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Exploring the preservation of Mine Dumpsas Heritage: debates in the context of Johannesburg South Africa

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2020
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/30596

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ABSTRACT

There is no doubt that Johannesburg has a rich mining history, as it has its origins in mining that began with the discovery of gold in the late 1800s. One of the most iconic and spectacular residuals of the decades of mining is the mine dumps which have contributed to Johannesburg's skyline and are regarded as part of the very significant mining heritage. The mine dumps over recent years have been a major point of debate as they are the cause of air pollution and reportedly the cause of many respiratory diseases which plague the communities who live near them. The mine dumps are also seen as a major resource both by the heritage community and by the mining companies who are relentlessly mining them sometimes without following the proper heritage legislative procedures.

This research report investigates the debates surrounding the preservation of the Johannesburg's mine dumps as heritage and their conflicting status as an economic resources, toxic waste and heritage resource. It also investigates the diverse opinions of how the different communities often separated by geographical location and socio economic status, view what is Johannesburg's mining heritage and how it should be preserved. This research report also investigates the management of the mine dumps and mining heritage in general under the current legislation and how the heritage authorities are addressing the issue of the mine dumps being regarded both as heritage and toxic waste.