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Looking down on Johannesburg: an exploration of rooftop spaces in the regenerated city

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Looking Down on Johannesburg:

An exploration of rooftop spaces in the regenerated city

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Research report

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28 May 2015



SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

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Abstract

Exclusive rooftop spaces in Johannesburg have become popular within the city, particularly owing to the ongoing processes of regeneration occurring within it. Their existence is based on the need for the upper to middle classes to experience what it means to be in the city. By attending events at rooftop spaces in the areas of the Maboneng Precinct and Braamfontein, I sought to read the city from above, in order to understanding how these spaces contribute to how the city is experienced. The four chosen field sites of Dukes, Seascape, the InterUrban Rooftop and the Open Air Cinema all enable a different reading of what it is to be in the city. The process of research revealed an interesting discussion about the temporal entry into the city, the new forms of gated communities, the capitalisation of the deep house genre of music at rooftop spaces, the right to the city, and the surprisingly profound role that social media plays in how the virtual and real worlds manifest in order to promote rooftop spaces as popular places to visit. These themes along with an insight into how the experiences and views of each field site enables one to reflect on the city of Johannesburg are explored. Overall, it can be said that rooftop spaces enable the middle to upper class a subjective experience of city life, one that posits Johannesburg as an object over which to gaze.

To my family for their unwavering support,

and my numerous “research assistants”

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Chapter One

Introduction

The lift climbed quickly up to the 50th floor of the Carlton Centre, carrying a splattering of tourists and voyeurs. After disembarking, we were met with an empty vestibule, lined with grimy floor-to-ceiling glass walls. There were peeling stickers on each of them, which read North, East, South and West, showed us the direction we were looking in. Sporadically placed and dilapidated information placards, give visitors a brief history of both the building of the Carlton Centre and Johannesburg. The Top of Africa, as it is known, was once the tallest building in the southern hemisphere and boasts an unparalled view of the city of Johannesburg. Glossing over the remnants of the gold reef, the man-made forestry of the northern suburbs, Braamfontein, Hillbrow, the mosaic calabash of the FNB Stadium, and even OR Tambo International Airport, the Carlton Centre overlooks the entire city. It allows visitors an insight into the Johannesburg of the past, pitted against the present.



Figure 1: Looking west from Carlton Centre [1]

[1] All photographs have been taken by Jahaan Kajee, unless otherwise stated.

Rooftop spaces have, for a long time, held fascination for voyeurs around the world. People flock to the Empire State building in New York City, the Burj Khalifa in Dubai and the Petronas Twin Towers in Malaysia to see more of the cities before them. Theoretically speaking, perspectives from such heights can provide an insight into how cities can be better understood, or read.

Johannesburg is a city undergoing a process of transformation, in order to restore it to its former glory: a hub of cultural, economic and social exchange on the African continent. Rooftop spaces in particular have become popular features within the city. Rather than the familiar site of women hanging freshly washed clothes to dry, with children playing in the morning sun alongside them, rooftops in the city are now being used as exclusive venues and bars as part of the ongoing regeneration and transformation of the city. Specifically within Braamfontein and the Maboneng Precinct, rooftop spaces have rapidly become popular sites where various experiences and connections to the city of Johannesburg are able to be made. This is of special importance particularly during a time when the city has become an "it" place to visit and to be a part of.

Inspired by De Certeau's (1984) insight into looking at and reading cities from above, this project seeks to understand what it means to experience the city of Johannesburg, from the vantage point of rooftop spaces. By looking specifically at four spaces – Dukes[2], Seascape, the InterUrban Rooftop and the Open Air Cinema's movie screenings, I seek to explore the experience of city life, specifically with regard to the increased

[2] The names of all field sites, informants, and companies have been changed for ethical reasons.

entry into the city with the purpose of attending rooftop events. These events follow a particular pattern, and ethnographic research is able to reveal certain peculiarities of how the city is able to be experienced, and as a result read from above.

Each field site occupies a space within areas of regeneration in the city. While it is important to make note of the rich histories and contexts of these spaces, I rather wish to place focus on representing each field site as suspended entities. This will be done in order to further emphasize how these spaces speak to a very specific, and subjective experience of city life, one that does not necessarily connect with the city below, and around them.

During the process of fieldwork the following themes became apparent: the temporal entry into the city, the new forms of gated communities formed as a result of regeneration in Johannesburg, the capitalisation of the deep house genre of music at rooftop spaces, the right to the city, and the surprisingly profound role that social media plays in how the virtual and real worlds manifest in order to promote rooftop spaces as popular places to visit.

These themes along with a deeper insight into how the experiences and views of each field site enables one to reflect on the city of Johannesburg will be explored. They will assist in the greater argument that rooftop spaces in the city enables a subjective experience of city life that involves visitors of these spaces to be removed from the city they are in, posing it as an object over which to gaze.

I sought to do this in a phenomenological sense, by drawing heavily on descriptive and visual snippets of specific encounters at each field site, interwoven with theoretical points of reference.

The second chapter will provide an attempt at theorising the city, by trying to make sense of the context in which it exists. The third chapter outlines the methodological process and tools employed during the process of research and fieldwork. The fourth chapter provides a description of each field site, specifically in light of a phenomenological experience of each site. The fifth chapter is divided thematically; touching on the specifics of what was revealed during the fieldwork process, weaved through relevant literature. Finally the conclusion will reflect on how the experiences and views from each rooftop space do not necessarily place voyeurs in the city, but rather in a space where they can look over the city.

Chapter Two

Theorising the City

To begin, I wish to attempt theorizing the city, within the particular context in which I am interested. This will be done in order to better understand what has led to the popularity and use of rooftop spaces as sites that enable a certain experience of city life. The concepts of space and place, the city, urban regeneration, and the right to the city all have an impact on the study of rooftop spaces in the city of Johannesburg.

Space and Place

> "Place is as requisite as the air we breathe, the ground on which we stand, the bodies we have. We are surrounded by places. We walk over and through them we live in place, relate to others in them, die in them. Nothing is unplaced" (Casey 1998: ix)

As stated by Casey (1998) place and space are concepts that are inherent in our beings. We are constantly within them, and encased by them, which is why they are incredibly valuable topics of study. Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga state that anthropologists regard space and place as extremely useful in that they "[offer] diverse theories and methods for spatializing and locating culture as well as identifying the contradictions of territory, cultural and economic globalization and modernity that lie at the heart of this contemporary tragedy" (2003: 37). Space and place are rich topics of study, however why they are of such value must be explored.

In *The Production of Space* (1991), Lefebvre puts forward the idea that space should be thought of as more than simply a container and a mental

conception. Space is able to hold multiple layers of meaning, and one should strive to break through the binary of the mental and physical elements of it. Lefebvre (1991) set out to propose a theory of the production of space by looking at the conditions behind how spaces are produced.

Lefebvre's (1991) triad of spaces (spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces) shows the different ways in which space can be represented. This triad especially helps with conceptualising how space is pliable to becoming imbued with different meanings. This is echoed by Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga (2003), whose 6 spatial constructs (embodied space, gendered space, inscribed spaces, contested spaces, transnational spaces and spatial tactics) show how space can hold different forms of meaning. Each of these constructs, as well as a reading of how they overlap can be used to explore the occurrence of different spaces. Spaces according to both Lefebvre (1991) and Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga (2003) are thus produced in multiple ways, and filled with meanings that have the ability to overlap, and combine in the creation of a particular set of social meanings.

The study of space has been used to address a number of concerns, such as capitalism, modernisation, local and community studies, as well as globalisation and its discontents (Arnande, Howell & Simons 2002). Such a discourse of space emerges "through encounters between specific material and historical character of the place that grounded the space and the political capacities of those who vied for control over its various dimensions, be they material or discursive" (Arnande et al. 2002: 540). Space is not merely an entity that is functional for those who use it; rather it is deeply embroiled with the histories and politics of the past and present. Space can therefore

become a lens through which socio-political and cultural contexts within a specific area can be viewed.

Blunt and Dowling (2006) write about the concept of home beyond the physical space. Although this is not directly related to the concepts of space, as I have thus far been concerned, Blunt and Dowling (2006) encounter interesting spatial concerns. They consider a home to be "a *spatial imaginary:* a set of intersecting and variable ideas and feelings, which are related to context, and which construct places, extend across spaces and scales, and connect places" (2006: 2). Home is considered to be space where social reproduction takes place (Blunt & Dowling 2006). Spaces of social reproduction can extend to areas outside of the home. They have the ability to construct and ensure the maintenance of the social occurrences that occur within them.

Space should, therefore, not be thought of as a *tabula rasla*, which passively enables meanings to be imprinted on it, but rather as "organic and alive...it palpitates, flows and collides with other spaces" (Merrifield 2006: 105). Space is thus a flexible entity open to the inscription of meaning by its surroundings and those who inhabit it. Space and place are "like knots, and the threads from which they are tied are lines of wayfaring." (Ingold 2011: 149). They radiate meanings from the threads that emanate from them. Rooftops are specifically interesting to study, as they exist within a space of deep historical and social roots, which carry certain meanings and enable a contextualisation of their location and popularity.

Cities

Massey, Allen and Pile consider cities to be “free-standing and geographically discrete places that rise and fall as a result of their strategic location, their economic viability or their political power” (2005: x). Cities are spaces that are filled with meanings and social roots that are made of interconnected properties (De Certeau 1984). They are complex sites of study with numerous factors at play, such as the social, economic, intellectual, and architectural (Wright 1988: 10).

Pile (2005) suggests that understanding city life can be done by looking at how people congregate in, and build cities through their actions. “[B]ringing people (and their money) together – both enables new forms of association to be created...and also requires of people that they interact in new kinds of ways” (Mumford in Pile 2005: 16). The city is a site where people are able to create new meanings in, and also interact with those outside of their own norms. On one hand, Pile (2005) notes that there is a blurring of social stratification in the city, which makes visible the character and intensity of city life. This is echoed by Robinson (2006), who argues that transformation opens up the opportunity for social relations to change within the city. While on the other hand, Allen (2005) states that representations of city life entail a consideration of how different groups interact in the city, which especially draws attention to social inequalities within it. This makes city life a complex space to study, particularly when considering the social interactions that occur within it. Taking into consideration how people interact within the city will inform how rooftop spaces are able to facilitate the experience of being in the city – particularly given the ongoing regeneration of Johannesburg.

