 'rewriting' the city.

Appendix

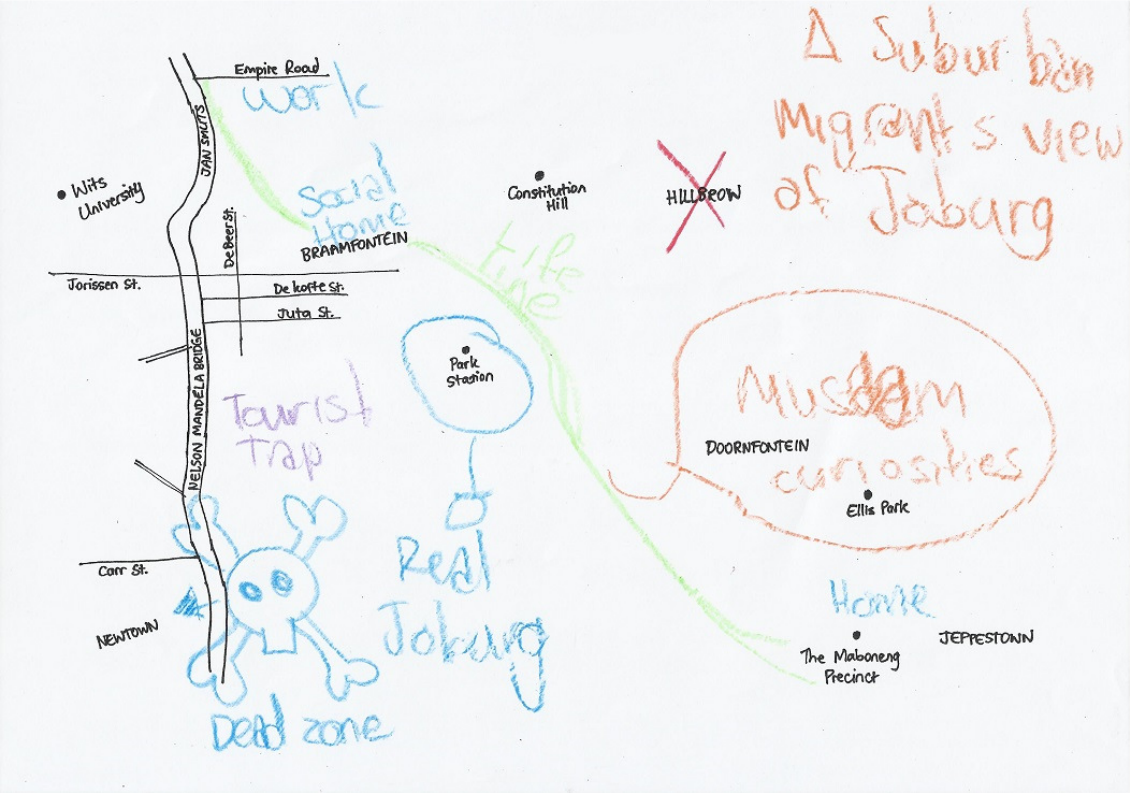


Figure 28: Andile's conceptual map of Johannesburg's inner city (2015).



Figure 29: Jess's conceptual map of Johannesburg's inner city (2015).

