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Ruling the Underground: Governance and Agency in a basement in Hillbrow

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2016-07

South African Research Chair in Spatial Analysis and City Planning

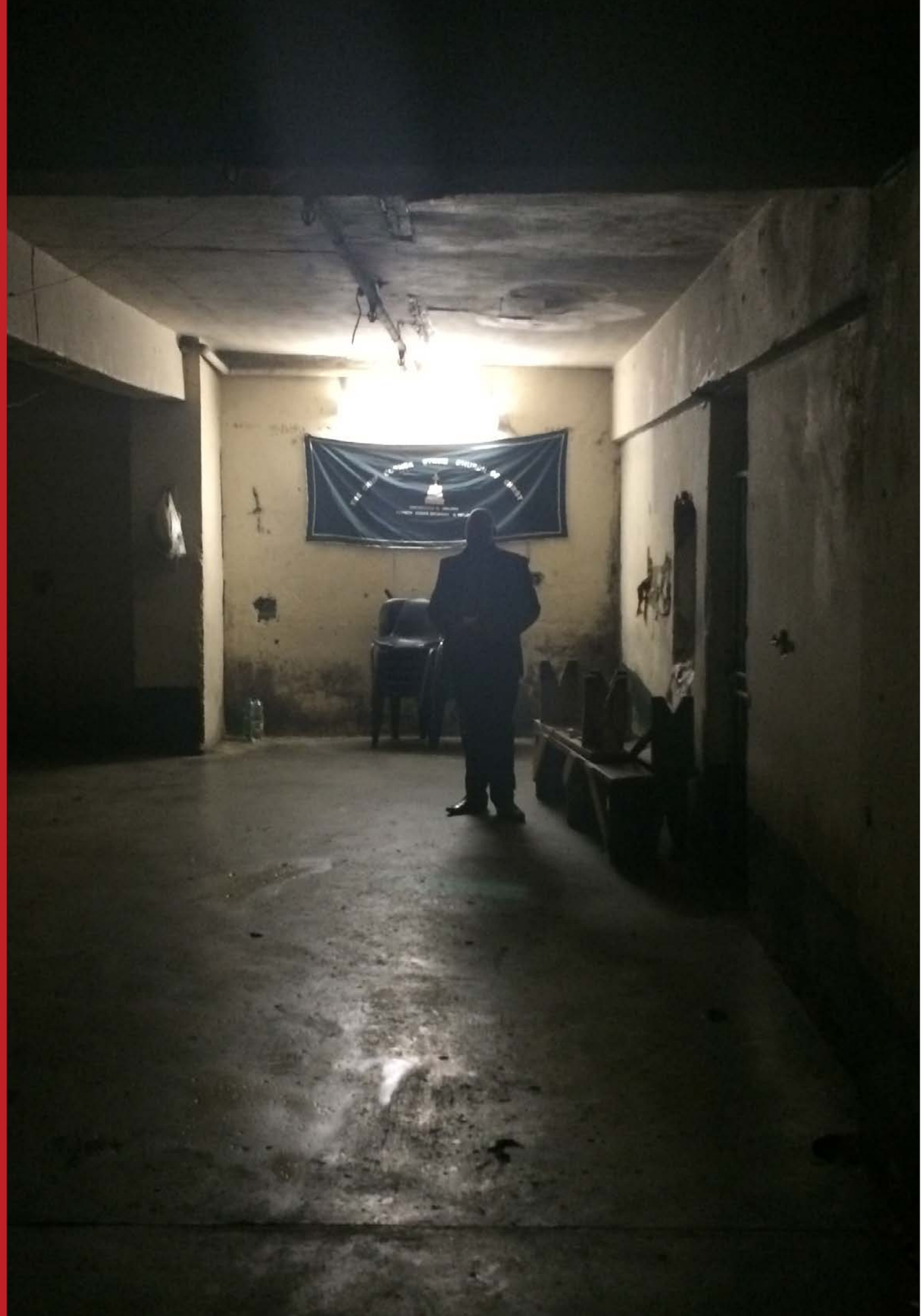
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RULING THE UNDERGROUND

GOVERNANCE AND AGENCY IN A BASEMENT IN HILLBROW



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Acknowledgements

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Photographs
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Copy-Editing
Joan Fairhurst

Report design and layout
Sticky Situations

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Printed in Johannesburg South Africa in July 2016

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01.INTRODUCTION A CHANCE ENCOUNTER

An unexpected answer a chance encounter, led to the discovery of the life and everyday experiences of people living and working in a basement in Hillbrow, Johannesburg. Unseen from the street level and only known to "insiders" who work and live in the inner city, the basement is used every hour of every day. It is home, work and leisure space, where the sacred and the profane sit side by side. Children are cared for, objects are assembled, taken apart or taken away, deals are made and prayers are offered; all to the steady rhythms of hammering, welding, singing and drumming that signal the hours, days, weeks and months that pass by.

This report outlines the informal governance relations and socially determined rules that allow for the creation of multiple purposes in a space that has been reterritorialised and repurposed. It also attempts to tell the story of life in a basement, considering its cycles, rhythms and beats within a space that simultaneously typifies the lived experience and working lives of many low-income people in Hillbrow. The basement affords important and invaluable opportunities for trying to understand a range of social and economic experiences and practices that take place within spaces that are informally regulated and hidden. Thus far, much existing research has focused predominantly on everyday social and economic engagements and interactions that occur at street level, or in demarcated spaces such as markets. In these spaces performativity and agency are more visible and, as such, are better able to be scrutinised and controlled. By contrast, activities within the basements are hidden, and occur within spaces where the distinctions between formal and informal, regulated and unregulated, legal and illegal are even more blurred and difficult to understand than those observed above the ground. This report presents an argument that invisibility, being beyond the gaze of the state, is an invaluable asset for many poorer people. Such "invisibility" ensures that the basement dwellers and users can live and work outside of the rules, regulations and laws that would otherwise deny them income or shelter. However, it goes further and demonstrates that the invisible and the informal do not equate with the chaotic or anarchic, as is the case so often presented. It explains how the often complex, yet still enduring and supportive nature of the socially determined rules of operations and relationships, occur within such a space.

The report also speaks to the idea of reterritorialisation, yet moves beyond an acknowledgement that such a process does take place, to an investigation into exactly how spaces are repurposed and retrofitted for new uses. We assert that reterritorialisation is as much about the physical adaptation of the space and reconstructing its materialities, as it is about re-working the rules that govern its use. Thus there is an interlocking process whereby physical change is reinforced through new rules for the territory which, in turn, allow and support both the physical transformation as well as the new uses of space. One without the other would be impossible.

As such, this research begins analysing the complex dynamics that arise at the intersection of space, scale, networks and agency, in a particular setting. Current planning procedures and policies do not account for the broad (and expanding) spectrum of diverse urban practices currently occurring within the inner city. A city's response to these urban challenges is often to try and eliminate such practices through rules and discourses of perceived normalisation. Given the necessity and embeddedness of the spaces under review in this research, it would seem more productive to rethink and redefine policies and regulations in ways that would enable people to work and live more functionally, and with integrity.

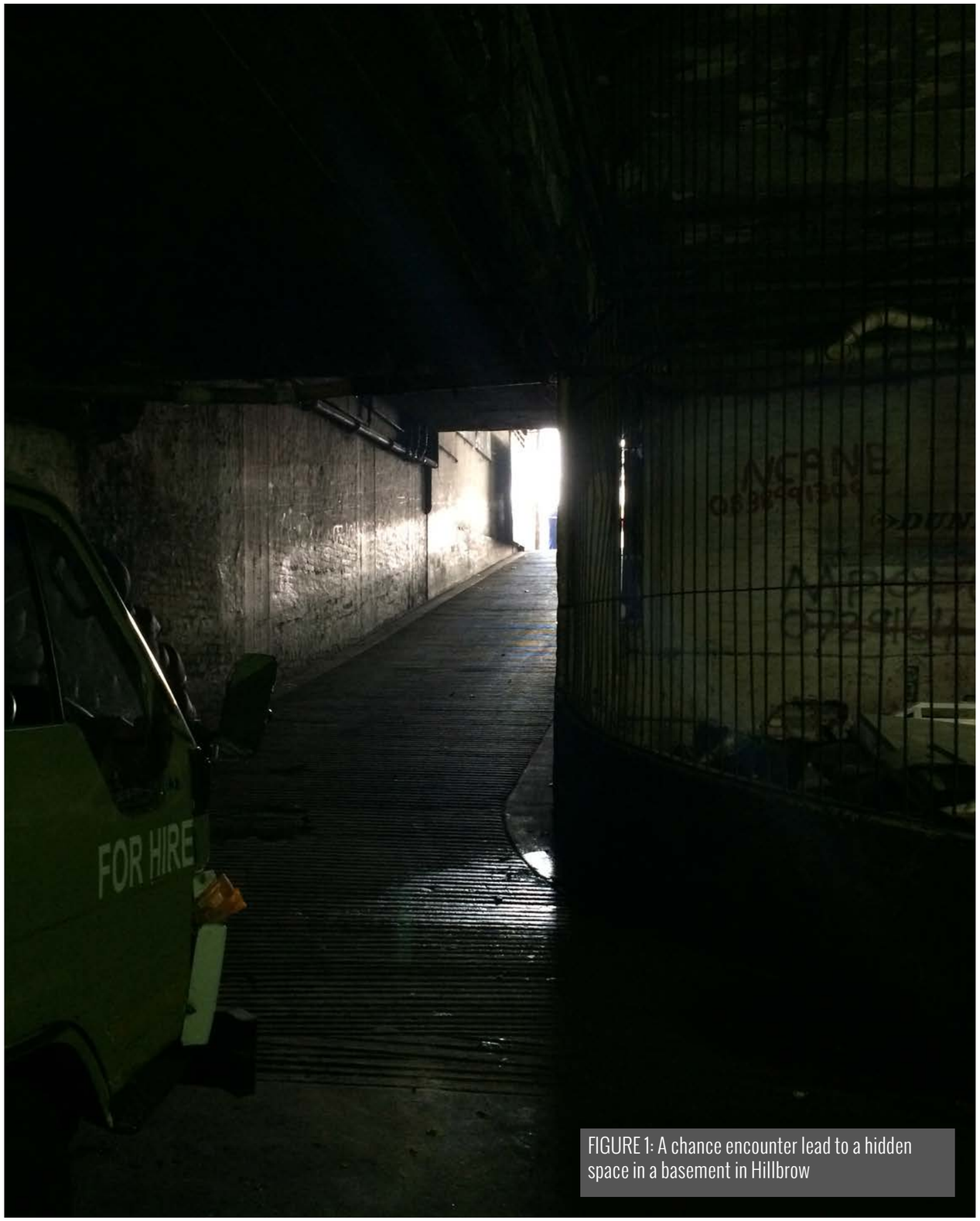


FIGURE 1: A chance encounter lead to a hidden space in a basement in Hillbrow

The report begins with a reflection on our process and experiences of conducting research in the precarious spaces of inner city basements in Hillbrow, and the difficulties and challenges that arise when "outsiders" enter these spaces. We ask questions around what this means for the research, the findings, the researchers themselves and, most importantly, the respondents. Following this meditation, we discuss our theoretical framing, which moves away from the traditional discussion of formality and informality. Rather, our choice is to present the findings from our work through an adaptation of Lefebvre's (1994) notions of rhythms and cycles as the structuring elements of the discussion, and to demonstrate how the activities in the basement have rhythms and cycles that differ in lengths and intensities. Embedded within these rhythms and cycles, questions emerge that relate to how space has been repurposed, how livelihoods are sustained, and how daily management and governance facilitates these temporal phases and processes. The final section provides key conclusions, and offers some ideas on how to support these spaces without interfering and destroying what is taking place.

02.RESEARCH METHODS A DISCUSSION



FIGURE 2: Sounds, sights, smells and an unfamiliar environment strikes all senses on first entry

FINDING THE UNEXPECTED

Being visually secluded and hidden, the basement is not visible to the general passer-by. It was only through serendipitous events during broader-scale research being done in Hillbrow, and discussions with Ben[4], a member of the community policing forum and "fixer", with whom one of the researchers has a long-term working relationship, that we became aware of the basement activities. As an active member in local cultural activities, Ben mentioned in one particular discussion, that Hillbrow required new spaces not only to support emerging small-scale economic activities, but also spaces to support and encourage the Arts. He commented that many basements in Hillbrow were currently being used for activities for which they were not originally designed, like food preparation and restaurants, manufacturing, repairs, recycling, church groups and music groups, amongst others. While this was clearly common knowledge among local residents, as researchers and urban practitioners who do not live in the area, this information was quite surprising. Out of curiosity, we asked him to show us one of these spaces.