Cities are in a constant flux of urban processes. According to Beauregard and Haila “the spatial form of the city is never a clear and perfect reflection of [these] processes” (1997: 328). The form that a city takes on can be far removed from the intentions behind its production. Beauregard and Haila posit that the city will always be incomplete, given the constant flux of relations between past and present influences (1997). Crew and Beaverstock (1998) recognise that cities are increasingly engaged with transformation, and along with it the ability to create new combinations of meanings. Contemporary cities are therefore prone to continuous making and remaking; this is why regeneration and transformation are often common processes within them.

Johannesburg is a city that has undergone massive forms of transformation since its inception. Fashioned largely as a result of gold mining, the city has become a space embroiled with the accumulation of capital (Kruger 2013), now “more than ever before in its history, Johannesburg’s city space is a product that is marked, measured, marketed, and transacted. It is a commodity” (Mbembe 2008). It is a city where the formal and informal sectors collide, which simultaneously resonates with characteristics of cities ranging from Los Angeles to Kinshasa (Kruger, 2013; Nuttal & Mbembe 2007). Johannesburg has, and continues to undergo layers of metamorphosis, however this seems to continually be in light of the inequalities of the apartheid era, and the years to follow where racial differences were replaced by class differences (Seekings & Nattrass 2005).

After a withdrawal of investment from the inner city during the 1970s and 1980s as a result of extreme racial segregations and political divisions,

Johannesburg was in a state of disarray (Bethlehem 2013; Bremner 2000). Many buildings were boarded up and abandoned, however this has been slowly changing. Since 1990 there has been economic development and other initiatives "to reinvent, re-image and reformulate [the] inner city landscape [of Johannesburg]" (Bremner 2000: 185). The city of Johannesburg has seen major forms of urban regeneration, particularly in the form of private companies reinvesting in the city, and developments to public services and amenities in the city (Bethlehem 2013).

Urban Regeneration and the Right to the City

Urban regeneration can be defined as the interplay between physical, social, environmental and economic factors within a city, especially in light of urban degeneration (Roberts & Skyes 2000). Regeneration seeks to bring about lasting improvements to areas impacted by change (Roberts & Skyes 2000) and enables the creation of "vibrant, inclusionary and interesting city spaces" (Crew & Beaverstock 1998: 288). There are a number of categories that can be used to describe such sites of regeneration: new geography of space (Duka 2013), contemporary spaces (Chipkin & Meny-Gilbert 2013), and spaces with new urban typologies (Chipkin 2013). All these categories essentially speak to the same notion, the city is undergoing a transformation that is inherently altering how these pockets of regeneration are perceived. This is the creation of a new sense of city life.

However regeneration it is a controversial topic. While some advocate for it, others condemn it. Zukin (2010), echoing the argument of Jacobs (1961), states that with regeneration cities inherently lose their soul and

character. “In London, Paris, and New York artists and gentrifiers move into old immigrant areas, praising the working-class bars and take-out joints but overwhelming them with new cafés and boutiques, which are soon followed by brand-name chain stores” (Zukin 2010: 1-2). Thus in the name of transformation, processes of urban regeneration can result in the loss of what the city actually is. This speaks to how different people view what the city stands for and what it means to be in it. For Zukin (2010) and Jacobs (1961), regeneration may result in the removal of an element of authenticity in city life.

This has been a prominent view in Johannesburg particularly, where regeneration is often considered to be of skewed interest – specifically in favour of private developers, as opposed to inline with more social aspects of regeneration (Frenzel 2014; Harvey 2012). Certain areas such as the Maboneng Precinct and Braamfontein have seen the private repurposing of abandoned buildings in favour of retail stores, art galleries and restaurant (Bethlehem 2013; Frenzel 2014).

Johannesburg is characteristically mimetic, from Victorian inspired verandas in the suburbs, to the faux Italian village that forms the Montecasino complex – people in the city have a longing for a sense of city life (Mbembe 2004). The city constantly seems to be borrowing different versions of city-life when seeking the creation of our own version of it. Mbembe makes the motion that such mimicry has enabled the city to “developed an *aura* of its own, its uniqueness” (2004: 376). Regeneration can enable the creation of a subjective image of what city life *should* be like for whomever is experiencing it. Perhaps regeneration serves to cater to the needs of those who want to make the city their own and who wish to make a return to the city and all that

it now has to offer. Processes such as regeneration contribute to the creation of a unique form of city life.

The notion of "the right to the city" (Harvey 2012) can be coupled with the apparent need for a sense of city life in Johannesburg. The right to the city depends on an individual's or a group's desires (Harvey 2012). Different groups of people relate to the city in different ways and such experiences of city life play a role in how spaces in the city are inscribed and embodied (Wright 1988). Urban processes, such as city making, transform lifestyles and the quality of urban life has the ability to become a commodity for those with money (Harvey 2012). These private developers are increasingly able shape the city to suit their own desires (Harvey 2012).

Cities have the ability to hold different ideals and experiences for different people: what the city is like to them, what it offers them as well as what they seek to do in the city (Pile 2005). Cities speak to the hearts desires; they are essentially what people envision them to be (Harvey 2012).

Rooftops

Turning to focus on the space of a rooftop specifically, there is limited literature about such spaces. What literature there is, is often concerned with 'living rooftops', particularly the ecological drive to use these spaces as gardens in an attempt to reduce the carbon footprint of a city (Devy, Swamy & Aravind 2009; Bazilchuk 2006). While this has been the case in developed countries (Taylor 2007; Bazilchuck 2006), it is not so in Johannesburg. Rooftop spaces, as I am concerned with, are used as exclusive venues complete with new sets of meanings and associations within the city.

De Certeau's (1984) seminal piece *The Practice of Everyday Life* shows how the exploration of cities can provide a unique perspective into how they work. De Certeau's reading of cities comes from both looking down on the city from above and walking the city on the ground level. Looking down on the city allows for a unique insight into how it operates. To an extent it removes one from that which they are studying, and enables them to read the city like a text, or an object over which to gaze. "...[T]he walker transforms each spatial signifier into something else" (De Certeau 1984: 98), walking enables those in the city to transform the space into what is meaningful to them. Looking over the city and walking in it enables both a broad and narrow, more focused view of it. To employ both an analysis from above and below is beneficial when approaching a study of the city, as it enables a more holistic view of city life.

Wright makes the notion that buildings should not be looked at in isolation but rather in relation to their context (1988). Although Wright (1988) states that urban history can show how sites affect their surroundings, at first glance the rooftop seems isolated from its surroundings. Linked only to the buildings they inhabit, rooftops in the city of Johannesburg city seem to hold themselves above the city, and not quite a part of it. This is an interesting notion to consider when studying the role of rooftop spaces within the larger context of the city.

Rooftop spaces in the Maboneng Precinct and Braamfontein occur within an already complex urban environment. With the ever-changing face of the city of Johannesburg, these spaces are novel breeding grounds for social reproduction. The different theoretical facets of interest with regard to these

spaces can be centred around 5 key points. Firstly, by making sense of the space each field site occupies, within the city of Johannesburg, is to understand what occurs in such spaces. Secondly, each field site regularly hosts events, which enable social reproduction to take place. Thirdly the cities ongoing regeneration allows for these spaces to be read in light of such processes of change. Fourthly the notion that all who wish to experience city life should be able to, and finally a holistic approach to studying rooftop spaces, à la De Certeau (1984), is beneficial to understanding the underlying workings of these spaces. It is these five facets that lay at the core of my research questioning, and which had an impact on both the way in which I conducted my research and made sense of my findings.

Chapter Three

Methodology

For each field site a similar methodological approach was adopted. I would contact the managers or owners of each space, and conduct semi-structured interviews with them. I had the opportunity to arrange interviews with Neville, the head of hospitality for the group that own Dukes, Brad, one of the owners of the Cinema, the company behind the Open Air Cinema, and Tsepho, who is part of the production company that holds the lease to the InterUrban rooftop space. After a series of emails exchanged in relation to Seascape, I was not able to converse with those who run the space. Managers cited a busy schedule as the reason for not meeting.

I engaged informants with a set of semi-structured questions, directed towards the venue with which they were involved. Questions varied from how the venue opened to each informant's own interest in rooftop spaces in Johannesburg. This was done to gauge their specific interest in hosting events on rooftops in Johannesburg, in a natural and conversational manner. I was given consent by each informant to conduct research and take photographs at the venues they were affiliated with, including those at Seascape, where consent was obtained via email.

These conversations occurred during the winter of 2014 in Johannesburg, where cold temperatures often discouraged outdoor events. I was encouraged to keep an eye out on social media for forthcoming events, as the informants were unsure of when the venues would re-open. Social media has become the foremost platform from which venues and events are

publicised. Sites, like Facebook, are able to bring people together in a wide variety of ways (Cabral 2011), in the case of my research it notifies groups of people about events that will be taking place.

I attended numerous events at each of my field sites in order to collect data, although it was not always possible to attend all of them. When attending events I initially began approaching others in attendance, by asking them about their experiences of both rooftop spaces and the city of Johannesburg. However this approach was of limited insight – I was often met with generic responses into the appeal of rooftop sites because of the views. It was difficult to engage with attendees and employees in such an environment as they were often unwilling to converse beyond social niceties – they were there to party, relax, or work. Although some interactions revealed interesting viewpoints, this was often only after I had explained the rationale behind my research. After such encounters I saw it fit to alter my methodology so that observations would make up the bulk of my research. However, where possible, I did make use of my limited engagement with informants.

