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The Remaking of Inner City Johannesburg and the Right to the City: A Case Study of the
Maboneng Precinct

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ABSTRACT

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Dreams of a fully integrated and equitable South Africa have not been realized in the twenty years since the fall of apartheid. Inequality, spatial segregation, and economic and social exclusion within the country now highlight the limitations of the new democratic government and the incompleteness of South Africa's formal racial desegregation. These forces are articulated across Johannesburg's urban landscape, where: (1) wealth is concentrated in the northern suburbs, (2) peripheral townships continue to suffer from inadequate access to housing, service provision, and a lack of economic opportunity, and (3) inner city Johannesburg is dominated by the competing forces of urban degeneration and gentrification; interest in regenerating and reclaiming the inner city for wealthy suburbanites has grown in the last fifteen years, and now threatens to displace the inner city's low-income population. The Maboneng Precinct, a regenerating neighborhood on the eastern side of the central business district (CBD), is rapidly transforming the inner city into a home for the city's elite and well-to-do youth. The Maboneng Precinct has successfully branded itself as an inclusive and integrated alternative to the exclusive northern suburbs, thereby allowing the neighborhood to successfully distance itself from accusations of gentrifying the inner city and displacing low-income residents. But

despite a well-developed narrative of inclusivity, Maboneng is actively engaged in gentrifying urban space: the neighborhood functions as a fortified enclave within the inner city, where it caters exclusively to middle- and upper-income people seeking to “take back the city” from the urban poor. These actions erode the rights of ordinary individuals to inhabit, appropriate, and move within urban space. This study is the result of two months of fieldwork conducted in the Maboneng Precinct; interviews were conducted with Propertuity staff, including Jonathan Liebmann (CEO of Propertuity Development), Alice Cabaret, the firm’s urban strategist, as well as inner city residents, businesses, and South African nongovernmental organizations. This study ultimately aims to expose the under-discussed, central aspects of the neighborhood’s design that act to reinforce class divisions and contribute to the displacement and marginalization of low-income residents throughout Johannesburg.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction	1
A. Organization of Chapters	6
B. Methodology	8
II. Literature Review.....	10
A. The Global City	10
B. The World-Class City	13
C. The Competitive City.....	15
D. Urban Regeneration, Renewal, and Gentrification.....	16
E. The Right to the City.....	22
F. Conclusion.....	25
III. Background.....	26
A. Global Urban Trends	26
B. Urbanization Trends: Sub-Saharan Africa.....	27
C. Johannesburg’s Urban Development	30
D. The Founding of “the City of Gold”	33
E. History of Segregation Prior to Apartheid	34
F. The Apartheid Era	36
G. The Decline of Inner City Johannesburg	40
H. Post-apartheid Johannesburg	45
I. Gated Communities and Northern Suburbs.....	46
J. Conclusion.....	48

IV. Remaking Johannesburg.....	49
V. The Maboneng Precinct.....	57
A. Propertuity Development: Jonathan Liebmann	59
B. The Precinct	61
C. Policies and Initiatives	67
D. Displacement	68
E. Local Economic and Community Development Initiatives	72
F. Financial Profile	74
VI. Analysis and Findings	77
A. The Abandoned City.....	77
B. “I Survived the Inner City”	84
C. Regeneration or Gentrification?.....	87
D. The Economics of Gentrification.....	91
E. Evictions in Jeppestown.....	92
F. Inclusive Neighborhood or Wealthy Enclave?.....	95
G. Myths in Maboneng: Rags to riches	101
H. Maboneng and the Black Middle Class	108
I. A World-Class Neighborhood.....	109
VII. Conclusion.....	112
References.....	118

I. Introduction

My nails dug into the plastic armrest of my seat as I stared at the movie screen. I continued to watch, horrified, as South African police gunned down striking miners at the Lonmin platinum mine in Marikana. I was spending the evening at the Bioscope Cinema in the trendy Maboneng Precinct, a privately developed regenerating neighborhood in Johannesburg's inner city. The Bioscope was commemorating the second anniversary of the Marikana massacre with a screening of *Miners Shot Down*, a documentary following the six-day strike that culminated in a government-sanctioned massacre on August 16, 2012. Mineworkers organizing the strike demanded reasonable wage increases and safer working conditions. In a shocking display of disregard for workers' rights and human life, the South African government's response resulted in the most violent event in the post-apartheid era. Police killed 34 miners and charged the 207 arrested strikers with the murders of those slain, leaving the South African police force completely uncharged. These backwards charges were issued under the doctrine of common purpose— an apartheid-era law.