Ben immediately took us to the basement that later became the site of our research. We approached a dark entrance, asked permission to enter, and were led down a damp and slippery concrete ramp, into a dark and unfamiliar bustling environment (Figure 1): strong smells and loud noises growing the further we walked down (Figure 2). We were introduced to John, the apparent leader and co-ordinator of the music instruction group, and as we later found out, the managing agent of the basement. The students who attended his group were seemingly of school-going age and attended his class after school during the week. The room where these activities took place was located within the basement: it was small, lit with only one light and had no natural ventilation. The back wall[5] was thoroughly pock-marked with bullet holes, the work of previous occupants (Figure 3). The ceiling had been partially fitted with telephone directories, apparently to assist with the acoustics and deaden the noise during its days when it was used as a shooting range. However, more significant was the drum kit with music stands. Plastic seats were arranged in theatre style and faced the musical instruments. Dental hygiene and HIV posters were stuck up on the walls (Figure 4). It was here that the researchers began to engage with John, and other senior men who were sitting and talking in the room.

During the discussion John (Box 1) detailed the number of different activities that he was able to manage, and commented on the fact that church groups used the basement on Sundays. It was also apparent that John was a businessman in a joint venture of some kind[6], with financial interests in mining and precious stones in a rural area. However, it was the obvious investment in children's welfare and artistic pursuits, coupled with an existence of business acumen and the camaraderie, within this unknown space that interested us.

At that first meeting we experienced a sense of welcome and acceptance; an easy ability to discuss personal perspectives and circumstances. This, combined with an overwhelming sensory experience of the unknown, together with the vibrancy of the activities and the shared sense of 'family' as referred to by John, piqued our interest. We were also driven by a curiosity to understand the systems within which individuals must both function and contribute in order to survive, living within the current socio-economic framework of Hillbrow. We wanted to do this by engaging personally with people about their experiences; by exploring the individual in relation to a mass urban classification system that stereotypes 'informality' and 'informal traders'; and by trying to understand individual social and economic survival strategies.

From the outset, a desire to understand the governance structures in place in the basement inspired our research, as did realising the value of this space within the broader socio-economic fabric. Together with this motivation was an urge to engage with people who creatively and emotionally respond to an exclusionary formal economy. The basement also presented something of an alien landscape for the researchers, and inspired an overwhelming aspiration to try and understand how a basement could support and manage over twelve different business activities (some in extreme contrast, such as butchers and mechanics) six days a week, sleeping spaces seven days a week, and over fourteen churches on a Sunday as well as a host of ongoing recreational activities.

The original team members discussed how to proceed and approached Professor Philip

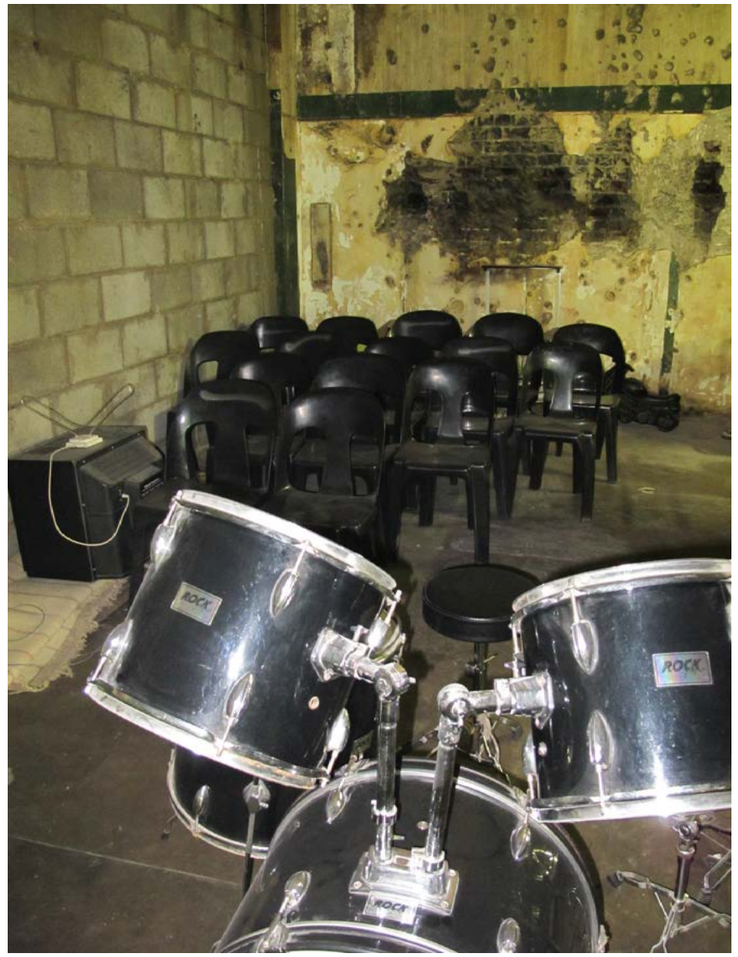


FIGURE 3: Youth Outreach Centre with musical instruments, chairs facing them and old bullet holes in the rear wall

1. Pseudonyms are used throughout the research report to protect the identities of those involved given the illicit nature of the activities. Steps have also been taken to ensure that the building in which the basement is located cannot be identified to ensure its protection.

5. We later found out that there was a time when a security company had used the basement as a shooting range.

6. The details of this venture and how it operated remained opaque and we were never able to gain absolute clarity on what it was all about.



FIGURE 4: Waiting chairs lined the wall, framed by HIV and health posters

Harrison, the Chair of the South African Research Chair in Spatial Analysis and City Planning (SARCHI SA&CP) who agreed to fund the study, and assist with some of the interviews and writing-up of the findings. As it turned out, three of the team members, Hayley Gewer, Morag Campbell and Jennifer van den Bussche conducted the interviews and the write-up and conceptualisation was then shared among the three original team members, with the addition of Margot Rubin who also project-managed the initiative on behalf of the Chair.

The team of four developed a mixed-method research approach that included the use of qualitative interviews, informal discussions, close observation and photo-documenting the activities in the basement. We workshopped a standardised discussion guideline (Appendix 1), which went through a number of iterations and was piloted before being rolled out. We were also keenly aware of the sensitivities and vulnerabilities of the people living and working in the basement: some of the proposed participants were foreigners and their legal status was uncertain; their activities contravened by-laws and health and safety regulations; and we were uncertain of how the basement managers had accessed control, which raised questions of whether the building had been appropriated in some way. We were also not sure how precarious the relationships between the 'managers' and 'owners' of the basements and those who lived and worked there were, or whether they even existed at all. Given all these concerns, we decided to tread very carefully, and were constantly conscious of the fact that we should neither expose this space to legal censure, nor endanger people's lives and livelihoods.

Thus aside from attaining all of the necessary university ethics clearances, we took a decision to ensure that everything about the basement and all individuals were anonymised and that everything was done with the full knowledge and consent of the basement managers. They were kept informed at all times about what we were doing and who we were interviewing. For giving us their time to participate in the interview, we also agreed to offer each interviewee R100 and lunch. Paying people for being interviewed is a contentious issue, and we were aware of the possibility of responses being biased. However, we thought that, given the precariousness of our respondents' income, and that the time away from the basement meant missed opportunities for income generation, ethically we needed to recompense them for their participation. This gesture also signalled clear respect for their work and their time. The offer of lunch was used both as a further incentive and to have a place to engage in a private conversation, away from the crowded basement and those in power. We also reassured our participants that we just wanted to hear their stories and experiences, and that there were no right or wrong answers. We paid people wherever they requested, which was sometimes in full view of the rest of the basement.

We resolved to behave in as transparent a manner as possible, showing respect and sensitivity to the dynamics of the basement, and the wishes of the participants. We would argue that the combination of compensation, the privacy in which to speak freely and the reassurance offered, produced useful and reliable results and unbiased responses.

Over a period of two to three weeks, in a relaxed environment, ten semi-structured interviews took place. At the same time, when we were on site or nearby, many informal conversations just happened and field notes were made after such encounters. These anecdotes added value and often helped to explain some of the phenomena we observed, as well as providing insight and creating meaningful impressions. The interviews included a range of people from the basement (Table 1). We also visited the basement

BOX 1 THE KING OF AFRICA

When conducting our research we met with John, who managed the space and was a character who stood out with his look, bearing, behaviour and his self-appointed title, 'King of Africa'. John has a room in the recesses of the basement that housed a mixture of eclectic objects: musical instruments, home-made mannequins in wheelchairs, a bed and other bits of equipment all thoughtfully arranged; an array of a series of religious artefacts are displayed on one carpet as portrayed in the pictures. We were told that nobody lives or sleeps in this space. It appeared symbolic and spiritual, speaking to a kind of mysticism that surrounded John. We were curious to know if this mysticism was something he used to enforce control. Does this add to his position as a "father" figure? Unfortunately we were not able to explore this further and these questions remain unanswered.



(left) The Inner Sanctum (above) Sacred objects carefully placed

TABLE 1: List of Respondants

NAME AS PSEUDONYM	POSITION/JOB/ACTIVITY	TIME ARRIVED IN BASEMENT AND LENGTH OF OCCUPANCY IN BASEMENT
Sarah	Restaurant owner and daily management	Since 2013 - 2 years
Mike	Scrap metal dealer Sleeps in basement	Since 2013 - 2 years
Elton	Welder/Mechanic	Since 2006 - 8 years
Andy	Upholsterer	Since 2010/2011 - 3 years
Elison	Previous basement manager	From 1999 to 2014 - 15 years
Alex	Previous tenant Panel beater	Not certain when arrived but moved out 2014 therefore timespan unknown
Mark	Sleeps in basement	Uncertain
Bella	CID Site manager - helps to manage the surrounding City improvement District and knows the area intimately	Works in neighbouring building
John	Basement co-manager since 2014; Tyre business owner; Youth Outreach Centre manager	Not certain: Rented a space from previous basement manager (Elison), but moved to shop at entrance paying rent directly to landlord (Mr A)
Paul	Basement co-manager (not sure of time frame); Scrap Metal business owner	Not certain: Rented from previous basement manager from at least since 2014

early on a few Sunday mornings, before the sermons and services started, and talked to various members of the church groups, but none of this information was formally documented. However, we did hear about other basement dwellers and users from the interviewees, and could then confirm some of the facts with the individuals concerned.

The research undertaken used a wide variety of complementary methods and techniques to build an understanding of the environment, and the experiences of the users of the particular basement under study. Whilst care was taken to try and ensure an ethical and sensitive approach, we did come up against some difficulties and issues, despite the care that was taken.

CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

> Conducting research in an extremely precarious environment brings unique challenges and difficulties.

Conducting research in an extremely precarious environment brings unique challenges and difficulties. One difficulty we faced was trying to get individuals from the different business activities to meet with us, not because they were unwilling, but often it was simply not always possible to keep an appointment as unforeseen work opportunities had to take precedence. While informal discussion could, and did, take place with the church groups, we did encounter some reticence when it came to sharing personal details. However, this could be attributed to translation snags.

In particular, we encountered significant uncertainty regarding questions about how the land and space was controlled and by whom. Initially we were told that the basement did not have a formal owner, and that John was the person who managed and controlled the space. Thus we sought his permission to be in the basement and to engage with the people who worked there. However, as the research progressed, we found out that there were actually other layers of management. We remain uncertain of the legal status of the various layers, but it seems that historically some men, described as “White Afrikaners with big bellies and guns” collected the rent money, from John and his brother Paul. Although we tried to contact the person we thought was the owner to ascertain who was who, we never really gained sufficient clarity on this point. More will be said later in the report about these layers of ownership and control. What eventually transpired was the clear presence of a web of indeterminate and complex relationships between the basement manager, John, and another figure of control, Paul, and these other mysterious men.