I sought to represent the experience of each field site in a particular manner, by drawing heavily on written descriptions, supported by images of each venue and events that I attended. This was in order to give more depth to the atmosphere of being at each field site. During fieldwork there were a few methodological tools that provided to be of use, particular those related to capturing each site in a phenomenological manner. Phenomenology enables anthropologists think about lived experiences (Desjarlais & Throop 2011), as well as allows for the feeling of being within a certain space to be conveyed.

De Certeau (1984) posits walking as a methodological approach when attempting to understand city life. Ordinary practitioners of the city are those who walk in it, these *wandersmänners* are able to write their own experiences of city life (De Certeau 1984). Walkers weave spaces together from their own experiences, and transform them into meaningful places. Walking is therefore a thoughtful way in which to view the city. Ingold and Vergunst (2008) also place an emphasis on walking as a methodological tool. They note that a "purely verbal account of events or observations [such as] along a walk can convey little or nothing of the embodied experience of the walker, from which they have been abstracted" (Ingold & Vergunst 2008: 10), which is why it is important to offer different representations of ethnographic experiences. Although this research does not warrant walking as a method, it is a way in which to understand how spaces can be experienced by people who make use of them. Spurring from this idea of walking the city, I sought to employ a method of "being" in the city, attending events, hanging out at each of my field sites in order to better understand and be able to convey the experience of city life.

De Certeau (1984) posits another method of understanding a city is to become removed from it in order to read it from above. For De Certeau (1984) this enables a voyeur to be stripped of all associations from what lays below them. This idea of removal can be used to understand rooftop spaces, particularly with regard to assumed sense that these sites may not be connected to the city they are situated in.

Stewart's (2007) approach to anthropological writing is experimental yet insightful, particularly with regard to research that is based largely on

observations. With the use of descriptive passages Stewart (2007) is able to weave experiences together in order to reveal important themes. Stewart aimed to "slow the quick jump to representational thinking and evaluative critique long enough to find ways of approaching the complex and uncertain objects that fascinate because they literally hit us or exert a pull on us" (2007: 4). An observational approach enables a new entry into the somewhat complex occurrence of rooftop spaces in the city of Johannesburg. By drawing on descriptions and occurrences at each field site, insights into them can be written, thereby enabling an exploration of city life in Johannesburg – from my own experiences of them. These observations will aid in unpacking what goes on at each field site.

A visual representation of each field site is essential when recognising how they facilitate an experience of city life. Cameras are valuable research tools that can be used as an extension of one's senses. They have the ability to record field sites both in their entirety and focus on specific details (Collier & Collier 1986). Photographs are a nonverbal methodological tool that can be understood interculturally and cross culturally (Collier & Collier 1986). They serve to show people "realistically in the ebb and flow of their lives in motion" (Collier Jnr 1995: 245). Analysing photographs with regard to their participants, settings, artefacts and activities is particularly appropraiate when supporting descriptive writing (Hamilton 2000).

The use of a smartphone is also important during the age of social media where photographs are taken and shared at a rapid rate. Smartphones and the act of taking photographs have become a part of everyday life (Hjorth 2008; Aguayo & Calvert 2013). By making use of both a camera and a

smartphone to take photographs, I was able to partly capture occurrences at each field site.

Social media is the foremost way to find out about new, popular places in Johannesburg. It has become the leading platform from which companies are able to market and promote projects they are involved with (Mangold & Faulds 2009), thus increasing and enhancing their social connectivity (Bargh & McKenna 2004). The website and application of Facebook and Instagram, respectively, serve to promote events at rooftop venues. Facebook is a networking website that is used by people and businesses to connect with others, on a social level. On Facebook you are able to share your activities, post photographs and "like" the posts of others. Each of my field sites have Facebook pages, and are used to advertise events that are being hosted. One of the field sites also makes use of Instagram. This is a mobile application used by more than 300 million users (Systrom 2014), and is "a way [for users] to snap photos, tweak their appearance, and share them on various social networks with friends, family and complete strangers." (Hochman & Schwartz 2012: 6).

Social media, in a way, allows for each venue to exist in both the real and digital worlds. Not only are they valuable tools to discover how rooftop sites are marketed, but also an insight into how people make use of social networks when at specific events. Particularly during the process of fieldwork, it was interesting to find to what extent the virtual world meets the real word. This will further be discussed in the subsequent chapters.

The use of ethnographic research, coupled with descriptive and visual snippets of each space enabled an appropriate representation of each field

site. Such methodological tools assist in the process of discussing the data found during the process of fieldwork. The following chapter will go on to provide in depth descriptions of each field site.

Chapter Four

Field Sites

In true anthropological tradition, my methodology entailed hanging out at as many rooftop events as I was able to attend. As was expected, once I entered the field, my methodology changed to suit the conditions I found myself in. I chose four specific field sites to conduct research. Each site was in either Braamfontein or the Maboneng Precinct – areas that have undergone the most regeneration in recent years.

Maboneng, meaning *place of light* in Sotho, is the brainchild of Jonathan Liebmann (Maboneng 2014). It is an attempt to rejuvenate the inner city of Johannesburg by repurposing old and abandoned buildings by turning them into restaurants, art galleries and retail shops. This was done as Liebmann, after having lived and worked overseas, "felt that there was a huge need to re-engage with the city and to provide alternative living and working spaces" (Douglas 2014). Regeneration in Braamfontein, specifically around Juta Street is the work of Adam Levy, a property developer who sought to develop the inner city into a more integrated, culturally relevant space of consumption (Play Braamfontein 2013). Both these areas contribute to the regeneration of the city of Johannesburg, and are appropriate spaces from which to conduct research, as they are host to numerous rooftop spaces and events.

The four chosen field sites are: Dukes, Seascape, The InterUrban Rooftop and the Open Air Cinema. Each site caters to a variety of clientele,

and hosts a range of experiences, which is why they make for interesting areas of study.

Dukes



Figure 2: Panoramic view from the upper deck of Dukes

All WITS[3] students know about Dukes. In the crest between the pillared Great Hall and the Physics building, the glass-lined rooftop venue can easily be seen. Dukes is a venue on the rooftop of a building owned by a prominent hospitality group in South Africa. Opened as a bar in 2010 to attract visitors during the Fifa World Cup, Dukes is now available for private hire, specifically geared towards corporate events and the occasional public event. The venue is expensive, and entrance fees for public events are regulated in order to maintain its exclusivity (Neville, Oral Communication, 20 June 2014). By such marketing the venue has remained both an elusive and exclusive venue, only admitting entrance to a select few. It boasts a 360˚ view of Johannesburg and from 2014 has been the venue of the event Sunset Sessions, an outlet of deep house music, from the heart of the city.

Dukes is by far the most exclusive venue out of the four field sites I

[3] The University of the Witwatersrand

have chosen to focus on. It is elaborately decorated and caters to wealthier clientele, such as middle to upper class young adults. It is an interesting space to consider particularly because of the stark contrast between the venue itself and the city around it.

The whitewashed wooden floors are littered with an assortment of textured couches and ottomans on which to sit. Ceiling-to-floor glass walls boast an unobstructed view of the city of Johannesburg. There is a DJ booth, with the latest stylings of deep house music blasting through the speakers, echoing throughout the venue. Outside there are a scattering of tall tables and bar stools, with handfuls of people gathered around them.



Figure 3: The interior of Dukes



Figure 4: Exterior of Dukes

On the second floor is what Dukes is famed for – there is nothing quite like it in Johannesburg. Large four-poster square couches line the glass balustrades on the perimeter of the building. The view shows off the city in a spectacular fashion. You are able to see the expanse of Johannesburg in the open air. The white beams of the Mandela Bridge can be seen poised over the stationary yellow and blue striped metro trains, with the flashing red and white lights of a Coca-Cola billboard glows in the distance. To the opposite side you see WITS University, stretching all the way to the Northcliff Water Tower – another space in Johannesburg with a famed vantage point from which to overlook the city. Looking down you are able to see over the surrounding buildings, and all the way down to streets that lie below.



Figure 5: The rooftop deck

Being at Dukes gives off a strange dichotomy of emotions and sense of being. Admittedly I felt privileged to be able to be at the venue. I started to look beyond the glass-lined balustrades and attempted to make connections with the city around me. If it were not for the familiar landmark of WITS to the north of the venue, and the characteristic Nelson Mandela bridge to the South, I would not have been able to situate myself – I could have been in any metropolitan city in the world. Looking down to the streets below reminded me that I was still in Johannesburg, the graffitied buildings and taxi's in the streets seemed to be a world away. While those around me socialised and took photographs, I seemed to be the only observer trying to make sense of the space I was in, and the city that lay beneath my feet.

The InterUrban Rooftop

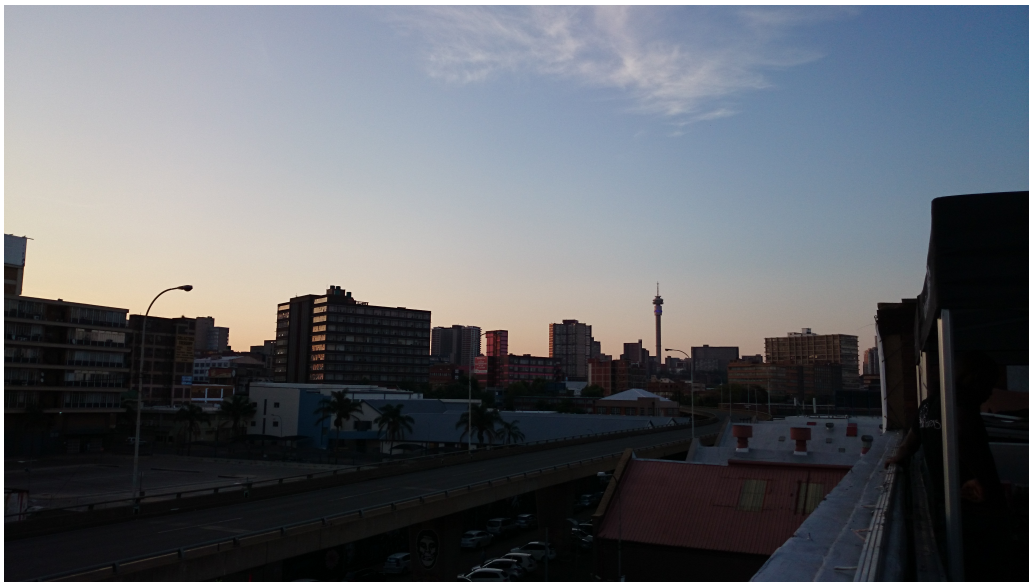

Figure 6: View from the InterUrban Rooftop

The InterUrban rooftop stands in the Maboneng Precinct. It is the rooftop space of an electrical company and is leased out by a production company in Johannesburg. The space is used for monthly events that showcases deep house music in the warmer spring and summer months. It is also hired out to those wanting to make use of the venue. The use of this space was to bring students and others into the city (Tsepho, Oral Communication, 18 July 2014). The use of this rooftop was experimental at first, however has remained a fixture in the Johannesburg social scene owing to its popularity,

The building that houses the InterUrban rooftop is a well kept, despite the large sets of rusted white burglar guards fitted to the bottom windows. There is a small crowd of young adults, perhaps in their late teens and early 20s waiting to gain entry to the event. An almost hidden door reveals the

entrance to the venue, where guests pay for their tickets, and are fitted with armbands. After five flights of stairs you have reached the InterUrban Rooftop, the home of many deep house events. Each event boasts a set list comprised of popular local deep house DJs, with the inclusion of the occasional international act.