The film followed the evolution of the strike, showing police footage, television archives, and interviews with striking miners and government officials. And as the film progressed, the mood in the small theater intensified. When the morning of August 16 arrived, the audience held their breath in tense silence. At this moment, Cyril Ramaphosa appeared on screen. Mr. Ramaphosa is a present leader in the ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC) and a former powerful leader in the National Union of Mineworkers who had stood alongside Nelson Mandela to play a central role in the negotiations to end apartheid. Additionally, Ramaphosa currently serves as a Non-

Executive Director and shareholder in the Lonmin Mining Company. As Ramaphosa began to speak, the mood in the theater shifted rapidly, and shouts from the audience broke the silence: “Murderer!” “Traitor!” “You have blood on your hands!”

In the days leading up to the massacre, Ramaphosa lobbied government ministers to use force to end the strike, calling it “a criminal act” (Desai, 2014). The decision to end the strike through the use of police force exposed patterns of “collusion between government and private companies,” with each player invested in furthering the conditions that allow for the continued exploitation of cheap, black labor (Desai, 2014). Furthermore, the events surrounding the Marikana massacre exposed the complicity of the black economic elite in furthering and reproducing the same white power structures that allowed for the systematic exclusion and exploitation of black people during apartheid.

Cries from the audience at the Bioscope Cinema echoed the deep tensions between government and society that the Marikana massacre forced to the surface, demanding that South Africans question the powerful solidarity that had seemed to exist among black South Africans of all classes throughout the emergence of the new democracy. Marikana served to expose and exacerbate the ruptures in solidarity, camaraderie, and unity between the country’s black elite and poor majority, and the state’s police actions further disrupted the already-fading illusions and false promises of post-apartheid democracy in South Africa. The tensions revealed in this moment at the Bioscope Cinema between the audience and Cyril Ramaphosa— a man once much beloved by oppressed people throughout the country — offered important context for understanding the complex dynamics of South African power structures. In South Africa today, the revolutionary ideals that had motivated the South African people in their struggle for freedom are all but absent from the government’s

actions; and dreams of a fully integrated and equitable South Africa that existed at the birth of the new democracy are fractured or fragile.

The same power structures that led the state to open fire on the platinum miners in Marikana are pervasive throughout all government actions. Though the face of the government has changed dramatically in recent years, the same white power structures remain in place, furthering spatial segregation, and economic and social exclusion within the country. These forces are articulated across Johannesburg's urban landscape and are highly active in the recently-developed Maboneng Precinct, which is rapidly transforming the inner city into a home for the city's well-to-do youth and wealthy urban elite at the expense of the low-income residents who have resided in the area since the end of apartheid. In August of 2014 I arrived in this regenerating South African neighborhood to research these forces, their impacts, and implications.

In Johannesburg, the solidarity that brought apartheid pass laws to an end in 1986 and transformed the cityscape has ruptured, and once again low-income black communities are threatened with being displaced to the city's periphery. Twenty years since the founding of the new democracy, the City of Johannesburg (CoJ) is engaged in a plan to transform the inner city into a "World-Class African City," a thriving center for "economic growth, job creation and tourism" by 2030 (*Murray, 2008, p. 71; Reddy, 2012, p. 7*). The process of inner city regeneration that manifests in patterns of social and economic exclusion is fueled by Johannesburg's position in the global economy and its efforts to become a competitive world-class city.

The city experienced rapid change in the years leading up to the end of apartheid. As white residents and businesses fled to the northern suburbs, low-income black populations

moved from the peripheral townships toward the center of the city. This transition culminated in massive disinvestment and the deterioration of the built environment and the inner city became mythologized among the city's middle- and upper-income suburban residents as an abandoned place of crime and danger. More accurately, the city became and remains an example of inequality and government neglect in post-apartheid South Africa. Today, wealth remains concentrated in the northern suburbs; the townships continue to be defined by inadequate access to land, housing, services, and economic opportunities; and the inner city is a contested space, in which suburban-led movements to transform and "take back the city" threaten to displace low-income residents. Johannesburg's regenerating neighborhoods, often presented as promising opportunities for integration and inclusion, manifest in patterns of displacement.

In the fifteen years since the CoJ embarked on its plan to re-envision the inner city, regenerating neighborhoods have undergone dramatic transformation, drawing increased levels of private and public investment and providing opportunities for suburbanites to reengage with the city. Located on the eastern side of Johannesburg's central business district (CBD), the Maboneng Precinct is one of the inner city's trendiest regenerating neighborhoods. Maboneng, which means "Place of Light" in Sotho, is located within a formerly industrial area of the City and Suburban and Jeppestown suburbs and is owned and managed by a single property development firm, Propertuity Development (Trangoš, 2014; Walsh, 2013, p. 403). For many former suburbanites who reside and do business in, or visit the world-class Maboneng Precinct, it represents a welcoming "place of light" in a city mythologized as a place of fearsome darkness. The six city block area which features artistically refurbished industrial buildings converted into apartments, restaurants, cafes,

bars, art galleries, theaters, clothing boutiques, and retail shops has drawn international acclaim and become a tourist destination for both domestic and international travelers. Maboneng seeks to distinguish itself from the exclusive northern suburbs and gated communities, offering residents the chance to participate in an urban lifestyle in an inclusive, integrated neighborhood. But reinvestment in the area that has resulted in economic vitality, upgraded housing, and employment opportunities has failed to include low-income residents in the blocks and neighborhoods surrounding the precinct. The high prices for goods, services, and housing in Maboneng and the neighborhood's investment in high levels of private security reinforces class divisions in the city, limits access and participation in the neighborhood to "desirable" middle- and upper-income people, and ultimately contributes to the exclusion, marginalization, and displacement of low-income inner city residents.