At some point during our research, after we had been in and out of the basement for some weeks and after numerous discussions about our work, what we were doing, and why, Paul began to feel uncertain about our intentions. He reported what was going on to, the “White Afrikaners”. They then apparently took, Ben, our “fixer” (a term used by Premo and Grossman, 2012) aside, and asked him who ‘these white women coming in here’ were and made it clear that they were not happy about the situation. At the same time, John and Paul indicated that they were no longer comfortable with the researchers coming in to the basement. Although never openly stated, it would seem that John and Paul suspected that we were somehow financially profiting from, or intended to profit from, the research. Following this accusation, our visits to the basement or telephone conversations with John and Paul, either consisted of insinuations for payments to be made in exchange for allowing us to do fieldwork in the basement, or we were questioned as to whether we were, in fact, intending to ‘buy’ the basement. Even though we made it clear that our interests were not in the least bit financial, our fixer was told that we were no longer welcome.

In an attempt to regain access to the basement, the research team decided it would be useful to demonstrate to Paul and John the kind of work that we produced, and what the final product resulting from this investigation, might look like. Our intention was to reassure them and assuage their concerns over privacy, and perhaps allay their fears that we would somehow disrupt the carefully constructed management hierarchy of the basement. We printed out hard copies of prior research work and sent this to John and Paul via Ben. When we again tried to meet with the basement managers, they refused outright. However, John would reconsider meeting if we were willing to invest financially in his broader business and immediately in the basement. We again informed him that we were not working to reap money or indeed to invest money. We were then told that John and the other manager involved in the basement were not happy about our presence and that we should not come back. As a consequence, only six out of the intended eight formal interviews took place, and we were not able to go back to clarify or verify any of the questions and answers from the interviews that we had already done.

> The consequences of this engagement proved to be both positive and negative...

The consequences of this engagement proved to be both positive and negative: negative as we think the work would have benefitted from more interviews and having more opportunities to engage with the space and its users. Moreover, we had also planned to go back and share our findings and suggestions for the way forward with the basement users, which now no longer seems possible. On the positive side, the experience had led us to reflect more deeply on own research practices and reconsider how we could, and should, go about this kind of research in the future.

GOVERNMENTALITY, LIVELIHOODS, RHYTHMS

03.THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

This study focuses on the intersection between land, governance and agency, particularly with respect to activities and imperatives that take place outside of formal and regulated frameworks and practices. We look to three bodies of literature in order to analyse and explore what we found in the Hillbrow basement: the first, is the consideration of land governance and governmentality, which considers questions of how space is managed and controlled, as well as practices of sovereignty and power; the second body of work concerns questions of territorialisation and piracy; and the third uses the notion of rhythms and cycles as an entry point to see what happens temporally within the basement. After exploring each set of literature briefly, they are brought together to expose their inter-relationships. Woven through these discussions is the question of livelihood and survival.

BOX 2 RETERRITORIALISED SPACES IN HILLBROW

Aside from the basement, a number of other reterritorialised spaces were 'discovered' during the research: two of the team members went with Ben to visit a woman whom we were told manages a building with a basement. The building is owned by her son-in-law; she collects R5 000 per month rent on his behalf. She has a small kitchen located inside a grocery store which is run by a 'Palestine man'. The woman was happy to chat further and be asked more questions. However, there was no basement. There were tenants of churches, crèches, mechanics and other such trades on the street, as well as the upper driving level - the street level had high columns and a drive-in space, so it could have been a petrol station, parking garage or even transport depot, in the past.

Ben then took us to another street with a basement - the building had many broken windows, dripping sewerage and a clear sense of no maintenance, although seemingly occupied by residents. In the basement was a panel beater, whom Ben said had recently moved out of John's basement due to a dispute.

The panel beater sublets from someone else, and it seemed as though at least one or two automobile related businesses were operating there, but this is unconfirmed. The panel beater said that he was looking for another place, and informed us that his current landlord charged him 'every time he sprayed a car'. On further questioning it sounded as if he was paying rent on some sort of commission basis. His clients came from Midrand, Rosettenville, Hillbrow and all over Johannesburg.

Ben then took us to another basement, almost hidden up an alley, which had been converted into a well-run, clean and apparently extremely busy, when open, bar/club. It was about three metres below ground level. We got inside to take a peek, but it was only opening at two pm and we were told to come back when the manager arrived.

Within the inner city of Johannesburg, access to well-located and affordable spaces through which people can earn a livelihood is scarce (McGaffin and Kihato 2013). Not only is the price of land beyond the means of the indigent or working class, regulatory frameworks and rules also often exclude people from participating in many spaces. Evidence from the literature (Simone 2005, Kihato 2010) suggests there is a process whereby those excluded from the formal market negotiate access to more interstitial, informal and concealed spaces which allows them to participate in urban life (Silverman and Zack, 2008), out of sight and away from the formalising gaze of the state. As a consequence, and as survival tactics, sites are retrofitted and remade for new and different purposes, a place-making tactic Simone (2006) terms reterritorialisation.

Simone (2004: 357) also uses the term 'piracy' to refer to the urban transgressions and the radical remaking of social and economic life - commonplace practices in African cities. Here the term piracy refers to "the act of taking things out of their normal and legitimate frameworks of circulation and use". Simone (ibid.) advocates using the term flexibly, even heuristically "as a way of talking about and then intersecting diverse urban practices concerning the pursuit of livelihood and opportunity". Thus spaces, infrastructures and the materialities of daily urban life are adapted for new uses that allow individuals, households and entire communities to find ways to survive.

At the same time, the invisibility to the formal gaze, and the unconventional uses to which



FIGURE 5: Evidence of space re-territorialisation

spaces are put, often operate outside prevailing and normative conceptions and legal parameters of habitation, entrepreneurship and social collaboration (Simone 2004). Thus the formal land management practices and tools, which, according to Gotz and Simone (2003: 123) "have been directed at tying identified actors to preferable behaviours in approved territories", no longer apply or operate within these spaces. That does not mean that there are no practices of control and management (Royston and Rubin, 2008). It rather implies that governance, new forms of rationalities, both mental and technological, are renegotiated, contested and accepted. This Foucauldian interpretation of governmentality 'the conduct of conduct' ranges from the 'governing of self' to 'governing others' (Lemke 2000: 2). In practice, this means that power and agents shaping the space are interwoven throughout the urban fabric, ranging from the very micro-scale of individuals, families, households and groups to the macro-scale of government authorities and corporates.

Foucault highlights how space is fundamental to any exercise in power negotiation. Spaces, like the Hillbrow basement in this study, become meaningful through the multiplicity of social practices, processes and agents that mediate power relations in daily life (Huxley, 2006). Huxley (2006: 772-3) contends that governmentality entails "the fabrication of 'governable spaces' in which questions of boundaries and territorial limits are implicated in determining domains of objects and types of subjects requiring government ..." (Huxley 2006: 772-773). As such, the production of space is contradictory, conflictual, contested and ultimately full of potential, because, inherent in these processes, are the mediation and manifestation of power and knowledge. Using the lens of governmentality allows for the shifting of urban politics away from traditional top-down/bottom-up processes, to open up networks of agency and possibility for those with vested interests and

visions who live and work in these spaces.

Work completed in both the inner city and informal settlements around land use management (Drivdal, 2015; Royston and Rubin, 2008; Kihato, 2007; Marx and Royston, 2007) demonstrates that socially determined rules operate within informalised spaces. These are rules and regulations that communities themselves devise locally and often extra-legally. Moreover, the complexities of control and power that operate within such sites are significant. The case studies in this literature reflect that, despite falling outside of official state practices of land regulation, there are definite rules about what can and what cannot take place within these spaces. These rules govern the behaviours of all concerned. The work on land, livelihoods and socially determined land markets, identifies five stages in the informal land management process that are relevant for this study: first, finding people or organisations with whom to transact; second, recognising others with whom to transact; third, calculating and valuing the spaces i.e. working out rental or costs; fourth, preparing the contract; fifth, holding the land i.e. the form of tenure and ability to stay within the site; and finally, terminating the relationship.

Understandings of these operations have been deepened by work completed by Mayson (2014) who has identified the role of the *mastande*. The *mastande* is the informal land "owner" or manager, generally collects money for rental and other services and acts as the mediator of how land is accessed and who is allowed to stay there, on what terms and generally resolves all disputes.

Extending the theoretical base of residential land management to commercial land management allows for an access point into seeing who controls each phase of the process, and how negotiations take place. From this, a framework for examining the governance of the basement spaces can be constructed, and a methodology applied to establish the processes or practices of reterritorialisation that involves exactly how, and under what conditions, land uses change and resources are pirated.

The notions of livelihood generation, governance and control become useful touchstones in exploring activities and actions in these interstitial and invisible spaces. However, the details of the everyday lives and experiences of those living and working in the spaces, and the rules and regulations that govern behaviour and interactions are not homogenous over time, even if all of the actions occur within the same space. Our attention now turns to the ideas of cycles and rhythms that, in a sense, is a return to the Foucauldian (1995) notion of the disciplined body with time as a structuring element of control. However, we also hope to go beyond that.

So, we follow Edensor (2012) in quoting Adam (1995: 66), who: "draws attention to how the 'when, how often, how long, in what order and at what speed' are governed by 'norms, habits and conventions' about temporality, a host of implicit, embedded and embodied forms of social knowing that regulate social life and space". Thus unpacking who does what, and when, in the basement gives some insight, in that these analyses granted us the ability to start to see how control and power are exerted in different ways over the passage of time. What is acceptable, and even encouraged, during the day may not be at night; similarly, in the context of weekdays versus weekends and months versus years. This allows us to see how rules are applied and what happens when the spatio-temporal set of regulations is disobeyed; what the consequences of 'disobedience' are; and the penalties to be paid. We can see the reciprocal nature of power and obedience, and how they reinforce the practices of control. Temporal practices also shape spatial realities, or more eloquently phrased: "... rhythms shape the diurnal, weekly and annual experience of place and influence the ongoing formation of its materiality" (Edensor, 2012: 3).

As part of the discussion around temporal cycles, governmentality and control is the question of how power is mediated and legitimated. Weber posited that power is underlain by the implicit threat of legitimate violence of the state (cited in Kalyvas 2002) and its leaders (ibid.) of whose power lies in combinations of charisma and the ability to dominate. Bourdieu (1991), however, speaks of the symbolic nature of power and how it is constructed of a predisposition of belief in a group or individual's authority. To which Loader (1997:4) then adds that such authority is reinforced through a set of practices "ceremonies, rituals and imagery". Such power is thus inculcated and embedded through instruction, habit and routine. Bourdieu (1991: 170) agrees that symbolic power, is maintained through these practices that allows "one [a leader] to obtain the equivalent of what is obtained through force (whether physical or economic), by virtue of the specific effect of mobilization".

> "...in the case of governmentality of pirated spaces, the daily routines, which are controlled by those in positions of authority, embed and inculcate the sovereignty of individuals or groups over space.

We would argue that in the case of governmentality of pirated spaces, the daily routines, which are controlled by those in positions of authority, embed and inculcate the sovereignty of individuals or groups over space. Coupled with the inherent threat of violence (in this case in the form of eviction or the withdrawal of protection) the ability of informal land managers to maintain power over space is consistently reinforced. How this operates in the case of the basement will be discussed below.

To initiate this discussion of time and space, cycles and rhythms, we turn to Lefebvre (1996: 31). He envisioned a method of analysis that could comprehend the interrelations between the temporal and spatial dimensions of everyday life, which he called rhythmanalysis. This method of study draws on a range of approaches and methods, such as chronobiology and the rhythms of speech and music to capture the experience and fabric of the urban. Lefebvre (1996) maintains that such an analysis must attend to the ways in which rhythms animate the urban experience. But this animation should not be confused with movement, speed or merely the repetition of gestures, because such a conflation can risk determining rhythms as purely mechanical, or as socially structured in a deterministic manner. Whereas what Lefebvre is alluding to is the reciprocal interaction or, at times, the mutual constitution of these gestures and movements with the natural, organic rhythms that surround us daily.

Lefebvre (1996) identifies two dominant forms of rhythms: the linear and the cyclical. Linear rhythms are those centred around social practices, human activity and the consecutive quality of social relations, such as the rhythms of work and travel to work or school (Lefebvre, 1994; 1996). Linear rhythms operate in conjunction with cyclical rhythms, defined as days, nights, seasons, waves and tides (Lefebvre, 1994). The linear and the cyclical cannot logically be separated as they interact in complex ways. For example, in the links between the structuring of the five-day working week and its linear patterns on the one hand, and cyclical daily patterns on the other. Lefebvre (1994) also references eurhythmics: the rhythms of the body, such as the heartbeat, breathing, hunger that automatically articulate with socially structured rhythms of work, consumption, recreation, which, in turn, influence the contours of the body.