Figure 7: View from the InterUrban rooftop, over Maboneng

The InterUrban Rooftop over looks part of the Maboneng Precinct, and the pointed Hillbrow Tower[4] can be seen in the distance. This rooftop is located in a more residential area of the city, and stands adjacent to an abandoned building, most of whose windows are shattered and covered with

[4] A communications structure in Hillbrow

cardboard. The InterUrban Rooftop is not particularly high in elevation, or sophisticated in what it offers, however people are continuously drawn to its location – be it the DJs who play the event, or the atmosphere of being in the city.



Figure 8: The afternoon crowds by the dance floor

This space has a casual feel to it. The venue is bare, save for a handful of wooden benches, and a grouping of white and blue couches and beanbags in the colours of a prominent sponsor of the event. It is almost as if I am at a friend's house party, with small groups of people animatedly making conversation with one another. It is an inviting venue. Looking out into the city before me, it is hard to recognise some of the surrounding buildings. The rooftop is situated amongst lower standing commercial buildings, perhaps it is this unfamiliarity, coupled with the bustle of ongoing life below that makes it feel like I am more in touch with the city around me. The graffitied buildings a few streets over remind me that I am in Maboneng, an up and coming suburb,

or sorts, in the midst of the city. The draw of the music detracted attention from the view, and towards the DJ booth.

This rooftop offers a unique insight into the city of Johannesburg, particularly owing to the predominantly student crowd of people drawn to the venue. It offers a different facet to rooftop experiences in the city as it exists in a space that is more occupied by city-dwellers, and residents passing through the area – both on foot and in taxis below.

Seascape

Seascape sits on Juta Street in Braamfontein. With beach sand, deck chairs and colourful umbrellas, Seascape transports visitors to a seaside bar, from within the city of Johannesburg. Open only on Saturdays during summer, Seascape is a place for patrons to have a drink at the wooden deck-style bar, and bask in the sun. The space is also available for private hire. It draws in a mixed crowd of people, hinging on the unique experience of the venue. Methodologically this field site gives a variation on what experiences can be had on a rooftop space, particularly considering the views are not of significant consequence.



Figure 9: Beach goers on a Saturday afternoon

There are trendy 20 and 30–somethings sprawled on nautically striped deck chairs and towels. With their toes in the sand they sip on drinks garnished with brightly coloured umbrellas, and casually take pictures on their smartphones of both themselves and their surroundings. There is a DJ behind a silver Mac laptop and Beats by Dr Dre headphones mixing the soundtrack for the afternoon. With beach balls floating around the venue, and colourful children's buckets scattered around serving as both ashtrays and decoration, the view is unlike any other seaside establishment.



Figure 10: The DJ playing music, with Nelson Mandela Bridge in the background

Looking past the concrete balustrade strung with unlit fairy lights, Seascape overlooks a bustling area of Braamfontein. Particularly during the weekends, the restaurants and bars below are filled to the brim, as are the sidewalks alongside them. Fashionably dressed people walk the streets, dodging the cars that circle the block repeatedly in search of parking spaces, with the ever-present car guards they come attached with. Seascape overlooks the tallest beams of the Nelson Mandela bridge, however much of this view is blocked by the neighbouring, and adjacent buildings.

As you sit on a deck chair, staring up at the umbrella overhead and zoning out with the beat of the music blasting through the speakers, it is easy to forget where you are, it is a calming space with people casually chatting amongst themselves, while taking photographs of their surroundings. Seascape provides city-goers with a seaside escape, from the heart of the city

of Johannesburg. The lackluster view coupled with the feeling of being at the seaside seems to constantly remind you of the non-descript location this space seems to convey.

The Open Air Cinema



Figure 11: Reflection of the Open Air Cinema sign on the glass wall of Minted

The Cinema is an independent cinema in the Maboneng Precinct that screens art house movies, South African made movies, and movies with cult followings. In the summer time the Cinema holds outdoor movie screenings in interesting rooftop and open space in Maboneng and Braamfontein, known as the Open Air Cinema. This initiative was to expand their business and to enable moviegoers to become part of an "exciting urban environment" (Brad, Oral Communication, 23 June 2014). Each event is held at a different location, making it a mobile space in which to experience the city.

The Open Air Cinema provides moviegoers with a unique experience of the city of Johannesburg, inviting them to become a part of the urban environment. Methodologically this enables an alternative experience of rooftops in the city, to a slightly older clientele. Given the moving location it enables an interesting take on why rooftop events can be alluring to those visiting the city.



Figure 12: Beanbags set up for a screening at Seascape

The Open Air Cinema moviegoers are in their late 20s to mid 30s. After helping themselves to complementary welcome drinks and popcorn, most people busy themselves with choosing a good beanbag on which to sit while watching the movie. Seats are reserved with loose jackets, blankets and other paraphernalia. Most patrons occupy themselves with chatter, and taking in the scenery before the movie begins.



Figure 13: The view from Minted, one of the venues used for a screening

Sitting on a beanbag in the middle of the city made me feel exclusive, part of select crowd that is privileged to be able to watch a movie almost above the city. Although the carefully selected spaces offer interesting views of the city, the actual experience of watching a movie creates a sense of disconnect. Watching the movie, popcorn in hand, made me forget where I was – I could have been anywhere in the country, immersed in the film on offer. My location above and within the city had little impact on what I was there to do.

Each of the four field sites I conducted fieldwork in varied in the experiences they offered and how they were used. By understanding the production of each of these sites, a more critical insight into the roles and dichotomies these rooftops are inextricably involved with will be revealed. The following chapter will provide a discussion of what was found during the fieldwork process, read through relevant theoretical points of reference.

Chapter Five

Discussion

A holographic green band was placed around my wrist, and I proceeded to walk up the 4 flights of stairs to reach the venue. Along the way there was a photographer armed with a DSLR camera waiting to take my picture against a backdrop lined with the name of the sponsor, and a large sign labeling the venue. The final set of stairs was made from a dark wood, and met a matching deck complete with an outdoor shower to the left, and a bar structure along the back wall of the venue. I was greeted by a woman who offered me a Jameson flavoured popsicle ice cream, while a man next to her filled freshly popped popcorn into brown paper bags. Beyond the Bedouin tent lined with fairy lights under which I was standing, the rest of the venue was covered in sand, with rows of brightly coloured beanbags waiting for moviegoers to claim them for the duration of the screening. This is The Open Air Cinema.

Rooftop venues in Johannesburg all compete to give those in attendance a unique experience in the city - something new to be a part of. The process of attending events followed a similar routine. Events are advertised and promoted on social media; those who wish to attend must usually drive into the city and gain a secure parking space, before paying a fee to gain entry into the event. Finally those in attendance often post about the events using various social media platforms. By exploring this sequence, in light of observations made at each field site, this discussion will give insight

into how the experience of the city life can be explored from the point of view of rooftop spaces. It will unpack the peculiarities of what is observed at these spaces and events in the areas of the Maboneng Precinct and Braamfontein.

Creeping[5]

Scrolling the stream of Facebook posts and updates is a norm for all 20-somethings, in search of both what your friends are up to, and for what events are being held in the areas around you. One afternoon while doing just that, a small red bubble appeared on my screen, alerting me to a notification from one of my Facebook connections. Sunset Sessions had invited me to an event they were hosting at Dukes the following weekend. The event promised to be unforgettable, with a stellar line-up of DJs that would be playing until the early hours of the morning. For research purposes, of course, I selected to "attend" the event, and continued to scroll the stream of posts on my virtual timeline. A few minutes later, another red bubble appeared on my screen. This notification was from a friend who had seen my RSVP. He "commented" on my activity, enquiring whether or not I go to parties on the ground anymore, owing to how many rooftop events he had seen me RSVP to during the span of my fieldwork.

Social media is both the beginning and end point of events that occur at each field site. When a person "likes" a venue's Facebook page, they are exposed to events set to take place at the venue. From here users are able to RSVP to events they wish to attend. Once selecting to "attend" an event,

[5] Creeping, or stalking, refers to the act of following peoples' activities on social network platforms (Creeping 2007).

this activity is visible to those with whom you are connected on Facebook. Virtually RSVP'ing to an event encourages interaction with others in reality. After having selected to attend an event I would often be asked by friends if I was really going to the event (virtual RSVPs are often not reliable), and whether or not I would recommend attending them. Some friends would be keen to accompany me to events, or to meet me at them.

Prior to an event, there is a certain amount of hype created on both Facebook and Instagram. In the days leading up to each event Sunset Sessions plaster their virtual event page with scenic rooftop pictures of Dukes, along with links to purchase tickets online. Potential attendees are urged to purchase these tickets before they sell out, as limited tickets will be available at the door.