Despite Propertuity's success in branding Maboneng as an inclusive and conscientious development, effectively distancing itself from accusations of gentrifying and contributing to new patterns of exclusion in the inner city, the March 2015 protests of evictions in the surrounding suburb, Jeppestown, have brought Maboneng's complicated relationship with low-income inner city residents into focus. Shouting "Maboneng must go" and "Sifuna ukudla iSushi noMaboneng," — *"We want to eat sushi in Maboneng"* — a reference to the trendy Maboneng restaurant, Blackanese, low-income residents in Jeppestown highlighted the stark inequality between Maboneng and the surrounding areas, and the developer's false claims of inclusivity (Levy, 2015). Maboneng functions as a fortified enclave in the inner city, catering exclusively to middle- and upper-income people, contributing to the gentrification of the eastern CBD, while eroding the right of ordinary individuals to inhabit,

appropriate, and participate in the formation of urban space.

The development of the Maboneng Precinct exemplifies wider patterns of exclusion throughout the inner city, tying individual property development firms, and regenerating neighborhoods to the CoJ's larger aims to remake Johannesburg into a world-class city. The transformation of Johannesburg into a world-class city, facilitated through urban regeneration projects, rests on the gentrification of urban space, the displacement of the urban poor and ultimately the erosion of the ordinary person's right to the city. Appeals to "clean up the city" or "clean up the neighborhood" are therefore thinly veiled justifications for the systematic marginalization, harassment, and displacement of Johannesburg's urban poor.

A. Organization of Chapters

Chapter 1 establishes a theoretical framework for assessing Johannesburg's regenerating neighborhoods, simultaneously engaging with conversations surrounding regeneration and gentrification, and the development of competitive, world-class, and global cities. Recognizing patterns of social and economic exclusion, in part fueled by Johannesburg's position in the global economy and its attempts to establish itself as a competitive world-class city, this chapter draws on the right to the city, as a framework for re-thinking and re-asserting the rights of low-income residents to access and participate in urban space.

Chapter 2 provides a background of global and regional urban trends, and a brief history of Johannesburg's urban development, focusing on the complex dynamics of segregation, inequality, and displacement that continue to define the city's three spheres— the inner city, the northern suburbs, and the southern peripheral communities.

Chapter 3 outlines Johannesburg's urban regeneration strategy and illustrates how the municipality has acted to reinforce socio-spatial inequalities in the contested spaces of regenerating inner city neighborhoods. This chapter identifies a common vision for Johannesburg held by city officials, urban planners, large-scale property owners, and real estate developers as a "world-class African city" and explores the related efforts to "clean up the city" that have resulted in the harassment, displacement, and criminalization of the city's low-income residents.

Chapter 4 presents a case study of the Maboneng Precinct, a regenerating neighborhood on the eastern side of Johannesburg's central business district (CBD), developed and run by Propertuity Development, which markets itself as an integrated and inclusive alternative to the exclusive communities of the northern suburbs. The case study traces the development of Propertuity and the Maboneng Precinct, and provides an overview of the neighborhood's policies, initiatives, and financial profile.

Chapter 5 presents analysis and findings, assessing the Maboneng Precinct's claim to be an inclusive and integrated neighborhood that is successfully regenerating the inner city while providing economic and social benefits to existing inner city communities. The study ultimately exposes central aspects of the neighborhood's design, including its security strategy, and cost of housing, goods, and services that reinforce class divisions, exclude low-income inner city residents from accessing opportunities in the neighborhood, and contribute to displacement of low-income residents. The chapter explores how narratives of abandonment and inclusion operate simultaneously within the context of inner city regeneration to erase the existence of low-income residents and to silence concerns surrounding the displacement of existing communities. These narratives function within the

suburbanite-led movement to “take back the city” which casts suburbanites, rediscovering and reclaiming the inner city, as heroes and casts the city’s low-income residents as the villains from whom the city must be reclaimed.