Thus this report looks at the nexus between livelihoods and invisible spaces and, in doing so, it builds on three lines of discussion: first, the idea of reterritorialisation, piracy and repurposing of space; second, governance and governmentality; and third, the importance of time and temporality. The intersections of the literature on these three themes allows us to build a deeper understanding of how space is reterritorialized; what the tools and mechanisms of control that substantiates new uses are; the purposes and meanings of space; and what allows these meanings to persist. Moreover, the report also allows for a differentiation of notions of socially determined rules, and from the research done, reveals that these rules are not homogenous within informal spaces but are highly differentiated over time.

Furthermore, we claim that, through an analysis of the reterritorialisation of space using the notion of cycles and rhythms, we are then able to deduce the social rules and social norms that govern the site. In addition, we contend that the predictable rhythms and cycles are important structuring elements of the governmentality and governance of informal spaces.

However, the question of time and ordering is not only one of disciplining subjects, but is also a matter of providing certainty in precarious situations. Within this analysis it has become apparent that the cycles of livelihood and survival in the basement are contests, a notion that is in conflict with the imagined order of everyday life as conceived by the local state authorities (Hall,2010).

04.CYCLES, RHYTHMS AND THE BASEMENT

INTRODUCTION: THE SITE

The basement (Box 3; Figure 6) is located in the inner city neighbourhood of Hillbrow, adjacent to the Johannesburg Central Business District (CBD). The history of the neighbourhood has been well documented (Beavon 2004; Morris 1999; Murray 2011), but, in brief, it began life as an area with a set of low-rise free-standing units in the 1920s. By the late 1940s, Hillbrow had become the site of the modernist redevelopment of Johannesburg. A change, encouraged by the removal of height restrictions and prompted by the burgeoning CBD, and the drive towards northern development, which meant that houses were torn down to make room for multi-storey flats, and the newly evolving high density lifestyle (Silverman and Zack, 2008). As a consequence, the morphology of the neighbourhood changed into the flatlands, with a mix of "European style" amenities and cosmopolitan living as offered through the café culture of the new suburb.

The situation in Hillbrow began to change in the late 1970s and early 1980s due to the influence of a wide variety of political, social and economic factors. Beavon (2004) cites the 1976 Soweto Uprising as the turning point for much of the urban change. This event also prompted the exodus of a number of businesses not only out of Johannesburg but also out of South Africa. These trends were coupled with the move of homes and businesses towards the northern suburbs. The result was a change in the inner city's demographics as white people moved north and a number of Black, Coloured and Indian people who were then employed by the remaining businesses in the inner city, began to occupy the flats of the inner city suburbs, including Hillbrow (Beavon, 2004). A further reason for the change was the slackening of many of the influx control and spatial laws in the 1980s and the early part of the 1990s that had been vigorously enforced during the previous decades (Sapire, 1994).

The migration of white residents from these suburbs caused something of a crisis for inner city landlords, many of whom were still paying off their loans and needed income to meet their obligations. The newer residents often could not meet the rentals on their own and, as a result, the densities started to increase in the inner city. Units that had previously been home to single households became the residences of a number of households and individuals. Increasing bond rates pushed rentals even higher than before and new owners of sectional title units who were inexperienced in managing such schemes and antagonistic relationships between tenants and landlords, often typified by exploitation, caused tension. By the early 1990s, many of the buildings were no longer being properly maintained, and a number of landlords even began to desert their properties.

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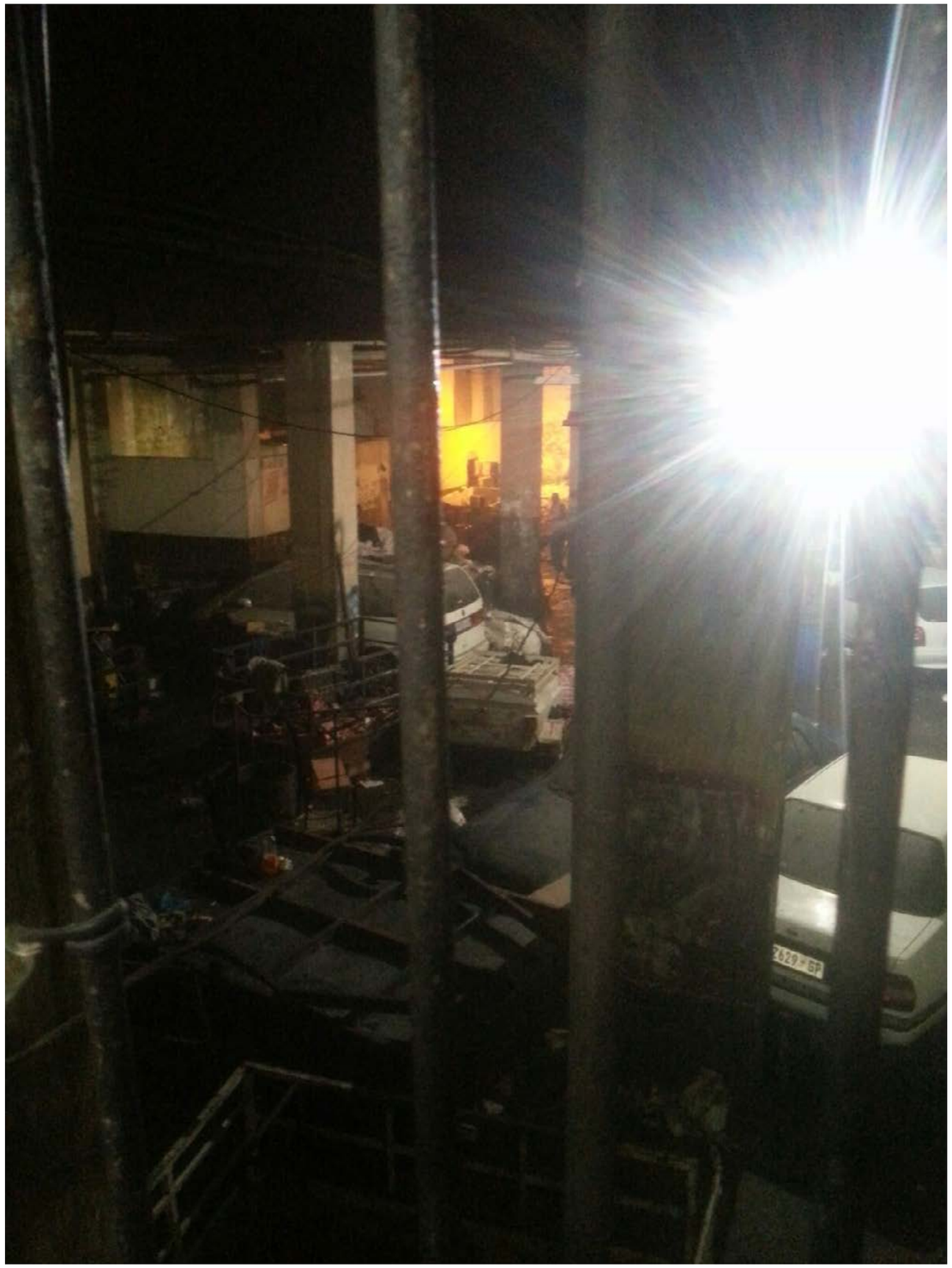
Urban management also became an issue over this same period as the rates base declined and population densities increased. The situation worsened, by problems within the City of Johannesburg, which effectively led to an inability of the City to maintain the urban environment. Thus, by the late 1990s and early 2000s, Hillbrow had earned itself a dire reputation as a space of vice and anarchy.

The City authorities, local business owners, property owners and residents have been at pains to try and turn that situation around and a number of initiatives attempted to improve conditions in the area (Gewer and Rubin, 2015). Currently

BOX 3 EXPERIENCING THE BASEMENT

One enters the basement through a big industrial-sized door flanked on both sides by small businesses. Walking down the driveway into this Hillbrow basement is like walking into a science fiction movie; strong and strange smells assault your senses and imagination as you descend into darkness, a few lights glow in the distance, grinders screech and welders dance shadows on the walls, people hunch over various tasks like shadows upon shadows, and occasional sightings of blankets and mattresses in sleeping nooks, give the impression that people could spend days never seeing the sun, keeping their activities hidden from any watchful authorities.

FIGURE 6: Experiencing the basement



Hillbrow is characterised by many medium- and high-storey apartment blocks, arranged in a traditional grid structure within an area roughly one square kilometre. The suburb remains largely residential. According to the 2011 Census, Hillbrow is home to almost 75 000, people although some might argue that is an undercount of the suburb's total population and over a third of which are foreign-born (Quantec, 2014). It is also densely populated with an estimated 74 131 people per square kilometre (Quantec, 2014).

Basement spaces, once used in the conventional way for residents to park their cars, have been reterritorialised and reconfigured, creating multi-purpose spaces to accommodate a range of social and economic activities that help to satisfy the needs of residents in Hillbrow and the surrounding neighbourhoods. These spaces are hidden from public life, yet they provide essential and dynamic sites for various economic and social activities.

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The basement that we investigated is the lowest level of a two storey-building and sits below street level. It is reached by a ramp originally intended for automobile access. The basement is about 150 m^2 and has six-metre high ceilings with 15 businesses operating in the basement during the week. They include services offered by car mechanics, panel beaters and spray painters; kitchens for catering (Figure 7); butchery for cow head sales (Figure 8); trailer manufacturing and repairs (Figure 9); food preparation for sale on the street (Figure 10); welding; recycling facilities for metal, plastic and paper waste; live chicken storage and sales (Figure 11); upholstering and

FIGURE 7 : Kitchen with a mixture of wood and gas fires, apparently used by multiple people





FIGURE 8 (above): Cow head butchery

FIGURE 9 (below): Trailer manufacture and repair





FIGURE 10: Cooked food retail on one of the four selected street corners



FIGURE 11: Live chicken sales

couch manufacture; tyre sales; scrap metal collection; food preparation especially trip food snacks; gate welding, manufacturing and repairs; restaurant; and a youth outreach centre.

The manager of the Youth Outreach Centre, known as John, claims to control the space, by subletting basement areas to these businesses. It was also estimated that approximately 30 people sleep in the basement every night, some in their so-called bedrooms and others in cars that are being repaired or on bedrolls that are hidden in niches and nooks in the basement during the day. There are 14 church groups that operate on a Sunday in the different corners and rooms of the basement.

The basement has few amenities: there is one tap situated near the recycling business that provides water for all of the users for domestic and business purposes (Figure 14), but water does drip through from the upper floors and the street and the basement is often flooded. There is some drainage into a large blue water barrel. All of the respondents said that electricity was never a problem: the basement is dark, but not completely unlit, and fluorescent lights are mounted in some places. There is one toilet built in an old lift well (Figure 12), with a door that does not close properly, and accessed via an unsafe staircase. Many of the users of the space said they go to the nearby Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station, which is apparently cleaner and safer. A makeshift communal bathroom is located beneath the toilet (Figure 13), but users have to bring their own water down with them and, once again, there is little to no privacy.

King John claims to 'own' the site, but what we later came to understand was that he actually is the local manager of this particular basement in that he controls access and pays rent to the *de jure* owner. This role is very like the *mastande* found in residential accommodation in other parts of the inner city (Mayson, 2014). In total he claims to pay between R25 000-R30 000 to the owners of the basement every month. Given the amounts that the tenants say that they pay, which varies between R800-R1 800 a month (Table 2), this does not seem unlikely. Exactly how much commission King John takes and what is passed on is rather unclear, but there is little doubt that he earns something from his role as *mastande*. The basement is tightly controlled by King John and an inner circle of trusted kin, and the rules and regulations that govern the basement demonstrate the disconnection between informality and anarchy.

As will be discussed in the following few sections, relationships within the basement are highly personal. For example, the team was able to track that 11 of the inhabitants and users of the space are relatives of King John, either through blood or marriage, and a number of others are friends or extended family. The question of connections and links and how they play out within various cycles and rhythms in the basement is a key area of discussion that will be explored in the next few sections.

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CYCLES OF SURVIVAL AND POVERTY

Whilst we did not use a ryth-manalysis methodology to undertake the study, aspects of rhythmanalysis are useful in understanding cycles of social and economic life in the basement.

The first cycle refers to larger processual cycles of decades, describing the contexts of improvement and decline that are often features of inner city neighbourhoods and given the historical nature of the suburb, provide the context in which the building and the basement operate.