Forthcoming events held at the InterUrban Rooftop were advertised on Instagram, by posting pictures of both the venue and which DJs would be playing. From here, those that follow the account are able to like and comment on these posts, often tagging friends in the images to enquire whether or not they would be interested in attending the event. Attendees are urged to purchase tickets before the event, and often these online tickets sell out a few days before the event is set to take place. Another reason for pushing for online ticket sales is to ensure the venues are well equipped for the projected turn out. One morning while setting up for an event later that day, Tsepho at the InterUrban rooftop asked me if I thought many people would attend the event. He told me that only 100 people had bought tickets online, which was why the company had provided a limited amount of beverages – particularly alcoholic ones. Aside from The Open Air Cinema,

which has a limited amount of seating for each screening, events I attended did not always sell out. The InterUrban Rooftop in the height of summer was the only venue that regularly had large queues of people, extending well around the side of the building, with people waiting to gain admittance. Bouncers let people enter the venue at limited intervals, at the word of the person in charge of the space.

Although it is not limited to rooftop spaces, social media is a powerful tool that can be used to promote popular spaces in the city. It enables a venue to have control in how the space is marketed, in a way that ensures maximum visibility and creates a desire to attend events (Bargh & McKenna 2006). It also allows venues to be prepare for events in advance, depending on the interest in specific events. Through social media these spaces are able to gain a following, and are attributed with certain meanings and associations, by people who often have not been to the spaces before. These spaces are sought after, by both those who are regulars at the events, and those who wish to experience them.

The popularity of social media, particularly in the virtual world can be read in light of De Certeau (1984). In reading cities from above, he posits a removal from them. One means of getting understanding the inner workings of city life is to read it from above, in a space free from associations that have been imparted on it by authors and spectators alike. If social media helps create virtual spaces from which rooftop spaces can market themselves in a manner that removes them from the real world, then understanding sites from above too can create a sense of removal from the context in which it resides in.

Social media enables potential attendees of events to engage with these spaces in a virtual realm before physically being there. The way in which these spaces have gained meaning in the virtual world speaks to the context in which they exist in, one that is intertwined with the practices of social media. Social media enables each venue to exist in two interlinking spaces, the virtual world and the real world. By existing in a virtual world, each space is able to gain certain associations, resulting in people wanting to visit the spaces in reality. It is social media that enables these spaces to become imbued with meanings.

Creeping in the digital age allows spaces, in areas that have been regenerated, to accumulate interest and popularity making them spaces that people wish to be seen at. Creeping is a way in which people are able to virtually find out about popular events and spaces in the city. In most instances social media was the foremost means of finding out about rooftop spaces as well as forthcoming events for the selected target market with access to such platforms.

Day Visits

After leaving my home in Greenside, I got onto the M2 highway going south. With the GPS on my smartphone directing me, I took the Joe Slovo off-ramp, and navigated the one-way roads of the CBD to reach Main street – the home of the InterUrban Rooftop. I opened my window and heard the sound of music, which emanated from the rooftop venue above. While doing so, a car guard in a faded luminescent vest saw this as a sign to approach my

car. After paying him in advance to watch over my parked car on the streets of Maboneng, I proceeded to enter the venue.

At the event, I ran into a friend from high school whom I had not seen for a few years. We listened to the music blasting from the speakers, while the light faded across the skyline behind us. Roxanne travelled from Lenasia to attend this event, also under the helpful guidance of her GPS, she wondered out loud about the safety of her car, parked underneath the suspended highway that lay almost adjacent to the rooftop we stood on. She asked me if I would mind coming with her to check on her car, and after a short walk around the perimeter of the building, we saw her red Polo safely where she had parked it.

There is a long history of people moving into urban spaces for different reasons. Human mobility in Africa in particular enables the transformation of urban centres within the continent (Landau 2007). Urban African spaces are spaces of flows, "with people maintaining an ever-expanding array of localized and translocal commitments and loyalties" (Landau 2007). There are streams of people moving into city spaces, however in the case of regenerated Johannesburg, this mobility occurs in a temporal manner. With regard to rooftop events in particular, people often enter the city for specific events, as opposed to as a part of their day-to-day activities. At Seascape, leaning over the balustrade, Victor chats to me about his ventures into the city. "With all of the development going on" he says, "there are always new things happening in the city. I'm always on the look out for new events to go to. I usually come

into Braamfontein for specific events, maybe once every few weeks" (Oral Communication, 28 June 2014).

Such a temporal entry into the city is interesting to consider particularly in light of South Africa's past. During the era of apartheid, people – specifically black South Africans, were required to travel into the city they worked in, but could not live in owing to physical separation of citizens under the Group Areas Act (Nuttal & Mbembe 2007; Blom Hansen 2006). Since the end of apartheid, the city has become a reflection of the changes that have taken place in both government and policy (Frenzel 2014). Johannesburg became the home to a largely working class and immigrant population, who both live and work in the city (Frenzel 2014; Leggett 2003). Given the ongoing regeneration within Johannesburg, these areas have seen the temporary entrance of a different range of people into the city.

In the case of rooftop venues, entrance is governed by which events people wish to attend. Such events have seen the city once again becoming a space where people who do not reside in the city flock to it for specific reasons. Regeneration sees people entering the city for recreational purposes, in the case of rooftop spaces in order to attend specific events. This is exemplary of the making and re-making of city life (Beauregard & Haila 1997) in a manner that shows a reworking of aspects in the past. Owing to the process of regeneration, the nature of the city along with previous associations and meanings attributed to it is undergoing change.

When people drive into the city for a specific event it is often met with a sense of hesitation. There is a conception of the city as a dangerous space which to enter (Dirsuweit 2002), sentiments echoed by my own parents when

I began venturing into the city. Throughout my research I was always confronted with the questions “where are you going?”, “is it safe?”, “where are you going to park?”, and “are you going alone?”. Most visitors into the city travel from various suburbs, hailing from Parktown, Emmarentia, Robertsham, Soweto, Lenasia and even as far as Pretoria: they flock to the city centre of Johannesburg to attend these events. With cars parked in the roads surrounding the venues, those in attendance often look down from the rooftop, surreptitiously checking on their cars, to check that they are still where they were parked.

With the ongoing regeneration occurring in Johannesburg, negative perceptions of the city are being slowly replaced with more positive ones (Pile 2005). People are feeling increasingly safer to enter the city recreationally, with the CBD as the new playground for people in search of a taste of the city and experiences that only the city is able to give them. Although it has yet to be seen if such change will be lasting.

The two elements to consider when entering the city are the temporary entrance into the city on an event-to-event basis, and the negative associations of the city itself. People flock to cities for a number of different reasons. While it was once associated with crime, an illegal immigrant population and general dilapidation, cities ultimately “offer the opportunity for forming new associations, opening up new futures” (Robinson 2006). As these perceptions change, perhaps so too will the nature of entry into the city.

Regeneration and a Gated Johannesburg

Dukes is on the 22nd of a privately owned building. You are usually required to sign a guest book before being allowed entry, however when there are events at Dukes, guests walk past the sign in desk, and the metal turnstiles that are no longer in operation, and stand before bouncers dressed in black suits. One wields a metal detector that he lazily waves over male guests, while briefly using it to prod into the handbags of female guests. From here you are directed into an awaiting elevator to take you to the 22nd floor. The doors open to a large sign reading 'D', and to the right there is a table with a cash register to facilitate the purchase of tickets for the event. After purchasing a ticket your arm is stamped with ultraviolet ink to signify you have in fact paid to attend the event. Legitimate attendance is strictly monitored with the use of a small ultraviolet light at the entrance of the event. What lies beyond this checkpoint is the grandeur of Dukes.

It is interesting to see how separated not only these rooftop spaces are from the rest of the city but also the areas of Maboneng and Braamfontein. Two versions of the city have seemed to emerge: regenerated Johannesburg and Joburg[6]. Regenerated Johannesburg has the aesthetic of a wordily city, chic clothing shops sit alongside quaint cafés selling gourmet delicacies and micro brewed beers. Well-dressed people park their cars in the streets, and walk to their desired destinations with a slow pace, casually checking their smartphones. In some aspects regenerated Johannesburg can be considered

[6] From here on out, Regenerated Johannesburg will refer to areas in which regeneration has occurred, Joburg will refer to areas where regeneration has not taken place. Johannesburg will be used to refer to the city as a whole.

a hipster take over of the city – ironically appropriating aspects of the city that is considered to be covetable. Joburg is, in some aspects, more derelict. With its worn down spaza[7] shops, busy fast-food outlets and chain stores. Car guards guide hipsters and visitors to the city into tight parking slots, while those passing through the areas walk with purpose, some carrying packets laden with groceries.

Such disparities serve as an interesting way in which to read the city of Johannesburg as a whole. Kruger (2013) suggests a reading of Johannesburg as an edgy city where such contrasts remain at the foreground of studies of the city itself. Kruger (2013) highlights that edgy cities, like Johannesburg, have unevenly developed districts and this has been characteristic of the city from its inception. These notions of a divided city have long been associated with the early gold mining industry, the era of aparthied, as well as changes and innovation in periods following the end of apartheid (Kruger 2013).

Such division can also be used to understand regenerated spaces, along with the rooftops that are situated within them, as a form of a gated community. Gated communities are associated with the loss of a sense of community in light of urbanisation, coupled with the increase in fear of security that is associated with city life (Wilson-Doenges 2002). They see a retreat from the urban, in search of more secure spaces for citizens to inhabit (Low 2001; Wilson-Doenges 2002) – boomed enclaves with security checkpoints and intercoms to facilitate those wishing to enter or exit the spaces (Chipkin 2013). In the case of the city of Johannesburg, this is prominently seen in the

[7] Informal convenience stores.

aftermath of the middle class retreat to the suburbs (Bethlehem 2013; Bremner 2000).