B. Methodology

I conducted fieldwork in Johannesburg’s inner city for two months, living in the Maboneng Precinct and working with the Global Regeneration Initiative for Neighborhood Development (GRIND), a nonprofit organization funded exclusively by Propertuity. GRIND aims to support “the implementation of innovative and inclusive urban projects in neighborhoods undergoing regeneration. The objective of GRIND is to build up a database of good practices and a wide network of practitioners to support better neighborhood regeneration around the world” (Cabaret, 2015). As a GRIND resident, I was tasked with implementing a self-designed project over two months in the neighborhood. I worked on a project to boost local employment and connect inner city residents in the surrounding areas with employment opportunities in the precinct through networking and free skills training workshops. Living and working in the Maboneng Precinct over the course of two months provided me with valuable insights into the specific challenges faced in neighborhoods undergoing urban regeneration.

I conducted interviews with several of the people most integral to the development of the Maboneng Precinct including Jonathan Liebmann, the CEO of Propertuity, Alice Cabaret, the urban strategist for Propertuity and director of GRIND, other members of the Propertuity staff including staff in charge of real estate sales, property rentals, and marketing, and several GRIND residents. Interviews conducted with individuals living and working in the Maboneng Precinct, the surrounding areas of the inner city, and the northern

suburbs were also essential to my research. Interviews with experts on urban development, housing, and economic rights in South Africa, including Guy Trangoš at the Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO) and staff at the Social-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa provided valuable perspectives on the social and economic challenges facing Johannesburg residents.

II. Literature Review

Urban regeneration projects, a central component of the municipality's plan to transform Johannesburg into a "World-Class African City," contribute to the gentrification of urban space, the displacement of the low-income inner city residents and the erosion of the right of ordinary people to access and participate in the city. The process of inner city regeneration that manifests in patterns of social and economic exclusion is fueled by Johannesburg's position in the global economy and its efforts to become a competitive world-class city.

A. The Global City

A "world" or "global city" represents an important node in the global economy. Saskia Sassen popularized the term, "global city" in her 1991 work, "Global City: New York, London, Tokyo" and defined the global city as a city that links its national economy to the global economy, while also contributing to the management and servicing of the global economic system (Sassen, 1991). Johannesburg, the financial capital of South Africa and home to the largest stock exchange on the continent, is an important financial center for the country, region, and the global economy ("Financial capital of SA," 2015). Global cities—further known for their importance as hubs for information, agglomeration economies, and market places—function within a hierarchical network of global cities interacting not only through competition but also through a culture of collaboration (Sassen, 1991). Global cities efficiently organize international production, finance, and information, and serve as hubs for the activities of transnational corporations. More than 70 percent of South African companies are headquartered in Johannesburg, and three of these South African firms, MTN, Sasol, and Bidvest are ranked in the Global Top 40 Companies ("Financial capital of SA," 2015). Many have argued that global cities represent a spatial manifestation of the

“glocal” economy and are therefore important sites through which the “destabilization of national-scale economic coordination is expressed” (Purcell, 2003, pp. 568-569).

Global cities in the developing world often suffer from substantial economic and social inequality, and have high concentrations of poverty. Johannesburg, São Paulo and Shanghai are all vital global cities, but may also be considered poor by some standards, despite being deeply embedded in the global economy. Unequal access to land, housing, basic services, education, and employment opportunities in Johannesburg is intensified by its position as a global city in a country plagued by inequality. South Africa’s 2011 Gini coefficient¹ of 0.65, ranks it as the most unequal country in the world (*The World Bank Development Indicators*, 2015). The country’s top 10 percent share 53.8 percent of the total national income, while the bottom 10 percent share only 1.1 percent of the total national income (*The World Bank Development Indicators*, 2015). Parnell and Pieterse argue in their work that, “making cities of the South work better purely in terms of becoming economic nodes in the global systems of trade, production and consumption is not going to help the poor in those city regions. But failing to make these emerging global nodes work for all their residents may hinder their global progress” (Parnell & Pieterse, 2010, p. 159). Global cities are faced with balancing the role of the city as a global economic power with the need to foster inclusion. Current trends indicate that many of these cities struggle to simultaneously achieve both goals, resulting in increasingly pronounced spatial and social segregation (Beall, 2002).

Social structures of cities are transformed by the economic role of cities, and in an era of globalization, this transformation is often characterized by “increased social and economic

¹ The Gini coefficient is a measure of “the extent to which the distribution of income or consumption expenditure among individuals or households within an economy deviates from a perfectly equal distribution” (*The World Bank Development Indicators*, 2015).

polarization” (Sassen, 1991, p. 329). While, global economic restructuring has led to an increased number of those who are considered, “urban marginal,” “urban disenfranchised,” or “urban poor,” those who promote globalization argue that national economic growth will eventually trickle-down to compensate the poor who in the meantime are made to suffer during this transitional period (Roy & AlSayyad, 2004, p. 80).