The second cycle, concerns what happens over months and years, as people come into the basement, find a place, and eventually leave. These cycles demonstrate the nature of access, tenure, land management and power, as they discuss how people gain spaces in the basement, how those relationships are managed and mediated and by whom. Looking at what happens around moments



FIGURE 12: Toilet built in the old lift well



FIGURE 13: Communal bathroom located beneath toilet

of entry, staying and exits provide insights into the nature of power, governance and land management.

The last cycle refers to what occurs daily and weekly and the individual rhythms of production, domestic life and biological need that constitute these cycles. These are generated from the actions of the everyday – opening/closing times, encountering the same people, the regular rituals and greetings that arise from the same people undertaking the same activities on a daily basis. As well as the disruptions in the daily cycle: not having work, sitting and waiting and not earning a living or alternatively too many commissions and thus the need to work late into the night work; or unexpected visitors such as the police.

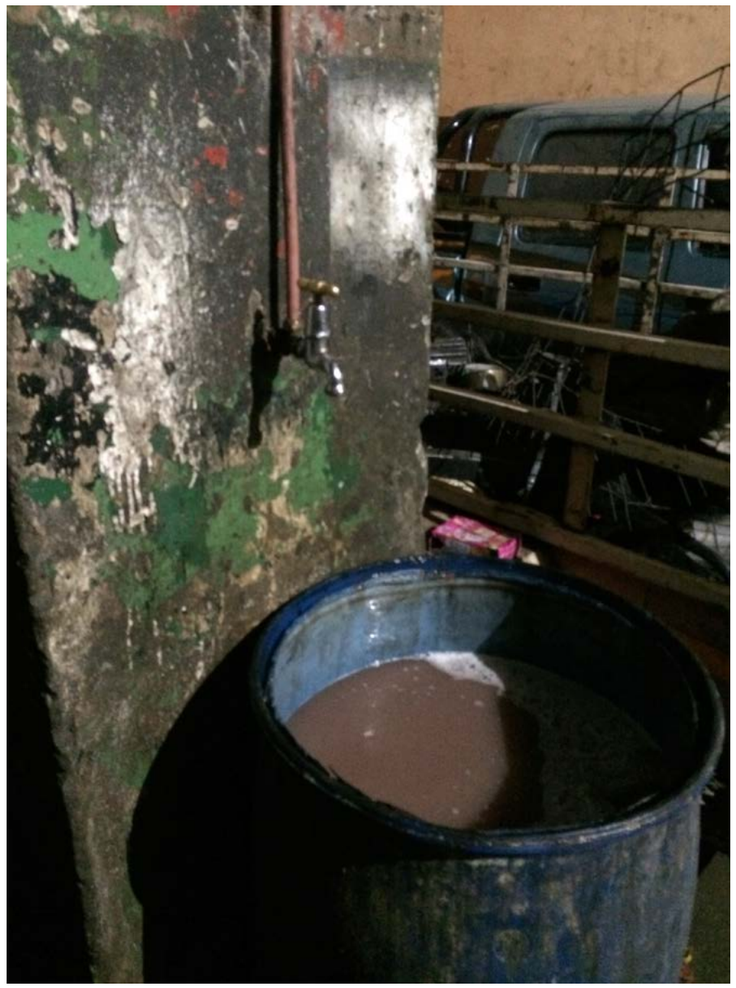
The daily rhythms are punctuated by the sensual and sensory experiences: the sights: lightness and dark; the changing smells, now food, now sweat; sounds, of voices, welding, cooking and hammering and the experience on the skin of those who work there, the ambient heat, the pressure of other bodies in the space.

The days mount up into weeks, and the workdays give way to the weekends, which are permeated by different sensory experiences, because what is allowed and deemed appropriate on the weekend differs from that on the average working day.

However, all three cycles are linked and are mutually constituting, so that what happens day-by-day accumulates and tells the story of each week, each month and each year. Furthermore, the accumulated history of the space has direct impact on the daily experiences of the basement residents and users, so their daily somatic experiences agglomerate to take long-term tolls on their health and other aspects of their lives and work.

The following section details the different cycles, offering insights into what happens across the various temporal periods and the links between them.

FIGURE 14: The only water source at the basement level, drainage is not a possibility without water pumps to ground level.



THE CYCLE OF YEARS AND DECADES: URBAN DECLINE AND REGENERATION

The building in which the basement is located was constructed in the early 1950s with a basement, a level for shops and then residential flats, was quite low-rise for its time. The building was affected by the socio-economic change in in Hillbrow as described earlier (Section 2.1). By the mid-1990s, the basement was no longer used to park cars and was taken over by a security firm. It was apparently a shooting range used to train

TABLE 2: List of activities, their spaces and rentals

ACTIVITY	RENTAL AMOUNT PER MONTH	INCLUDES/ EXCLUDES	WORKING HOURS	INCOME/ TURNOVER
Restaurant	R800	Water and access to space	7am - 5pm Monday to Saturday	R8 500 per month
Scrap metal dealers	?	Working and sleeping space both in the basement	6 am – 7 pm Monday to Saturday	R2000 per month
Welding/ car mechanics	R1 700	Since 2006 - 8 years	8 am – 5 pm Monday to Sa turday	R3000 per month
Upholstery	R1 500	Since 2010/2011 - 3 years	8.30 am – end time negotiable Monday to Saturday	Highly variable Monday to Saturday
Church groups	R700 - R1 400	From 1999 to 2014 but no longer in the basement	Sunday longer in the basement	?

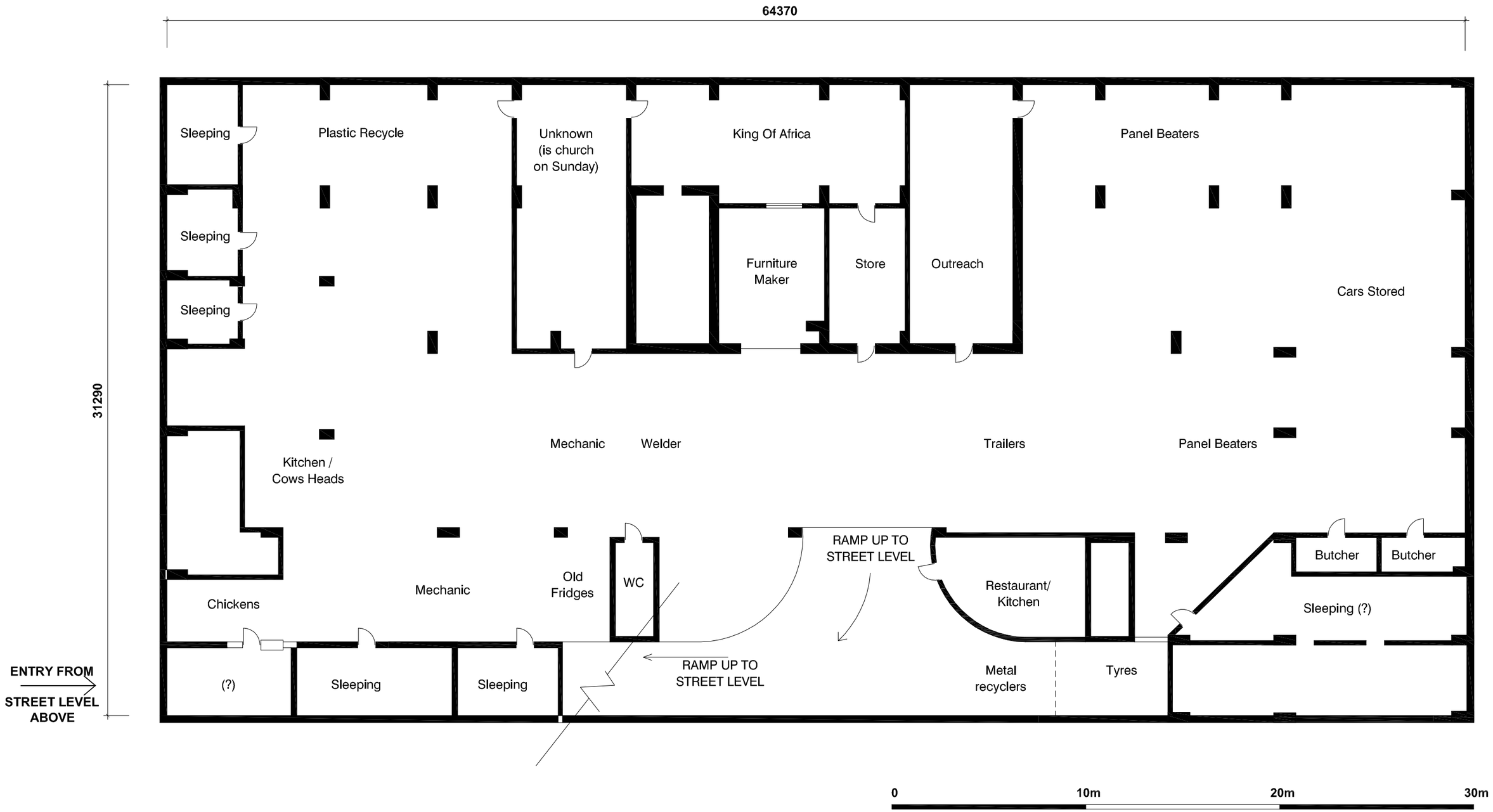
the security company's personnel. The personal accounts from the interviewees pick up the story over the late 1990s. At that time, the *mastande* or land manager, Elison, was operating a panel beating business in the basement. The alleged title deed owner of the whole building told him that a previous tenant owed him R150 000 in rent. The owner and Elison agreed that if he paid 10% of that debt, over time, he could lease the entire basement. At that stage, the rent was around R5 000 a month for the whole basement. Elison sublet to "'a few tenants, maybe three-four", to supplement his costs. It seems that the owner from whom Elison rented, was very responsive, and would attend to any necessary repairs quickly.

Then somewhere between 2007 and 2010, Mr A became the new owner, and brought with him a new caretaker for the building. Elison stayed on to manage the basement but was forced to raise the rental. When Mr A took over, Elison had three to four tenants. By 2014, he had six tenants and 13 church groups on the weekend, but still had to increase the number of tenants to supplement the rent collected. Since Mr A had put the rent up significantly and by 2014 Elison said he was having to pay an estimated R30 000 per month, which included R14 000-R17 000 for electricity, R600-R700 for water and 'others' [other costs] that were listed on a printed bill. There was no signed lease agreement. The arrangement worked by Elison depositing the cash into a bank account. Aside from an increase in rent, Elison's relationship with Mr A changed as he often did not respond to the need for repairs and maintenance for a number of days. Although this was not stated, it seemed that, as a consequence, conditions in the basement worsened.

The relationship came to an end sometime in 2014, when a water pipe on the street flooded the basement to above ankle level. Mr A apparently did not do anything about it, and Elison's tenants refused to pay because they could not work. Elison was only paid R4 000 rent for the month. This was not satisfactory and the following day Mr A sent his security men, who stayed in a neighbouring building, to close the door and lock it, effectively barring Elison from the premises. There was no violence. Elison said they were not "dangerous men" but he "just respected what the security guys said" and so departed.

Paul, who at the time subleased space from Elison and operated a scrap metal business from the basement, tried to remove the water, but failed. Then the Municipality responded and closed the pipe, and eventually the basement apparently drained of its own accord. It was, after this event that Paul and John were next seen to be managing the space. John operated a tyre business on a different level of the building but was still leasing directly from Mr A. Paul sublet space for his scrap metal dealership. One

FIGURE 15: Plan of Basement. Approximately 64 x 31 metres, approximately 2,000 square metres area



other person whose name Elison could not remember was also barred from being in the basement. Apparently this then opened up the space for John and his brother to take control of the basement. It is uncertain whether Paul and John paid Mr A for access to the basement or not, but it was at that point that Elison moved out.

Aside from cleavages, there were significant continuities from one owner to the next, and one *mastande* to the next. Space that was sublet under the previous owner, caretaker and *mastande* continued to be let to the same people. For example, the people who ran the trailer manufacturing business and Paul who operated the scrap metal business and then helped to take over the basement, stayed in the same place. John who had run his tyre business from the basement moved it a level up in the early 2010s. However, the number of people and activities did increase and the original users were joined by new people over time.