Gated communities in South Africa have long been known to exist in the chase of the ideal (Duka 2013) and are protected against outside influences (Chipkin 2013). They enable a better understanding of the communities that choose to be enclosed within them. To be gated is to selectively separate oneself in the name of safety. In a sense this is what regenerated spaces in the city of Johannesburg have become. Although not rigidly separated, or "gated" per say, these spaces, venues and establishments only enable a certain class of people entry into these areas of city – those who are able consume what is on offer within these spaces. Although Liebmann, the propertier behind the Maboneng Precinct, argues that these areas are the opposite of being gated (in Brodie 2011), spending time in these spaces makes such a claim questionable. This is because their very nature is exclusionary.

Rooftop spaces in themselves add another element of gating, by regulating and physically marking those who enter and exit the venue with the use of armbands and ultraviolet stamps. These spaces see a specific clientele of people who frequent them, perhaps in search of a safe environment in which to experience the city. Such gating leads to the question of whom these regenerated areas are developed to cater to, along with who these gated areas serve, those who reside in the "edgy city" of both Regenerated Johannesburg and Joburg.

This City, is My City[8]

The city of Johannesburg has different ideals for different people. Venturing into the city for the first time for me, a middle class student, was done with caution; however once I grew familiar with the location of each of my field sites the city itself became increasingly familiar. Driving through the city I was able to navigate my way through the afternoon traffic, and the occasional roadblock without the use of the GPS on my smartphone to direct me. I felt at ease when scouting out new locations to visit, and even when conducting research at each of my field sites I had a sense of entitlement: these were my spaces, my venues, and my city. The city that I had spent far too long shying away from at the words of those who had feared it. Were it not for transformations to the city as a result of regeneration, I would not have been afforded such a sense of familiarity and entitlement.

With industrialisation urban spaces are open to transformation (Merrifield 2006). Such transformation is often orchestrated by state powers, however in the case of regeneration in Johannesburg, this has been done by private developers. According to Harvey (2012), the city belongs to all those who wish to inhabit it. When the city starts to become developed and inhabited by the middle and upper classes, this is a way in which it becomes more accessible to different groups of people. These are the people who readily consume the products, services and experiences on offer in these areas, such as visiting a beach in the middle of a city, watching movies from a rooftop space and enjoying deep house music as the sun sets over the

[8] From the song "This City" by Patrick Stump

skyline. People who attend these events are able to afford the prerequisite entrance fees, they tend to be fashionably dressed, wearing name-brand clothing, propped with the latest of smart phones. The Maboneng Precinct according to Walsh (2013) saw a return to the city by the suburban upper to middle class South Africans. This urban area was repurposed to suit the needs of the suburban middle class, in their own vision of what city life should be. This return, however, is in a temporal manner, where visitors to the rooftop spaces specifically enter the city to attend certain events or venues. For Crew and Beaverstock (1998) these spaces reflect both cultural and economic processes, which have enabled the city to be inhabited by a different class of people. Lefebvre argues that because of such processes of transformation to the urban becomes a facet of the political, where “class issues [become] explicitly urban issues, struggles around territoriality [are] out in the open” (Merrifield 2006: 67).

Regenerated Johannesburg seems to unintentionally exclude those who are unable to afford what is on offer – those who inhabit the city, guarding cars in the streets and those who plead for money from those who have entered the space. This makes visible the disparity between social classes in Johannesburg. Interaction between social classes occurs on an incredibly narrow scale, and is often limited to car-guards around each venue and those working at the event. Graham (2007) makes this distinction visible when using it to conceptualise the differences between those who own automobiles and those who do not. For Graham there are “gargantuan disparities between the automobilized citizens of the affluent northern suburbs and the immigrant street-hawkers on the roadsides in the inner-city, they are

two sides of the same coin" (2007: 69). These classes of people exist in the same city, despite the disparities between them. In the case of regenerated Johannesburg and Joburg however, these rooftop spaces do not allow for an amalgamation of all classes of people who enter the city (Mumford in Pile 2005), but rather an intensification of relations between them (Pile 2005). Perhaps this resonates with Pieterse, who states that the "overwhelming urban crises of unemployment, inequality, social exclusion of subaltern groups and spatial segregation that stem from apartheid ideologies of racialised fragmentation must be acknowledged and confronted" (2006: 286). This is exemplary of how the racially divided past of South Africa has translated into disparities between classes (Seekings & Nattrass 2005), and furthermore between those that occupy regenerated Johannesburg and Joburg.

Chipkin's (2013) assertion that there is an emergence of a new social world in unexpected places in 21st century South Africa is particularly true with regard to rooftop spaces. These spaces have resulted in the city becoming open to new associations, identities, and experiences (Robinson 2006), enabling different people entry into the city, albeit on a more temporary basis. Although this implies exclusion in the city, this simultaneously allows for the inclusion of a group of people who were once too afraid to enter the city. As posited by Harvey (2012), the right to the city is for all with the desire to occupy it – no matter their stature.

The managers and owners of Dukes, The InterUrban Rooftop and The Open Air Cinema have no qualms about the experiences they provide within the city. Brad, one of the owners of The Open Air Cinema says that rooftop screenings allow movie goers to have "a different experience of the city, and

[for them] to be a part of an exciting urban environment" (Oral Communication, 23 June 2014). Speaking about the exclusivity of Dukes, head of hospitality Neville does not take the disconnect between those who enter the venue and those who live in the city seriously – "it is what it is" (Oral Communication, 20 June 2014) he commented nonchalantly. Abbey, who works in the Maboneng Precinct reminded me that these venues are still businesses. Even though they have high entrance costs, they are covering other costs of running the event, exclusion is not intentional, but rather an accepted by-product.

Private developers have the capacity to create the city in their own image of what city life should be (Harvey 2012; Frenzel 2014). When asked about rooftop spaces in the city of Johannesburg, Brad from The Open Air Cinema sees this outcrop of exclusive spaces as "Joburg catching up with the rest of the world, by capitalising on what they already have" (Oral Communication, 23 June 2014). Despite skeptics, regeneration in the city has enabled a new injection of funding to it; it has brought in a class of people who once fled the city, making it accessible for a wider range of people. Although its effects are predominantly seen within the specific domains of the Maboneng Precinct and Braamfontein, regeneration does have the ability to draw attention to surrounding areas (Frenzel 2014). The effect it has on these surrounding communities, however, has yet to be seen.

To take a concrete stance on whether such development is positive or negative may not be an ideal line of thought, given the subjectivity involved in making such claims. This research is focused on the experience of the city from vantage point of rooftop spaces, by those who frequently inhabit these

spaces. To take the stance that regeneration is bad is not particularly beneficial in this case. The by-product of regeneration can be aptly summed up by the quote: “it is what it is” (Neville, Oral Communication, 20 June 2014). Regeneration served to invigorate the inner city by opening it up to a different class of people – and it has done just that. This, however, may give rise to a further line of questioning with regard to the impact of regeneration on those who reside in the city and in surrounding areas.

Kicking it Deep

The DJ booth is on a raised stand, sheltered by a red Bedouin tent. There is a lone DJ rocking over the soundboard from which his music emanates. The dance floor stays empty in the afternoon, with people preferring to chat to their friends and drink in the sunlight. As the skies turn dark, more and more people crowd the dance floor – moving to beat of deep house music throbbing through the speakers. Chatting to a group students standing just under the cover of the tent, I realised just how intertwined the genre of deep house music has become with events in the city of Johannesburg, including three of my field sites – Dukes, the InterUrban Rooftop and Seascape. Deep house music surges from speakers that are scattered around each venue. It is mixture of techno and house, fused with instrumental breaks, and the occasional vocal interlude. With his reflective sunglasses hanging from the crew neck of his t-shirt, and a plastic cup filled with a pungent beverage, David animatedly described the music: “It’s like you can feel the beat of the music in your body – it just makes sense when they

play it" (Oral Communication, 13 September 2014). Deep house is the new vogue.

Deep house was once relegated to Truth – a dingy house-turned-nightclub in Midrand (a suburb between Johannesburg and Pretoria). It has a notorious reputation for the use of recreational drugs, and people of questionable character according to many who have visited the venue. However for the discerning frequenter of Truth, it is known for playing the best in underground music in South Africa. It is a respected location for deep house DJs to play their music; especially during a time where it had not garnered the following it has in recent years.

The year 2014 saw a dramatic increase in the popularity of deep house music, and has led to its increased radio play and resulting commercialisation. Deep house music has survived the move from the dark, besmirched basement of Truth, to the skies of Johannesburg, and its enthusiasts have followed suit. David welcomed the change in venue, it gave him the chance to see more of the city. It was not only at the InterUrban rooftop where I got the opportunity to chat to him, I often ran into him at Dukes where he attended other deep house events, often dragging me to the dance floor to feel the music as he did. Rooftop spaces in regenerated Johannesburg seem to have capitalised on the newfound popularity of deep house music. By hosting events with the latest and most popular DJs of the genre, the venues and related events have cemented their status as landmarks in the city that play deep house music. For Harvey "[t]he better the common qualities a social group creates, the more likely it is to be raided and appropriated by private

profit-maximizing interests" (Harvey 2012: 78). Owing to such a vested interest in deep house music, event companies have been able to capitalise on this, and has allowed them to create an experience for deep house enthusiasts within the city of Johannesburg.

The playing of this genre of music at rooftop spaces in part has enabled a new sense of community in Johannesburg, a space for deep house enthusiasts to gather in order to listen to this music, with spectacular views of the city they inhabit. According to Lefebvre festivals or events have the ability to "tighten social links" (Lefebvre in Merrifield 2006: 14). With deep house connecting all those who choose to attend these events, a sense of community is apparent at Dukes and the InterUrban rooftop. For Harvey "[t]here is, in effect, a social practice of *commoning.* This practice produces or establishes a social relation with a common whose uses are either exclusive to a social group or partially or fully open to all and sundry" (2012: 73). There is a link between the social group and the common, enabling different groups to engage with the surroundings they find themselves in. Regenerated areas can be regarded as the creation of a new sense of commons – one that has become intricately involved with capitalisation. In rooftop spaces specifically commoning can be said to occur amongst those who listen to the genre of deep house music.