Saskia Sassen’s work on global cities sheds light on the increasingly exclusive spatial divisions manifesting in Johannesburg and cities throughout the world, and demonstrates the importance of recognizing economic functions of cities as driving factors behind inequality (Sassen, 2004). The growing number of high-level professionals and wealthy firms in global cities has resulted in increased levels of spatial and socio-economic inequality (Sassen, 2004). Some macroeconomic policies adopted by economies tied deeply to the global market also have been found to have profound effects in terms of inequality (Beall, 2002). Many scholars argue that in developing countries, growing inequality can be linked to the neoliberal macro-economic policies adopted as governments choose to open markets up to global competition; these policies may substantially limit the abilities of governments to promote social development. David Harvey has argued that, freer markets tend to produce greater inequality (Harvey, 2003). Other research in this area has focused on the spatial transformations undergone by global cities, highlighting increases in “environmental degradation” and “intense crowding and congestion,” both associated with the effects of rapid urbanization and globalization (Huchzermeyer, 2011, pp. 10-11). But globalization seems to be at work in transforming the social dynamics of cities as well. New social movements seeking to address the inequalities of globalization have emerged from the poorer half of global cities, demanding environmental, spatial, and social justice. These

rights are being demanded at the subnational scale, at the level of neighborhoods, cities, and urban regions. This new form of citizenship, associated with global cities may weaken the nation-state model of citizenship, in which being a citizen of a city is, in some ways, more significant than being a citizen of a country (Purcell, 2003, p. 573).

B. The World-Class City

In 2004, the City of Johannesburg's (CoJ) announced its plan to remake the inner city as a "World-Class African City" by 2030, transforming the city into a thriving center for "economic growth, job creation and tourism" (Murray, 2008, p. 71; Reddy, 2012, p. 7). Ananya Roy's work on world-class cities explores the phenomenon by which global cities aspire to be modern, prosperous, and to resemble other important cities within the global economy. Roy describes the world-class city as:

[W]orld-class towers of shimmering glass and steel; it has world-class expressways and soaring flyovers. It has world-class shopping malls layered like iced cake with floor after floor of world-class stores, selling world-class brands, at world-class prices. The world-class city has swanky airports that connect you to other world-class cities. It has world-class gated condominiums with world-class infrastructure, swimming pools, manicured golf courses, air-conditioned private schools, tennis courts. Each world-class city is like every other world-class city. In each world-class city you have traveled into the future. But there is one more thing about a world-class city— it has no slums. After all, slums are places of poverty disease and waste. (Roy, 2013)

D. Asher Ghertner's work on the making of the world-class city in Delhi, illustrates how

the vision of the world-class city provides a clear set of criteria for assessing what should be seen as “beautiful/ugly,” “visible/invisible,” and “legal/illegal” (Roy, Ong, & Ghertner, 2011, p. 281). Ghertner also uncovers a strong relationship between world-class aesthetics and private property, even amongst Delhi’s slum dwellers, who associated private property with cleanliness, legality, and worth as opposed to public property, which was commonly associated with filth, illegality, and disrepute. In his findings, Delhi’s slum dwellers both opposed aims to remake Delhi as world-class city, as it would eradicate the communities they lived in, and concurrently expressed desires for world-class urban improvements, appealing to the aesthetics of the world-class city to transform the built environment (Roy et al., 2011, pp. 263-300).

Roy argues “the making of the Indian world-class city is inevitably a normative project. It requires the valorization of worlding aspirations and the devalorization of claims that may block or stall such forms of worlding” (Roy et al., 2011, pp. 265-266). The making of the world-class city is often justified through promises of “integration, public interest, and urban democracy” (Roy et al., 2011, pp. 265-266). As a part of this process, those who had previously resided in gated enclaves convert the city center into a world-class urban commons. These patterns manifest in the regeneration of inner city Johannesburg, where the suburbanite-led movement to clean up the city is presented in the language of urban integration and inclusivity. Roy asserts that the reclaiming and remaking of urban space, is carried out explicitly for the purpose of advancing within the global hierarchy of cities and economies, and at the same time is motivated by “middle class consumer-citizens” who demand access to the city (Roy et al., 2011, pp. 265-266). Urban space is purified through the remaking of cities that espouse the values of “leisure, safety, aesthetics, and health”

(Roy et al., 2011, pp. 265-266). Appeals to clean up Johannesburg's inner city have centered on the evictions and harassment of low-income urban residents, and the displacement of poverty to the periphery to make room for neighborhoods that cater to middle- and upper-income residents. Similar to the phenomenon described by Saskia Sassen in global cities, where the global economic functions of cities increase inequality, the sanitization of urban space required by the world-class city further marginalizes poverty and informality and deepens spatial divides within cities.