It is not clear what the next few decades may hold for the basement, especially now that the Johannesburg inner city is going through another cycle of, at least partial, regeneration with the municipality, along with the private sector, having reinvested heavily in inner city areas over the past decade. Despite this investment and numerous official policies, strategies and road maps for development, little has actually been done to meet the demand for housing at the lowest end of the market, which is still largely serviced by the informal private sector. Nor has the need for commercial and manufacturing space been addressed. Conversely, over the last two years there have been number of initiatives that are supposedly 'cracking down' on by-law infringement, illegal activities and illegal migrants. Operation Cleansweep, Operation Fiela and the various blitzes have served to address perceived issues caused by informality in the inner city. Aside from disrupting people's livelihoods and lives, it is uncertain what these municipal initiatives have actually achieved in terms of regeneration. However, the intention seems to be to return this part of the city to its earlier form irrespective of the changing needs and demographic profile of the suburb's current population. If this does happen, then no doubt, there will be another owner with a strong possibility that the entire subterranean world might then disappear. It might relocate to another peripheral location and continue to operate in a similar manner, or the very unlikely possibility exists that the present set-up becomes subsumed in the formal system and disappears.

ANNUAL CYCLE: ACCESS EGRESS, EXITS AND ENTRANCES

The second biggest cycle is that of years and months and constitutes people coming into the space, establishing themselves and leaving. This section discusses these entrances and exits and offers the story of how people gained access to the basement, who controls the portals and allows access to happen, and how it is maintained over the time that people work in this space. Just how power and control are negotiated and sustained is dealt with and an account of the dynamics and mechanics of symbolic power is offered.

QUESTIONS AND ACCESS OF USE

The cycle begins with the basement users' desire to access the basement, which raises the question as to why people want to work in a basement and not another space. The reasons seem to be a combination of an ability to access basement space often through personal connections with John, as well as, the utility of this specific space. This seems to be Sarah's (owner of the restaurant) experience. She worked at a local supermarket but wanted to start her own business. She knew John and the basement so went to ask if any space was available which there was, so she took up an unused corner and started her business. Elton, the welder, remembered that he accessed the space by joining his cousin Arnold's business. Mario is a relative of John and his family was called to come and work in the business.

However, John appears to be quite accepting of people and does not necessarily require a personal relationship to allow people in. Andy, the upholsterer, did not have a connection with John but said it was easy to get space: "John is a good man, he's welcoming to everyone - he doesn't say this one [yes], this one no - he is like a father of Africa". How the overnight sleepers gained access is uncertain. At least a few of the residents are also users of the working space and someone with access to one of them may entitle the overnighters to stay and sleep. Thus access is largely determined by social networks but the final decision of who is allowed in definitely resides with King John and his family members. It also seems that, whilst personal connections help, they are not absolutely necessary to ensure acceptance for access.

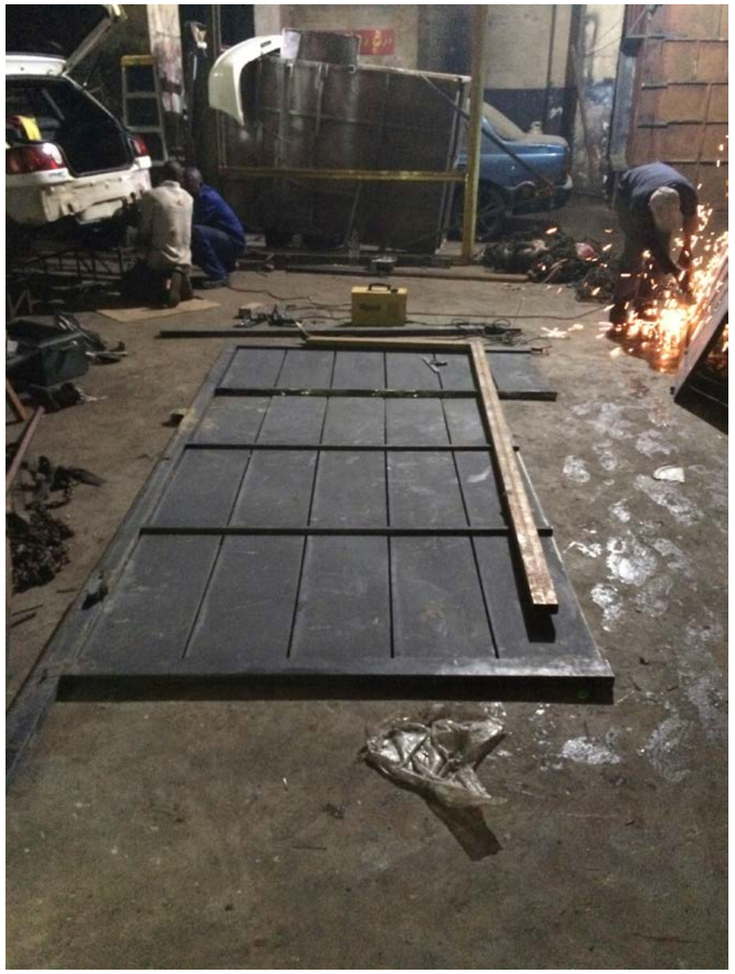
Key to choosing the basement are the users' pragmatic concerns, most of whom, for one reason or another, could not operate on the streets. Some like Elton, who is a welder, admitted that they need the basement because his business requires access to electricity. For the church groups and some of the other businesses, the key concerns are around accessibility, safety, the large spaces that their activities require, and the need for somewhere that is waterproof and protected from the elements. Many of the business activities require heavy machinery, tools and equipment that are expensive and not easy to transport. Consequently, some of the basement users need a place somewhere where they can store their equipment safely and do not need to transport it every day.

Being out of sight of the authorities and beyond the gaze of officialdom was another reason that users cited for accessing and staying in the basement. Sarah said that if she operated on the streets the "Metro [the Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department (JMPD)]" would give her problems. Similarly, Elton was convinced that, if they worked in public spaces, "the police would arrest them". There is also the perception that the pavements and public spaces are already full and there is no more room for the people who now work in the basement.

Another essentially pragmatic reason for people to use the basement is the lack of other available space. It could be speculated that the basement provides very cheap commercial and residential accommodation for people who could not find affordable rentals elsewhere, thus the subterranean nature of the space is important for many reasons. People are literally below the gaze of those in official power. Whilst key to the appeal of the site is also that the enclosed nature of the space offers protection against prying eyes, the weather as well as a place of safety to store equipment. So too is the actual size of the basement that allows for activities such as working on cars and trailers, churches hosting events for many people, all of which would simply not be possible in smaller venues (Figure 16).

Although there was consensus that this was the best space currently available and affordable, many of the tenants mentioned that the basement was not ideal and that they would prefer other working environments that had better ventilation (Figure 17) and better access for customers, many of whom refuse to come into the basement because they think it

FIGURE 16: Some business activities require larger spaces to operate



is dangerous. They would also be more comfortable in a space that was bigger with fewer people.

Although the basement provides the users with the chance to construct some type of livelihood that produces saleable commodities, an opportunity that is unlikely to happen elsewhere in the inner city, it also creates some practical dilemmas. Basement users tend to become trapped in cycles of poverty as they are only able to earn just enough to survive and send money home to family and friends. Moreover, working in the basement does not allow enough spare time, or money, to look for alternative sites. A situation that exacerbates their plight is the fact that some of the basement users are not South African citizens and may not be able to get loans nor do they earn enough for a deposit on something else. Sarah's case exemplifies this situation. She would like to work in another space, but relies heavily on what she currently earns in the basement. She said that in another restaurant her turnover and profit would be much higher, as she would be busier, but she does not have the upfront capital of R2 000-R3 500 to pay the first month's rent. In addition, because she does not have official papers , she says she does not have access to loans. All of which effectively "traps" her in the basement.



FIGURE 17: Little ventilation exists in this basement

TENURE: PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND THE ABILITY TO NEGOTIATE

Despite the lack of formal lease agreements or other documents, the tenants seem to feel secure in their tenure, and trust that their space will not be given to someone else. Although the caveat is that their rights are defensible, only as long as they pay their rent, it is a condition that is not unlike the situation in the formal property market. However, it too is not a straightforward matter because the navigation and negotiation of the relationships are highly personal . Many of the relationships are forged through kin networks or some kind of previous social connection. Although individuals noted they did not socialise after work, relationships of reciprocity exist, as indicated by Sarah who mentioned that if she did not have money for stock, she could go to King John or anyone, and ask for assistance for R50, which they would give her and which she would repay at a later date. Furthermore, a real relationship of trust exists in the basement, as some of the tenants leave their equipment out because "no-one from inside would steal" (Sarah).

An illustration of how intertwined and personal the relationships can be gleaned from the case of Mario who works in the scrap metal business for his uncle, Paul, who is King John's younger brother. They have the same mother and father. Paul is the boss, and there are now six full-time staff although there were only about three when he started working for Paul. Chris is a fellow employee of Paul, who is a cousin. Chris's father is John and Paul's brother from the same parents. William is another fellow employee, a cousin whose mother is related to John. Alfred is another cousin who is a fellow employee although the exact relationship is unclear. This one example clearly demonstrates the degree of interconnectedness between people working in the basement.

The question of personal relationships becomes important when considering how precarious these people's livelihoods are. Although many of the land users have been dealing with the same customers for a number of years, their incomes and livelihoods can be unpredictable. Andy the couchmaker stated that he is "in partnership with Jack and another person and mainly works on commission - so if there is no order there is not work [...] it kills - sometimes if could be two weeks with no job". In these cases, savings and the ability to borrow money are imperative for people to be able to survive. In addition, for people whose income is erratic these personal relationships are vitally important as is the ability to engage and negotiate, so that they do not lose their place in months when income is low or non-existent.

Despite there being some degree of leeway regarding payment and security, there was a sense that the opportunity would not be extended indefinitely. If tenants were not able to pay rent for an extended period then they would be asked to leave. These snippets of information support this contention.

Sarah, the restaurant owner, discussed how many people come asking for a space for a restaurant, and John says no. This makes Sarah feel good. She has no lease, goes month by month, and as long as pays the rent she says she is fine.

Andy, the upholsterer, mentioned that the problem is that "we are out of money and they want us to pay rent. So if we can't pay rent we can lose our space. So you have to find the rent money - before you pay your rent money in your house you must pay the rent in the basement - cause they will take it".

Larry the welder disclosed that "No-one has ever wanted their space. No lease but [occupiers] assume they can stay if [they] pay rent".

In reality, the cycle of comings and goings is a relatively long one, and the people in the basement have generally been there for a number of years. This could to be due to the nature of the opportunity that the site offers, and also the lack of other similar spaces that are affordable. However, over time, the basement, by virtue of its hidden marginality, has become a kind of a trap, making it difficult for people to find something as suitable and go elsewhere.



FIGURE 18: A bedroom during the week



FIGURE 19: Becomes a Sunday church

WEEKLY AND DAILY CYCLE: SYMBOLS OF CONTROL AND AUTHORITY

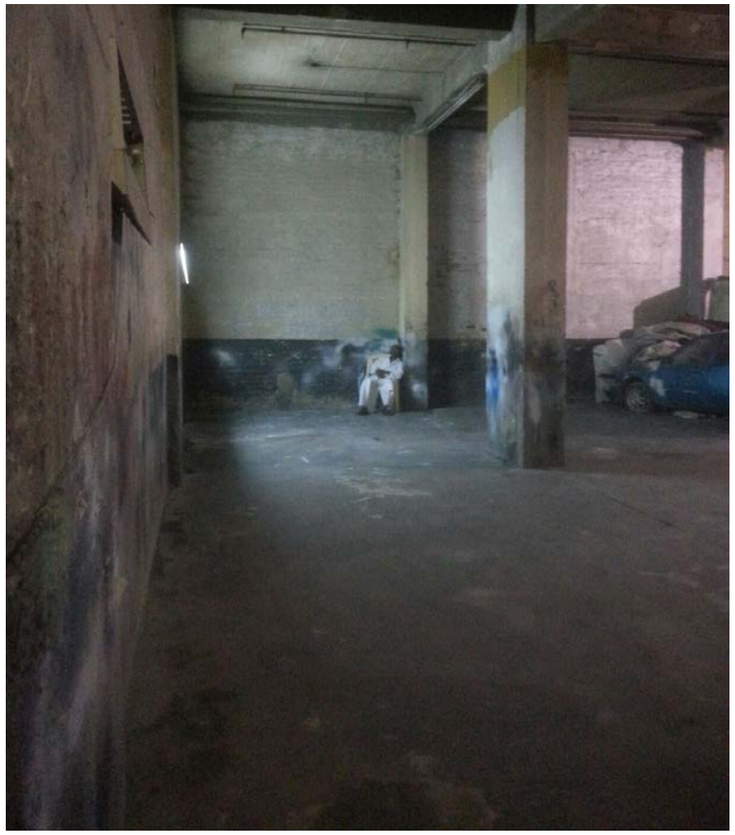
The daily and weekly cycles demonstrate very clearly the power of those managing the basement and their ability to control what happens in the space. They are remarkably able to ensure consent and obedience. This section describes the cycles and the various rules of the basement and how they are enforced.