In a sense these spaces can become exclusionary. I have encountered people at Dukes who attended events in order to see the venue itself, as opposed to enjoying the music, "I don't know how to dance to this music" complained one guest, while her friends tried to drag her to the dance floor. She left soon after, citing having seen the venue and her disdain for the

genre as justification for her departure. Dukes was the draw card, however the music was the reason as to why she left.

At the InterUrban rooftop however, more guests seem to be deep house enthusiasts. Although organizers capitalise on the views, and the experience of being on a rooftop, more people can be seen moving to the music at this rooftop compared to any other field site. The views are lackluster in comparison to the other field sites, however the charm of the space is the music which draws in a regular student crowd. Deep house enthusiasts become regular frequenters of venues with the best DJs playing. They are spaces in which they are able to enjoy their favourite music from within the city, which enable social reproduction to take place. Rooftops therefore become a space where social reproduction is able to take place, by allowing communities to be constructed and are maintained by virtue of both location and the playing of a similar genre of music.

But First, Let Me Take a Selfie[9]

On the balcony of Dukes at sunset, party-goers gather to take in the last light of day. Armed with their smartphones, most take pictures of the scenery around them. Hundreds of photographs are taken of the landscape, of friends, and the ever-present selfie. There is a professional photographer roaming around at the event. While he occasionally approaches groups of people to take their picture, he is more often than not approached to do so by guests. I overheard a woman telling her friends "I just came here to take pictures!" while overlooking the pointed Hillbrow Tower in the fading sunlight

[9] From the song "#Selfie" by The Chainsmokers

to the west of the building. Dukes is one of the best locations from which to view the surrounding city – and all those who attend events at this location are aware of this.



Figure 14: A guest at Dukes taking a photograph of the city

Each event overflows with people taking photographs on their smart phones of themselves and their surroundings for their Instagram accounts or Facebook profiles. They often search for the best lighting and favourable angles from which to snap. As I walked past groups of people, I was often asked, and sometimes offered to take photographs of groups of friends. At events at Dukes, The Open Air Cinema and at the InterUrban Rooftop there are professional photographers taking photographs. After events people scour Facebook in search of their images that are posted on this platform. I have experience of doing this myself, often in search of the best picture to post on my Instagram or Facebook accounts. It is often a task delegated to whomever spends the most time social networking, and owing to my research

interests I was often the go-to source for friends looking for professional photographs of themselves and their friends at events.



Figure 15: A group of friends taking a selfie at Dukes



Figure 16: A group waiting to pose for a photograph at the InterUrban rooftop

Virtual sharing is characteristic of Generation Y (Cabral 2011). Born between 1980 and 1999 this generation grew up in the age of the internet, where posting and sharing activities online is a norm. While chatting to a fellow sun bather at Seascape, I noticed him carefully position his drink on a table, so that he could get the ideal shot of it, coupled with the grainy beach sand and the Nelson Mandela Bridge resting in the background. "I don't know why we need to share our lives so much, and get so many likes on Instagram. It doesn't even matter a few hours later" (Oral Communication, 4 October 2014) he said as he took multiple pictures, with the touch of an icon on the screen of his phone. According to Cabral "Generation Y is unconsciously addicted to social media and as a result they feel constant social pressure to be connected with technology" (2011: 6). With a constant need to share, rooftop spaces offer a particularly superior vantage point from which to take and subsequently post photographs.

Not only do people take photographs of their surroundings, but also of themselves within these spaces. These are known as "selfies", where the people take photographs of themselves with the use of the front facing lens on a smartphone. Warfield (2014) examines the process of taking selfies by women and questions what selfies are representative of – be it the person taking the photograph, or the tools that enable their existence. While some studies consider selfies as inherently narcissistic, Warfield (2014) considers them to be a subjective form of self-expression by the person, usually a woman, who is taking it. Posting about events in the form of selfies or images of the events is a way in which they are able to project their own identity to the world (Fallon 2014). Instagram has the ability to "reveal an

interesting, if idiosyncratic portrait of [a] person" (Fallon 2014: 59). It also has the ability to chronicle "personal relationships and individual experiences…[that] may tell us who the person is or who they want to be, the things they like or what society tells them they should be like" (Fallon 2014: 59). Instagram enables those who attend events to project their experiences on others, in a way that perpetuates what is popular at the time. While Bourdieu (1990) posits photography as a product within the domain of the private, Instagram turns this idea on its head - photographs posted on Instagram are defined by the fact that they are shared (Champion 2012). Photographs are posted on this public platform, thus reshaping how intimacy is experienced and defined (Hjorth 2009).



Figure 17: A movie-goer taking a photograph during a screening at Seascape

During, and after events, there is a significant increase in Instagram and Facebook posts. This occurrence is known as visual weight (Hochman & Schwartz 2012). After attending events, I noticed that my Instagram newsfeed was filled snapshots of the day's event, heavily filtered in order to portray the best possible representation of it. What also must be taken into account when using social media is that these platforms work at rapid rates. Snapshots of events are quickly surpassed by other popular events and hash tags (Champion 2012). This makes events incredibly short-lived, not long after they have ended their supporting posts have dwindled. After each event has taken place venues quickly gear up to promote upcoming events.

When I have posted about my research on Instagram or Facebook, they were often met with hints of jealousy – friends asked if they could help me with research, and if they could use it as an excuse to go to parties and events every weekend. At events others in attendance would often tell me how lucky I was to have such an enjoyable topic to research. Posting about attending such events was personally a task I was hesitant of doing. I do not consider my online presence to be profound as I do not regularly post about my activities, however during the process of research I thought it would be interesting to see what the reaction was. I posted images to both Facebook and Instagram, and often received numerous "likes" and "comments". Most often people would comment, virtually, to ask where I was, as well as about my research topic, often exclaiming jealousy and offering their services as research assistants in order to join me during field work. In the real world my posts became a conversation starter, with my friends and peers firing me with

questions about my fieldwork, and suggestions about alternative approaches to my project.

Social media has the dual ability to showcase a person's identity as well as the venue itself. Attending events at each venue is the manifestation of what is seen in the virtual world, as is posting about them. Social media can be posited against De Certeau's (1984) approach to understanding cities from above. He suggests that becoming removed from the city enables it to be read like a text, free from all associations that may exist on a ground level. Social media helps create virtual worlds, which are too removed from the real world. Understanding sites from above too can create a sense of removal from the context in which it resides. While social media can be utilised in a manner that is removed from the real, so too does reading a space from above.

Social media is thus a cyclic and symbiotic process which involves the interlocking of both the virtual and the real worlds, in a way that promotes both the identity of the person who attends the event, and the venue itself. Taking photographs at rooftop spaces and subsequently posting them are a way to show people where they are in the real world, as well as enable them to have a presence in the virtual world of social networking (Batchen 2008). This is one way in which to read the city, in terms of how it can be experienced as the manifestation of the virtual world in reality. Posting about experiences at these spaces is a way of creating a sense of self, governed by being in the city as well as a presence on social media networks.

Experiencing the City

The Open Air Cinema's first rooftop screening for the year was held at Minted, an industrial bar, overlooking Wolmarens street in Braamfontein. Upon entering the venue, you are presented with a welcome drink, before being directed to a mobile photo booth set up for the occasion. With an assortment of props on hand, such as top hats, feather boas and fake mustaches, the woman in charge of the booth gave me suggestions on how to pose for a set of four photographs. Each set was immediately uploaded to The Open Air Cinema's Facebook page, enabling easy access. With large turbines secured to the roof of the venue and concrete floors beneath my feet, the venue holds under one hundred multicoloured beanbags, all set before a white screen onto which the movie would be projected. Opposite this, at the far end of the venues there was a table with a laptop, from which a DJ plays a mix of popular music with jazz undertones. To the left of this sat a popcorn machine which provides all movie-goers with complementary popcorn. The walls were set in glass and overlook Smit Street. With the city lights surrounding us, and cars lights sweeping the streets below – the venue is set for a scenic experience, however as the movie starts to play, all interest is lost in the surrounding views.

Many people are fascinated with views of the city of Johannesburg. In recent years renderings of the skyline has increased in popularity in the form of key rings, canvassed photographs, and even wall appliqués. It allows people of Johannesburg to take pride in their city, and become a part of the happenings of city life. I remember being in New York in 2011 where a group

of friends and I spent an evening trying to get to the roof of any building we could get into, to take in the visage of the skyline we had all encountered on television and in movies. The city life of New York has always been alluring, and the dense city has held fascination for many voyeurs around the world. In Johannesburg, this has not always been the case. However with ongoing regeneration, many feel more comfortable to flock to the city – at least the areas of Maboneng and Braamfontein. It has enabled people from Johannesburg, and elsewhere to experience their own version of city life.

Throughout this project, I encountered numerous people taking in the view of the city, perched on the swanky rooftops looking down into the streets below. People have different reasons for visiting rooftop spaces in Johannesburg and make different connections to the city when in these spaces. Looking to such encounters can provide an insight into how cities can be read by those looking over, or down, on them.

Richard is originally from Mozambique, and studies in Pretoria. Having lived in apartment buildings fall of his life, he has long been fascinated with rooftop spaces – envisioning holding his own events on them. He has family in Johannesburg, and is usually in the city for certain events. When standing on the upper deck of the Dukes rooftop, he makes connections to the different areas of the city. With a drink in hand he motions to Fordsburg – his favourite area of the city, and to the South, where one of his cousins lives. The city is posited as an object on which to gaze, from which he is able to connect with the spaces he holds dear to him.

Sitting with her toes in the sand on a Saturday afternoon at Seascape, Angelina chats about why she visits the city. It is a "happening" space to be. Living in Johannesburg, she is always on the lookout for exciting things to do. Initially she was hesitant when coming into the city, which was always considered a dangerous space to be, however this feeling has dissipated with more trips to the hub of Braamfontein and Maboneng. The views of the city draw her to interesting spaces, and Angelina like many others spends time online searching for rooftop events to attend during weekends.