C. The Competitive City

Since the mid-1990s, policy-makers and economists have increasingly focused on the importance of "competitiveness" at the national, regional, and city scale. In an effort to advance its position in the global economy, Johannesburg's plan for inner city regeneration centers on building an environment to attract capital and skilled workers. Competitive global cities center efforts on investing in transportation and communications infrastructure, and creating comfortable living environments for workers (Huchzermeyer, 2011, p. 47).

Competitive cities have three essential components: "accumulation, class formation, and social control" (Huchzermeyer, 2011, p. 52). In their work, Kipfer and Keil define the competitive city through three distinct visions of the city, Harvey's "entrepreneurial city," Jacobs and Fincher's "city of difference," and Smith's "revanchist city" (Fincher & Jacobs, 1998; Harvey, 1989; Smith, 1996). These visions of the city articulate the patterns of capital accumulation, class formation, and social control in competitive cities. These strategies and patterns are tied to a larger understanding of intercity competition, in which cities function as homogeneous units competing for the same capital investments and mobile skilled workers. Competitiveness can be the focus of policies at the city, regional, and national

level through “economic development, finance, taxation, land-use planning, urban design, culture, diversity management, policing, and workfare” (Kipfer & Keil, 2002, pp. 234-235). Kipfer and Keil argue that the increased emphasis placed on competition has transformed the development and management of global cities (Kipfer & Keil, 2002, pp. 234-235). As a result of these policies, competitive cities characteristically have high per capita incomes and high levels of employment. Unemployment in Johannesburg, which hovers around 40 percent, presents a large challenge to the city establishing itself as a competitive city (Murray, 2008, p. 91).

While urban policies aim to advance Johannesburg as a competitive city and to improve the city’s standing in the global economy and potentially offer long-term promise for addressing citywide unemployment and poverty, trends indicate that these policies may only further entrench existing spatial, social, and income inequality.

Like scholars critical of the inequalities present in global and world-class cities, research on competitive-cities indicates that strategies adopted by cities to become and remain competitive often lead to deepening social and economic inequalities. Huchzermeyer argues that the spaces of consumption created in competitive cities to cater to the needs of middle and upper class residents deepen class segregation, while excluding and displacing poor urban residents (Huchzermeyer, 2011, pp. 50-51). The emerging regenerating neighborhoods of Johannesburg, designed to cater to the needs of comparatively wealthy suburbanites, thereby threaten the inner city’s low-income communities.

D. Urban Regeneration, Renewal, and Gentrification

Johannesburg’s regenerating neighborhoods have consistently associated themselves with the processes of urban regeneration and renewal, and vehemently fought against being

characterized as gentrifying neighborhoods. The process of urban regeneration, revitalization, or renewal, also sometimes referred to as gentrification, is often part of the city building efforts of global, competitive, and world-class cities. As is the case in Johannesburg, frequently, the initiators of inner city regeneration are “middle-class outsiders” who feel compelled to rescue and improve the declining urban landscape and economy. In Rousseau’s conception of urban regeneration, efforts are aimed at both attracting business and capital and at attracting middle class residents (Rousseau, 2009, p. 784). While some argue that regenerating Johannesburg’s inner city holds the promise of cultural and economic benefits, others maintain that these benefits are greatly overshadowed by the potentially devastating social and economic impacts on low-income inner city communities. Today urban regeneration and gentrification is increasingly incorporated into public policy, “used either as a justification to obey market forces and private sector entrepreneurialism, or as a tool to direct market processes in the hopes of restructuring urban landscapes in a slightly more benevolent fashion” (Lees, Slater, & Wyly, 2008, p. 198).

Gentrification is distinguished from other processes of urban regeneration in that gentrification specifically suggests “the transformation of a working-class or vacant area of the central city into middle-class residential or commercial use” (Lees et al., 2008). This upgrading process leads to the displacement of lower-income households in the area (Wei & Knox, 2014). Urban regeneration not classified as gentrification, upgrades the built environment and promotes economic or cultural improvements without transforming areas into middle class or upper class neighborhoods and displacing low-income residents. Despite this distinction, Guy Trangoš at the Gauteng City-Region Observatory is correct in

observing that, “gentrification is a deeply contested term. Its interpretations are incongruent and its applications liberal” (Trangoš, 2014, p. 1). Since Ruth Glass introduced the concept of “gentrification” in 1964, scholars have grappled with an evolving definition and understanding of gentrification (Mathema, 2013, pp. 1-2). Between the late 1970s and early 1980s, David Ley and Neil Smith debated the root causes of gentrification. Smith understood the phenomenon through his “rent gap” theory, which proposed that “gentrification occurs when there is a mismatch or a “rent gap” between potential economic returns from a centrally located building and the actual economic gains from its current use” (Mathema, 2013, pp. 1-2). He argued that upgrades to the built environment occur only when it is profitable to invest in such projects (Smith, 1987). Ley, on the other hand, understood the process of gentrification as stemming from societal shifts in demands for housing and living environments as opposed to changes in the housing market (Ley, 1987). But, in 1991, Hamnett critiqued both Smith and Ley’s explanations of gentrification stating that Smith was overly concerned with the supply-side of the built environment, and Ley, too focused on demand for housing and urban space. Thus, neither Smith nor Ley’s understanding provided a comprehensive and adequately complex explanation of gentrification (Hamnett, 1991; Mathema, 2013, p. 2).