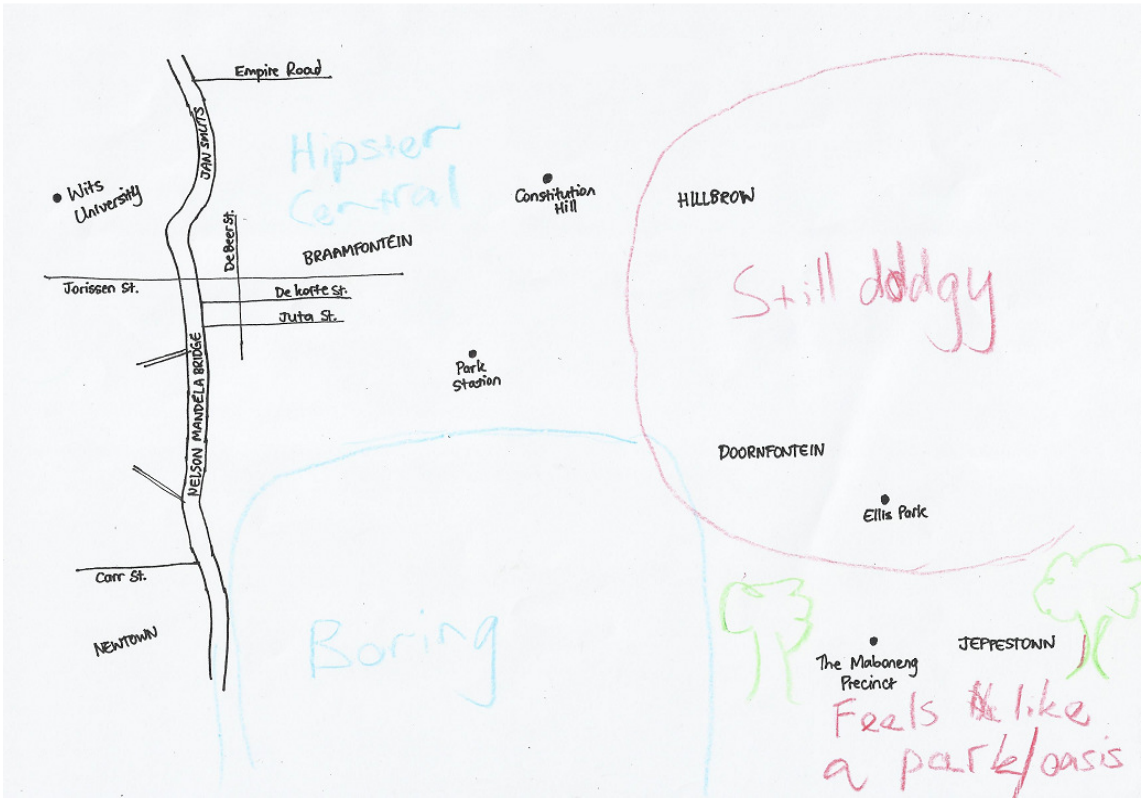


Figure 30: Mike's conceptual map of Johannesburg's inner city (2015).

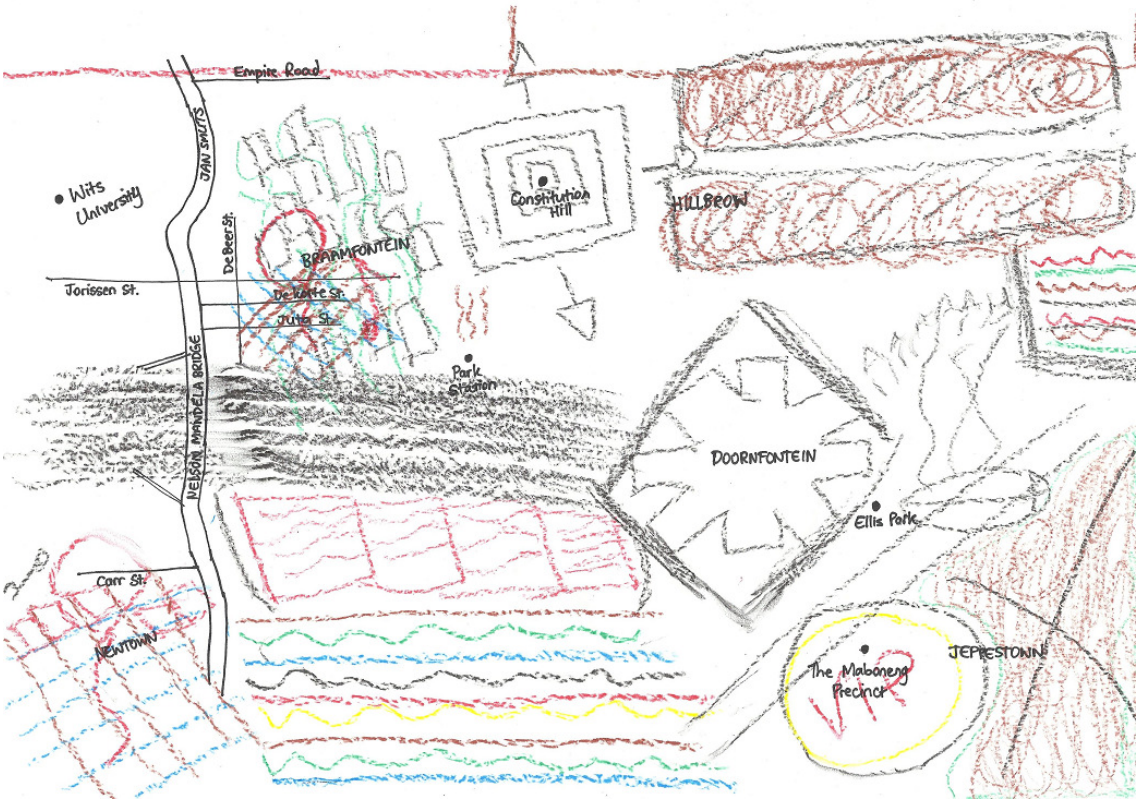


Figure 31: Saul's conceptual map of Johannesburg's inner city (2015).

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