Gazing over the car headlights sweeping Juta street at night while casually tossing popcorn into her mouth, Patricia is impressed at how many great locations The Open Air Cinema has been able to procure for their events. She is a regular at these screenings, and has thought that each location seems to be more impressive than the rest. It has exposed her to new venues in the city, and has familiarised her with the streets of Johannesburg more than she was able to in previous years.

Looking over the University of the Witwatersrand campus, Nabila is troubled by the positioning of Dukes. "It's a beautiful venue, but it feels likes I'm not really in the city, like I'm too far away from it, I feel like that's what all these areas, like Arts on Main [in the Maboneng Precinct] and even Braamfontein are like…it's a weird way to experience the city." (Oral Communication, 28 December 2014).

What does it mean to be in the city? To experience it? To look over it? These questions are what plagued me during the process of fieldwork. Being in the city is a subjective experience – different people make different

connections to the city around them depending on what is meaningful to them. It requires people to engage with their own feelings of what it is to experience the city. While most do so in a way that praises the views and experiences they are able to have, to a lesser extent people are concerned with negative aspects of regeneration. Perhaps to an extent rooftop venues further removes one from the city, despite having the guise of being in it. Connections made to the city are mainly linked to the experience and views that come with visiting rooftop spaces. This is what strikes resonance with party and movie-goers in the city of Johannesburg.

Viewing the City

A question that arises from such experiences is: what are people looking at from these venues? The answer to this question differs from venue to venue and with regard to those who are in attendance. Based on my own observations at each venue, this is what I saw:

Dukes by far has the greatest view of the city of Johannesburg. Looking over the city definitely creates a sense of disconnect between you, and the city around you – you are elevated, and removed from it. Looking down over the streets below, the buildings are coated with bits and pieces of graffiti, people ambling about on a Sunday afternoon, and the occasional taxi speeding through the almost empty streets. It is reminded me of the opening scene in a movie, an overhead shot of a metropolitan city, before zooming in to focus on a specific site. WITS university always draws me in, as I made out the shapes of the various buildings I would visit on campus. I noticed other

buildings I was familiar with, from having driven around the city in the past, however the rest of the mostly unfamiliar city is poised for me to look over in a spectacular manner as the sun sets, and the city is lit from within.

Seascape overlooks Juta street, and the bustling weekend crowds that flock to the city. The venue is on the rooftop floor of the building, and the experience of Seascape is more alluring than the view that it boasts, which is mostly obstructed by the surrounding buildings. The venue is a constant reminder that it is situated in Braamfontein, a heavily regenerated area of the city. However sitting on a deck chair with sand beneath your feet and a DJ playing in the background, it is easy to forget your location in Johannesburg. It enables you to escape city life, while being in the midst of it.

The InterUrban rooftop looks over the Maboneng Precinct. It is situated in a more utilised area of the city, that is to say the surrounding buildings are more residential and functional for those who live in and around these spaces. From the rooftop the Ponte Tower[10] can be seen, spanning across to the Hillbrow Tower. There are groups of non-descript buildings which I was unable to recognise. Although being initially taken by the view at the InterUrban rooftop, this does not last long. People around me were drawn to the music, the bar and to their friends, however the space and views are not extraordinary.

The Open Air Cinema allows people not only to experience different venues in the city, but also a different take on the movie-going experience. It is hard to say what people are specifically drawn to – the view or the experience of watching a movie in a novel space. Screenings have occurred

[10] A residential skyscraper in Hillbrow

at Minted, a bar on the rooftop of a building in Braamfontein, and at Seascape on Juta Street. Each movie screening has wielded a different experience. Minted was an industrial style bar, the venue was an enclosed space, situated between buildings that stood taller than it. The view were largely obstructed, with your gaze drawn to the streets below. At Seascape, the atmosphere was more relaxed, movie-goers were huddled under blankets, some bravely licking on popsicles despite the cold weather. While the movie is being screened, it is easy to become captivated by what is being screened as opposed to the artificially lit city on display from each location.

> "Indeed, in so far as being or existence is not bestowed by creation or creator, place can be said to take over roles otherwise attributed to a creator – god or to the act of creation: roles of preserving and sustaining things in existence" (Casey 1998: 4)

Places, or in this case rooftops thus have the ability to create certain experiences with the city of Johannesburg. Rooftops wield different experiences depending on the venue, and the person who attends them.

Rooftop spaces look over the city, and seem to poise it as an object over which visitors are able to gaze. This is reminiscent of the tourist gaze, where certain sites of significance are poised for people to watch over, while maintaining a certain distance between them and their surroundings (Urry 2000). It is a means of staging an authentic experience for consumers. If tourists can be defined as "a kind of contemporary pilgrim, seeking authenticity in other 'times' and other 'places' away from that person's everyday life" (Urry 2000: 8) then perhaps those that frequent these spaces can be considered as tourists in their own city, wanting to experience it.

Rooftop spaces can be linked with tourist practice especially because such spaces are able to pay homage to numerous attractions at once (MacCannell in Urry 2000), these spaces post the entirety of the city for visitors to gaze over. For Urry, “This mode of gazing shows how tourists are in a way semioticians, reading the landscape for signifiers of certain pre-established notions or signs derived from various discourses of travel and tourism (2000: 12). Gazing thus poses the city as an object, which enables voyeurs to make their own connections what is before them, despite a sense of removal from the city itself. It seems as if rooftop spaces are not necessarily about being in the city per say, but rather about being in a place with an ideal view of the city.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

The city of Johannesburg has seen a reinvigorated interest in it. Many seek a return to the city in order to be amongst the historic buildings, and to look over the unsung splendor of the skyline. There are a number of contributing factors to consider when attempting to understand the way in which rooftop spaces enable an certain experience of city life.

By exploring the four spaces of Dukes, The InterUrban Rooftop, Seascape and The Open Air Cinema using methodological tools that incorporate both written and visual representations, resulting discussion revealed a number of interesting themes. These themes provide a blending together of what it was like to experience each field site and different theoretical perspectives.

Rooftop spaces invoke a unique sense of meaning for those making use of them. Those who frequent exclusive venues, do so in order to attend events, which offer enviable experiences from within the city. People entering the city to inhabit such spaces do so on a temporal basis, for specific events. These events can be said to facilitate an entry into the city that would have previously been unheard of.

With these areas being targeted by private developers for ongoing regeneration in the city, they do indeed cater specifically to those whom are able to afford the experiences on offer within them. Despite the exclusionary element of regeneration, it has enabled the city to become occupied by a different class of people, who have a newfound claim over it. However it must

also be noted that such exclusion have allowed these regenerated spaces, and rooftop venues within them, to become gated communities of sorts, in that they only allow a certain group of people entry into events – those who can afford what is offer within them.

Although, the views are an initial draw card to visiting rooftop spaces, they are often bypassed by the actual experience on offer at event or venue; be it the popular genre of deep house music being played from the speakers (which has the creation of a sense of community at both Dukes and the InterUrban rooftop), the experience of a seaside escape in the midst of the city or watching movies while perched on beanbags at rooftop spaces.

The role of social media is also particularly profound when understanding rooftop spaces in the city. Social media virtually enables venues to gain popularity, and creates hype for people to attend these events. When people attend these events, it is a reification of the virtual world. At these events social media becomes a tool of self-expression, enabling users to post about their activities. This enables the real world to once again become part of the virtual world.

Rooftop spaces in the city of Johannesburg enable a very specific experience of city life. As De Certeau (1984) suggests, considering cities from above is highly insightful when attempting to understand peculiarities that occur within it. In studying rooftop spaces a combination of both being at the spaces and looking over the city is an optimal way to gain an understanding of the selected field sites. By representing each field site in the moment it was experienced, it can be said that these spaces are in fact removed from the city in which they reside.

Each field site offered a different experience of the city. While Dukes allowed visitors an exclusive venue from which to gaze over the city, the InterUrban rooftop enabled deep house enthusiasts to gather in a comfortable environment from which to listen to this genre of music. The Open Air Cinema allowed moviegoers the experience of watching art house music from captivating locations, while Seascape transported visitors to an ocean getaway from the skies of the city of Johannesburg.

Reading each of these spaces from above has enabled an adept understanding of what it means to be in the city. These spaces enable a heavily subjective experience of the city of Johannesburg. They operate under the guise of being able to be in the city. However rooftop spaces are distinctly separate, or even removed from the city they exist in – their connections to the city around them are often limited to the building they are in, and they often seem to exist in a bubble within the city at large. In this bubble, guests are able to permeate through the city into the hold of exclusive rooftop spaces. From here guests are able to float, comfortably over the city, in a way that enables them a subjective sense of city life. Once you have entered the bubble, you are encased by the venue you are in, and although you are initially drawn to the views from each space this is short lived compared to the experiences on offer. The imagery of a bubble invokes a further sense of removal from city life; floating over the city that one is not quite a part of.

To return to De Certeau, it is indeed plausible that to look down on the city is

> "to be lifted out of the cities grasp. One's body is no longer clasped by the streets that turn and return it to an anonymous law…when one goes

> up there, he leaves behind the mass that carries off and mixes up in itself any identity of authors or spectators" (1984: 92)

While De Certeau (1984) encourages a more holistic understanding of cities, I have posited that these spaces are suspended above the city, and unabashedly service the needs of the consumers that inhabit them.

Despite how removed temporal visitors of the city become, especially when they enter exclusive rooftop venues, it seems to appease a need to experience city life, one that sees the repurposing of the city to suit the middle to upper classes. These spaces truly are case of mimetic Johannesburg, offering visitors what they wish to experience within a city, making connections to the spaces around them from above without necessarily having to physically engage with the city around them.

Rooftop spaces in the city of Johannesburg, from the vantage point of this research, can ultimately bring to light the contradictions that arise from regeneration in the city. These spaces have the ability to give insight into the very subjective experience of city life, and open up new lines of questioning with regard to future research, concerned with spatial consideration, the subjectivity involved when considering the experience of city life, along with the contradictions that come along with processes of regeneration.

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