An average week in the basement runs from Monday to Saturday with most of the users starting early in the morning (Figure 18) and working until early evening (it appears that the exact times vary slightly). There are approximately 15 different businesses and activities operating from within this space. However, on Sunday 14 church groups use the various spaces (Figure 19) for religious practices, consultations and prayer. In many cases spaces, are converted from one use to another over the course of a day or week (Figure 18, 19, 20 and 21).

An average day begins as one of John's associates opens the doors to the basement between 5am and 6am. At this point the welders, upholsterers and the food preparation people enter the basement and start their day. The restauranteurs generally begin by trying to get rid of the water that has leaked onto the floor during the night. The people[4] who have been sleeping on mattresses and in the various niches around the basement get up, wash and get ready for work. By 10 am the basement is cleared and work begins in earnest with the overnighters having gone to work either in the basement or elsewhere.

There is a constant rhythm, a hum and a pace, of people moving in and out, be they customers, recyclers who are collecting plastics or bottles or workers who are getting materials. The sounds of people is augmented by the sounds of the different machines in operation, of trolleys, trailers and other types of metal being dragged along the concrete floor, together with the sounds of people trying to be heard above all this cacophony.

FIGURE 20: Cars moved aside for church group



At lunch time, the restaurateur goes upstairs and outside and tells people, often long-standing customers who work in the area, what is on the menu every day. Outside customers have her telephone number and call her to bring the food up as they do not want to enter the dirty basement, and so her restaurant becomes a take-away service. The foodmakers have finished making their food and head to the taxi ranks and streets to begin selling their wares. The workers sometimes break for lunch and get food from the restaurant or the local *chesa nyama*, spending a significant portion of their salary on take-away food that generally often costs over R50 for a single meal. In the afternoon, children from the surrounding schools and who live in the area come to

4. From what we could gather, it is mostly men.

King John's outreach and after-school programme. The sounds of welding, grinding and cutting and making a range of products carry on in the main space, whilst the outreach centre operates behind closed doors, apparently with music and singing. As the afternoon winds down, the businesses cease their work. Those who have special orders may take a short break or go and talk to John and his brothers and the other tenants to negotiate working late or gaining more room to facilitate the extra work.

Throughout the day, people walk in and out of the basement, customers arriving and leaving; deliveries are made and goods are picked up; there is hammering, sawing, talking and shouting. Although there is no access control, certain tenants keep an eye on who is coming and going, and what is going on, reporting any unusual activities to the *mastande* and his team. Apparently a family member is positioned at the base of the ramp and watches who goes in or out, an implicit but powerful form of surveillance.

Once evening approaches, many of the workers clean up their areas, put their tools away or, in some cases, lock them away and start preparing to go home. The night sleepers and residents then start to come in and by 9-10 o'clock at night the basement is locked. It then fills with the domestic noises of people cooking their evening meals, relaxing, chatting and getting ready to retire for the night. If people come home late they have to phone ahead and Peter, who works for Paul in the metal recycling business and lives in the basement, will unlock and let them in.

> "...almost the whole basement is rearranged to create spaces for church groups..."



FIGURE 21: Purifying the space in readiness for the sacred

The same pattern is followed every day until either late Saturday or early Sunday morning; at this time almost the whole The same pattern is followed every day until either late Saturday or early Sunday morning; at this time almost the whole basement is rearranged to create spaces for church groups: cars are re-arranged (Figure 20) or moved out of the basement, trailers are moved aside, and all the equipment and materials are pushed into small areas to clear the space. Then, literally and figuratively, the basement is cleaned: it is washed down, in particular the smaller rooms and cordoned off spaces. Candles are burnt to purify the space (Figure 21) and move it from the mundane to the sacred. Bedrooms too are cleared and as much as possible is packed away (Figure 22). For example, the fridges that are usually piled up are arranged to cordon off a space (Figure 23). The people themselves are in their Sunday best, dressed for prayer and

FIGURE 22: Businesses pack equipment and stock to make way for Sunday church groups



social expectations. For those who live in the basement but do not attend Sunday services, quiet corners (Figure 26) are found to relax, watch sport and socialise.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

The basement houses a number of activities and for all of these activities to peacefully co-exist the *mastande* instituted a set of rules. It seems that the tenants follow them closely. Interestingly when asked about rules directly, all the tenants said that there were no rules "there is no rules, we all respect each other, there is no rules [sic]" (Andy). However, through probing, a number of rules and regulations surfaced and the list was quite extensive. They included restrictions about when people could work: "[we are] not allowed to work on Sunday" (Larry); the hours when work was permitted; and the requirement that people had to pay their rent by the 15th of the month, or only a few days afterwards. There were also rules around people's general comportment, and what was considered acceptable behaviour in the basement. There was a clear expectation that people needed to tolerate and respect each other, and the work that they undertook. Duplication of product or activity or internal competition was disallowed. Sarah mentioned that "the other guys by the mechanics, that are making pap [mealie meal porridge] too but do not sell it inside, they take it away using trolleys and sell outside". Since this arrangement did not interfere with her food preparation business, she and the *mastande* found it acceptable. King John stipulated what could and could not take place in the basement:

"John, doesn't want alcohol and ganja [marijuana] inside. You know right and wrong – 'cause you know yourself. We used to take beer inside but we hide it because we don't want him to see - he gets very angry 'cause he thinks we are wasting our money on alcohol. We don't take alcohol any more. No other rules" (Andy).

Despite the large number of people sharing the space, a strong injunction against fighting was evident:

"No rules. Just no fighting. If [I] get angry [I] have to keep it inside and not fight" (Larry). Larry continued and voiced the opinion that the result of general acceptance of these agreed conditions, is that "here is never any problems in the space. Sometimes it can be difficult for the trailers to get inside … but there is never fighting only shouting".

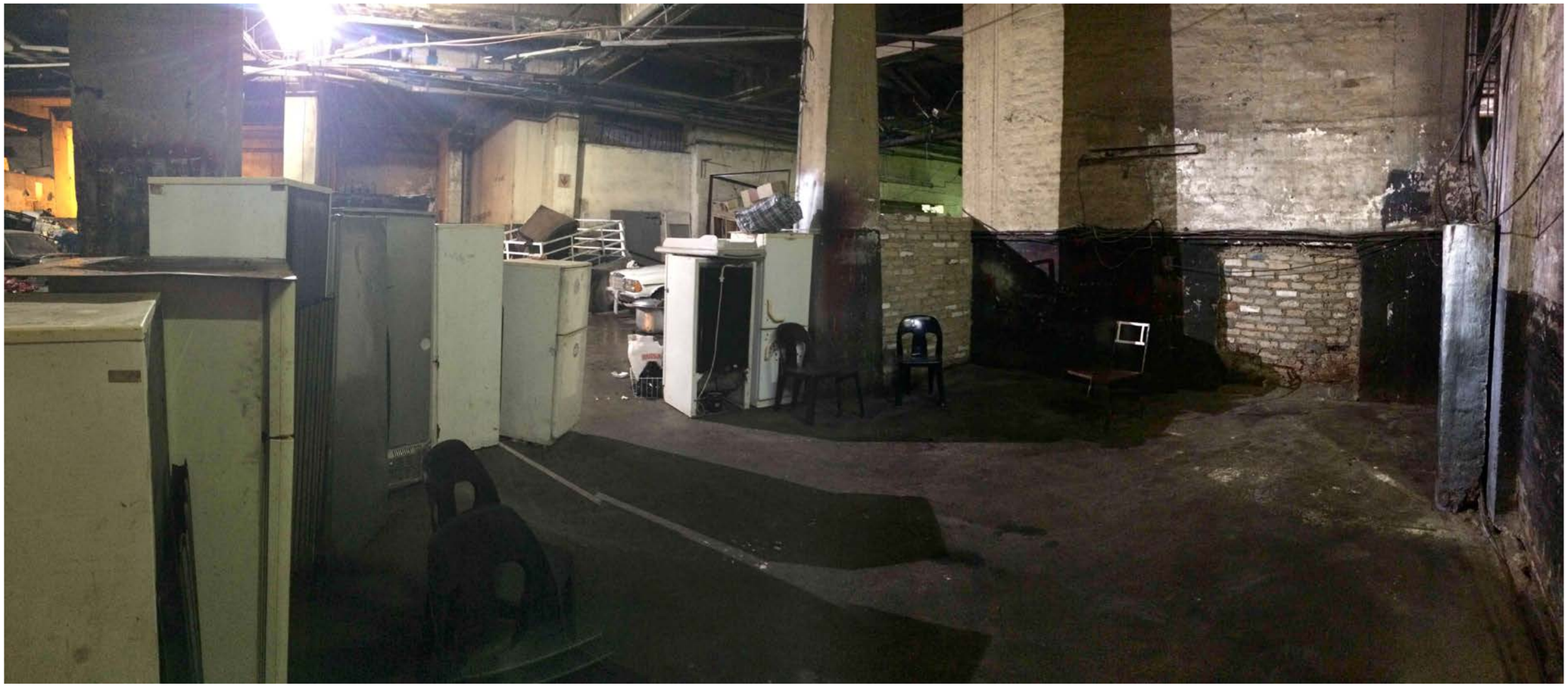
A strong sense of a tradition of discussion and engagement certainly came to the fore in this research. To support this notion, we asked what would happen if someone in the basement had an unusually big undertaking to execute, or delivery of furniture to receive and had it put it in someone else's space. We were told that the basement users talk to each other and negotiate a time schedule, make an arrangement to accommodate the circumstances and inform King John, then "it is not a problem". However, if a fight or dispute breaks out that could not be resolved between the parties concerned, each of responding tenants said that they would approach King John or Paul to arbitrate and resolve the issue. Remarkably, for a space with so many diverse and potentially contradictory interests, activities, personalities and uses of space, the basement, did seem convivial and peaceful (Figure 27).

HEALTH AND SAFETY? YES AND NO

Lefebvre (2004) speaks to bodily rhythms and cycles, the embodied experiences of hunger, thirst, sleep and rest. Within the daily cycle of the basement, the needs of the body are in conflict with the need for livelihood and income. The basement is an oddly contradictory space, supplying a safe and yet simultaneously a very dangerous environment.

As mentioned, water and electricity provision is minimal, but the supply seemed to be consistent and sufficient to service the businesses and the people. However, what is available in the basement affects the type of work that is possible. At the same time, there is a reciprocal and iterative relationship between the activities and the services, facilities and environment. Noteworthy is that hygiene, health and safety appeared to be ignored as the floor is covered in a thin film of dirty water; the air is toxic with fumes; and rats scuttle around the floor. Respondents, as tenants were not happy with the conditions stating that the basement has "too much dust; not nice air, too much rubbish" (Larry). The roof constantly leaks

FIGURE 23: Fridges arranged to cordon off space for church group



and the floor is often wet and slippery, sometimes resulting in the tenants being unable to work until the water had drained of its own accord (Figure 28). Additional toilet facilities were on the first floor, but accessibility to them was unclear. Sarah's concern was that she was pregnant and would not be able to bring a new-born baby into this environment. She had also noticed a recurring cough (that could only be soothed by drinking milk) that had evolved since working in the basement with the fumes. As evidence, these observations show that health and safety are real concerns, not simply in terms of by-laws,

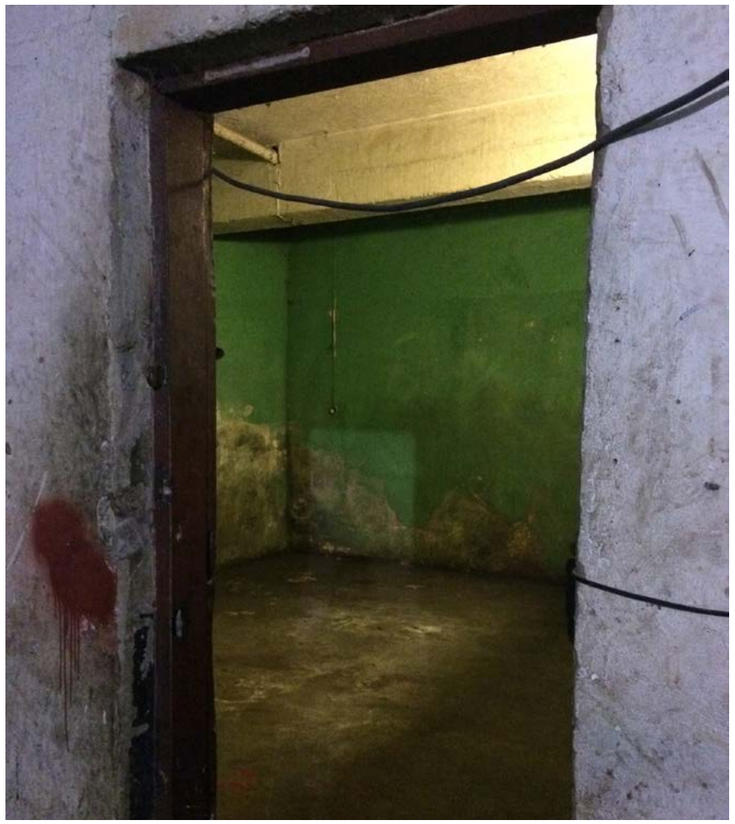


FIGURE 24: Rooms are cleared and hosed out to make way for church groups on Sundays

FIGURE 25: Church space





FIGURE 26: Quiet spaces on a Sunday - work space becomes relaxation space

but in terms of real effects on the living, working and health conditions of the occupants.