In 2005, Davidson and Lees defined gentrification as being characterized by four elements including the “(1) reinvestment of capital; (2) social upgrading of locale by incoming high-income groups; (3) landscape change; and (4) direct or indirect displacement of low-income groups” (Davidson & Lees, 2005). And in 2008, Murray’s explanation of gentrification focused on urban blight and decay, which result in the devaluation of the built environment, as the necessary conditions for urban regeneration. Gentrification, which

restores value to decayed urban spaces therefore links abandonment and displacement through a cyclical pattern (Murray, 2008, p. 129). But just as the causes of gentrification are much contested, so too are the effects of gentrification.

The two phenomenon most commonly associated with gentrification are increases in the cost of housing and retail prices and growing proportions of high-income, often white, people buying homes in the area (Godsil, 2013, p. 8). Some scholars have argued that increased property values may have some limited positive impacts due to increased demand, leading existing property owners to acquire greater equity. Other potentially positive outcomes from gentrification may include the expansion of the city's tax base and residential integration. Residential integration may prove an important and necessary step towards addressing concentrated poverty, and other inequalities that manifest through unequal education, access to job networks, security, and amenities (Godsil, 2013, p. 1; Mathema, 2013, pp. 2-3). Additionally, some have argued that the presence of middle-income residents in mixed-income communities may influence the behaviors of low-income residents. Middle-class residents may function in gentrifying neighborhoods as “‘role models’ who promote and foster ‘mainstream’ social norms and expectations” (Chaskin & Joseph, 2012, p. 3). Likewise, the presence of higher-income residents in gentrifying neighborhoods may lead to lower crime rates. Researchers have attributed this to (1) increased proportions of home owners, which leads to greater neighborhood stability over time, (2) the ability of higher-income residents to better enforce rules to ensure order and safety, and (3) increased law enforcement services, as these institutions have been found to be more responsive to the needs of higher-income residents (Chaskin & Joseph, 2012, pp. 3-4). While gentrification may lead to some potential improvements in neighborhoods, the

process has also been shown to have various negative impacts including widespread displacement of low-income households (Godsil, 2013, p. 1).

In his 2002 work, Atkinson identifies nine interconnected impacts of gentrification:

“displacement; harassment and eviction; community conflict; loss of affordable housing; homelessness; change to local service provision; social displacement; crime; and, population loss” (Atkinson, 2002; Davidson, 2008, p. 2388). Among these, Atkinson’s work finds displacement to be the most common consequence of gentrification, occurring in over 50 percent of cases (Davidson, 2008, p. 2388). Gentrification-induced displacement occurs when higher income individuals and families move into neighborhoods leading to increased prices of housing, goods, and services. Over time these factors push low-income residents out of gentrifying neighborhoods (Mathema, 2013, pp. 2-3). Increased property prices may lead to displacement if building owners hike up rents, or if increased taxes become too high for existing property owners. While the extent to which gentrification causes displacement is difficult to assess, and is frequently disputed, gentrification clearly coincides with rapid shifts in economic and racial demographics of neighborhoods (Godsil, 2013, p. 1).

Figure 1. Effects of Gentrification. Source: Atkinson, R., & Bridge, G. (2005). *Gentrification in a global context*. New York, NY: Routledge.

<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>
Stabilization of declining areas	Displacement through rent/price increases
Increased property values	Secondary psychological costs of displacement
Reduced vacancy rates	Community resentment and conflict
Increased local fiscal revenues	Loss of affordable housing
Encouragement and increased viability of further development	Unsustainable speculative property price increases
Reduction of suburban sprawl	Homelessness
Increased social mix	Greater take of local spending through lobbying/articulacy
Rehabilitation of property both with and without state sponsorship	Commercial/industrial displacement
	Increased cost and changes to local services
	Displacement and housing demand pressures on surrounding poor areas
	Loss of social diversity (from socially disparate to rich ghettos)
	Under-occupancy and population loss to gentrified areas

In studying the displacement occurring as a result of gentrification, researchers have drawn distinctions between direct and indirect forms of displacement. Direct displacement results from the forced removal or eviction of low-income residents in gentrifying neighborhoods, but displacement can also occur in gentrifying neighborhoods in a number of indirect ways. Marcuse, Smith, and Williams outlined several forms of indirect displacement in their 1986 work. Indirect displacement occurs when:

...any household is not permitted to move into a dwelling, by a change in conditions which affects that dwelling or its immediate surroundings, which (a) is beyond the household's reasonable ability to control or prevent; (b) occurs despite the household's being able to meet all previously imposed

conditions of occupancy; (c) differs significantly and in a spatially concentrated fashion from changes in the housing market as a whole; and (d) makes occupancy by that household impossible, hazardous, or unaffordable. (Marcuse, Smith, & Williams, 1986, p. 156)

Atkinson notes that indirect displacement often affects communities adjacent to gentrifying neighborhoods (Atkinson, 2002).