Many of the tenants also expressed concerns over the danger of fire. Sarah conveyed her fear of fire against her appreciation for the companionship experienced in the basement, "for now I am in a workshop, I am in a company - it's fine unless there is fire, I am scared of fire". This is no doubt due to the fact that there is only one entrance /exit and, from what was reported, no firefighting equipment in the basement (Figure 29), while the fire hoses on the upper level were not in working condition at all. When asked if the authorities come and inspect the basement for health and safety, the researchers were told "They come… Maybe two months, three months - they wanted to check whether it's clean…Not safe? Not safe - never heard them coming for safe…. Yes they come but only for cleanliness not safety" (Andy). However, later comments also indicated that the authorities were bribed on a regular basis to leave the place alone and not report on the real state of the basement to the municipal authorities. No doubt, if they did, the basement would immediately be closed down.

> "…the basement is also considered a 'safe' place in the sense that the tenants felt protected when inside, arguing 'but the streets aren't safe'

Paradoxically, the basement is also a considered a 'safe' place in the sense that the tenants felt protected when inside, arguing "but the streets aren't safe" (Mike). The comment itself is unclear but alludes to both not being disturbed by either the police or the JMPD or criminals, especially thieves. Thus the basement offers protection from the gaze of the authorities, where people are able to get on with the business of earning an

income and where their stock is protected. Basement users also shared that, despite no formal security measures, they do feel safe working and living in the basement, where they are protected from people who may hurt them.

However, the people who worked in the basement carried their daily experiences with them even after they leave the basement, sometimes only for the next few hours but often for the rest of their lives. Sarah's story illustrates this. She knows that her customers like a stew made with tripe, the intestines of a cow, a traditional delicacy. Preparing it for cooking requires a great deal of water for cleaning it thoroughly and she cannot wash the meat in the basement as they have only the one tap for the whole area. So she literally takes her work home with her when she takes the tripe home to prepare and clean it, bringing it back in the morning. For Sarah too, her daily experiences are taken into the future as she is pregnant and very concerned about her baby that is due to be born soon, and the effect of the environment on the unborn child as well as the fact that she cannot bring her baby into the basement with its fumes and noise. She is not sure how she will manage this.

For many others too, the routines of everyday life have long-term consequences in various ways. The body is at work in the space and the body that leaves that space, carrying with it residues of dusts and dirt which is visible, and/or toxins and diseases which may not be visible. These could be the cause of the slow, or rapid, degeneration of each person working in that space. Thus the minute cycles of breathing in and out, the intimacies of going to the bathroom and the lack of hygiene become connected to larger life cycles, amputating life spans and affecting health and well-being, whilst at the same time ensuring livelihoods and the ability to survive the current moment.

FIGURE 27: Contrasting activities -a butcher's block in the foreground, a mechanic behind





FIGURE 28: Without drainage the floor was covered in a film of stagnant water and mud

FIGURE 29: Firefighting equipment on upper floor is not in working condition



05.DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

THE DYNAMICS OF CONTROL

What becomes evident from the short time spent in and around this basement in Hillbrow, is that a high degree of regulation and control exists, despite the seemingly informal, atmosphere that pervades the space. Regulation takes place through the collective understanding of how the space is to be used and managed. This understanding does not emerge from formal rules or guidelines, but is seen to be socially determined and enforced through the various temporal cycles of the space.

The annual and monthly cycles of entry and exit and who controls access and transactions demonstrates that the control of the basement takes place through King John and a core family group. However, John and his two brothers each had a particular role, although John seems to be the dominant figure, even though, perhaps, having symbolic rather than real control. He is the person people contact for access; he is the frontman and it is he who proclaims who is allowed to enter, what activities they can operate and allocates the space for them. On a daily basis, he is the person to whom people turn with their problems and to resolve disputes. Paul, John's brother, is the person who has more practical control. He takes charge of the bank slips, physically holds onto the keys and keeps an eye on access to the basement. Control is socially determined and there is little to no engagement with the formal by-laws or rental laws. The core group makes the decisions. However, for all that, it is socially determined, it is consistent in practice and usefully predictable for users and tenants. Relationships with the tenants tend to be more paternalistic than authoritarian. John is seen as a 'father figure' and many of the rules that govern the basement are about behaviour and conduct, which is largely outside of the professional authority of a *mastande*, as it belongs more to the realm of the personal. This may well counter the very personal relationships that do exist, creating a situation in which the boundaries are not as clear-cut as they would be in formal circumstances.

> For the vast majority of people living in the inner city of Johannesburg, everyday life is characterised by unpredictability, flexibility and negotiation.

Time, the cycles and rhythms, are not random but, like the space, are highly controlled. The socially determined rules and regulations are time- as well as place-dependent and contestations and conflicts are not tolerated. Having rules, even ones seemingly opaque, is extremely important. Knowing when spaces open and close, when work can be done and when it cannot, knowing that one can work over time to meet a deadline and that it will be sanctioned, provides those who live in precarious situations with some certainty.

The nature of control stems from two forms of power. First, the Weberian threat of violence, which in this case, is the ability to evict and remove users who do not obey the rules or somehow threaten the authority of the sovereign group. Second, in the rituals that constitute the symbolic power of the core group. The belief that King John is the person in authority is reinforced by his acting out that role and presenting himself as the person in charge. His strange rituals, mannequins, the burning of candles, and his behaviour offers a degree of mystery with a whiff of him being a prophet. Thus he plays on well-worn tropes that are familiar to most of the users to ensure that his authority does not just stem from potential violence but also takes effect through the rituals he enacts which are embedded in his 'otherworld-like' power and enforce his paternal authority.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SPACE: WHY THE BASEMENT SPECIFICALLY?

Once used for parking cars, the basement now provides a site of safety, security and often basic livelihood for many of its users. The mere size of the basement means that there is enough space for a multitude of uses, actors and imperatives. The basement is, for the most part, weather-proof, lockable and safe – important attributes that workers would struggle to find if they were positioned on the street. In fact, the invisibility of the basement and its hiddenness from the eyes of the world at large add to the appeal and importance of this particular space. Many of the businesses and other unregulated uses that take place in the basement would not be able to function on the streets and would be forced to relocate to more peripheral or industrial areas.

The use of the basement for these types of activities is not random. The space has been reterritorialised and retrofitted to allow for the types of activities that address the needs of the surrounding community. Over time, and through processes of occupation and negotiation, this space has taken on different functions that are socially and economically determined. In Hillbrow, a predominantly residential area, space that is available for living, for working, for meeting and for transactions, is a precious resource integral to livelihoods and survival. In this context, it has become flexible, transitional and open to interpretation in defiance of the solid and structured framework of the built form that contains it.

NEGOTIATION AND FLEXIBILITY

For the vast majority of people living in the inner city of Johannesburg, everyday life is characterised by unpredictability, flexibility and negotiation. These mechanisms allow for finding a livelihood and an opportunity to survive day-by-day in a precarious environment. Similarly, negotiation and flexibility characterise life in the basement. These interactions and transactions take place horizontally, between people working on the basement floor, and vertically, between the different levels of management that include various levels of importance and distance such the local authorities and the building owners, John and Paul and the rest of the core control group. Negotiation pervades the basement space and appears to determine many of the social and economic interactions. The knowledge that one can negotiate and re-negotiate daily life, and the flexibility this affords, are extremely important opportunities for poor and destitute people whose lives are subject to unpredictability and risk.

Given all these considerations, what becomes more apparent is the presence of diverse spatio-temporal and social control mechanisms that maintain livelihoods and people both in the basement and, by inference, throughout Hillbrow and, similar locations in the inner city. These socially determined rules become as powerful, if not more powerful, than legal and official regulations and discourses that shape and discipline the lives of those who work in the basement, having long-term imprints on these people's future and bodies. It is these rules that allow for a degree of permanence, continuity and sanctioning, providing a sense of safety, security and reassurance in a world that seems to offer little more.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

> a space that is pirated, reterritorialised... ...transitioned from an outdated and slightly anachronistic use, to being a highly relevant and necessary space

The basement is a space that is pirated, reterritorialised. It has successfully transitioned from an outdated and slightly anachronistic use, to being a highly relevant and necessary space for a number of poorer people in Hillbrow who live, work and rely on the basement for their livelihoods, homes and touchstones of predictability. The lack of other spaces, its size, affordability, access to services, such as electricity, and water, the ability to lock the site as required and remain hidden, are extremely valuable pragmatic elements of the basement that attract its users and residents.

However, such reterritorialisation does not simply happen. It requires the active control of some kind of authority that designs a set of social rules that govern life, decide how space is used and by whom, and that enforces the cycles over time. These rules define the code of conduct, which the users then internalise and abide by and, in doing so, accept and reinforce this authority. The threat of violence also underlies this authority as does the disconnection from livelihood and predictability. Significant too, is the symbolic power and the supernatural, which further supports and bolsters the nature of the authority.

This preliminary study of a hidden space, possibly also opens up more questions than it answers. There are many gaps in our knowledge of unexpected spaces and socially determined processes that still need to be answered. However, we would argue that this a start, a beginning, an introduction to a world that researchers and academics were only marginally aware of, yet constitutes an important space in the lives and daily practices of poorer people in an inner city location.

There is a planned second phase of this project, which will take place within the next few months that will explore other but larger spaces, hidden and controlled, that have traditionally been beyond the sight of the formal. The hope is that by furthering the project we can better understand what happens and why, and perhaps support rather than destroy these activities and daily practices that play such an important role in the lives of the inner city poor.

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DISCUSSION GUIDELINE APPENDIX 1

PEOPLE SLEEPING /STAYING IN THE BASEMENT

1. Personal information
   - Where are you from originally?
   - How old are you?
   - Do you think you are in good health?
   - Are you able to get sufficient food every day? From where?
2. Understanding the space
   - How long have you been managing the basement?
   - What did you do before you started managing this space?
   - Can you tell me how many people work here?
   - How many people stay here?
   - Do you know most of or all the people in the basement?
   - Where in the basement are you positioned? Where do you sleep?
3. Governance structures
   - How did you hear about this place?
   - How did you start managing this space?
   - Did anyone give you permission to do so? If so, who and how?
   - How do you decide who is allowed to work or stay here?
   - How much do people pay to work/stay here?
   - Are there rules that people have to follow? What are they? How do you let new people know about them? What would happen if someone ignored them or disobeyed them? What would you do?
   - If people come to you with problems or conflicts what do you do? How do you resolve them?
   - Has anyone ever wanted your space in the basement? How did you protect it?
   - Who controls access to this space - allowing people to enter and leave every day? What about weekends?
   - How does everyone get on in the basement? Do people help each other?
   - Who do you socialise with most?
   - Do you feel safe in the basement, and why?
4. Livelihoods
   - Is this the main way that you have to generate an income?
   - Roughly how much income do you get a month?
   - What do you do with your income?
   - How many people do you support financially?
5. Policy and plans
   - Have you ever had problems from the JMPD? flat owners? Landlords? What were they? What did you do about them?
   - What do you like or don't like about staying in the basement?
   - What do you think could be done to make the basement a better place to stay? Has it been a good or bad experience (financially/health, etc).





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