While gentrification may have some positive effects in regards to economic development, upgrading of the built environment, and security improvements, both direct and indirect displacement of low-income residents in gentrifying areas is of much concern in Johannesburg's inner city.

E. The Right to the City

Henri Lefebvre's notion of "the right to the city," concerned with the ability of ordinary people to access and make use of urban space is essential to understanding the complex dynamics of inequality, and exclusion in Johannesburg. Evaluating urban strategies from the vantage point of low-income residents' right to the city allows commonly accepted notions of city building to be questioned and patterns of exclusion and marginalization to be exposed (Marcuse, 2009, p. 191).

Lefebvre introduced "the right to the city" in 1968, in his work exploring transitions in post-industrial European cities (Lefebvre, Kofman, & Lebas, 1996; Marcuse, 2009, p. 189). Lefebvre marked a notable transition that had taken place following the industrial revolution in the production and consumption of urban space. Prior to the industrial revolution, Lefebvre argued, urban space was created in a somewhat collaborative, organic, participatory fashion, but following the industrial revolution cities became dominated by

money, products, and commerce (Huchzermeyer, 2011, p. 245; Lefebvre et al., 1996). In cities heavily influenced by the flow of capital, Lefebvre understood the right to the city as essential to the creation and use of urban space. Lefebvre included in the right to the city, “the right to long-term habitation of the city and to spatial centrality”, “a right to voice or participation, through access to central decision-making”, and finally, “a right to the *oeuvre*, the creative making of public space in the city after one’s own desire, and without consideration of their productive utility- in the post-millennial context, utility for urban competitiveness” (Huchzermeyer, 2011, p. 245). The right to the city includes the ordinary person’s right to inhabit, appropriate, and participate in the formation of urban space. The right to the city includes the right of urban dwellers to refuse to be excluded or removed from the physical boundaries of the city and its networks for “communication, information, and exchange” (Murray, 2008, p. 28). The demand for a right to the city originates amongst the city’s most marginalized populations, and it is their right to the city that researchers are concerned with (Marcuse, 2009, p. 191).

The right to the city is not a legal claim, but it is a claim to all of the aspects that comprise urban life. The right to the city incorporates a claim to the city center, to public space, information, services, and transparency of government. Lefebvre is clear that the right to the city does not represent just a claim to the city in its current state, but a claim to the future city, as it should be (Lefebvre et al., 1996; Marcuse, 2009, p. 193). The right to the city transforms Westphalian notions of citizenship, replacing it with a citizenship based on inhabitation. The right to the city is earned by residing in the city and the right to create and shape urban space belongs to those who live in the city (Purcell, 2003, pp. 576-577). Inhabitation, in this understanding is not equated with ownership, or legality of inhabitation,

and instead relies on the appropriation of urban space. Appropriation denies the right of ownership; for example, the owner of a posh downtown hotel, “would not be able to prevent an inhabitant from stopping in to rest and eat lunch in the hotel's well-appointed lobby” (Purcell, 2003, p. 581). The right to appropriate space disrupts “capitalist social relations” and undermines current capitalist valuation of urban space. Purcell uses Lefebvre’s vision to reimagine citizenship and the capitalist world order within the framework of the right to the city (Purcell, 2003, pp. 564-565). She argues that if implemented “Lefebvrian citizenship” would disrupt “the hegemony of capitalist social relations” placing urban dwellers at the forefront of urban decision-making (Purcell, 2003, p. 576).

While Lefebvre’s work does not directly discuss many contemporary urban challenges, scholars have applied his notion of the right to the city to many modern urban trends. Huchzermeyer uses the right to the city as a framework for exploring informal settlements and broader informality in South African cities. She argues that the right to the city stands in contradiction with global aspirations for urban competitiveness. Urban competitiveness discriminates against, and criminalizes unskilled, low-income urban residents while privileging skilled urban inhabitants’ access to urban spaces and services (Huchzermeyer, 2011, p. 245). Parnell and Pieterse expand on Lefebvre’s work contextualizing it within the struggles poor urban dwellers face to gain access to land, housing, transport, public spaces, and services (Parnell & Pieterse, 2010, p. 153). Researchers focused on the potentially positive effects of gentrification have relied on Lefebvre’s right to the city as a framework for understanding how mixed-income neighborhoods offer pathways for low-income communities to access to cities, amenities, and services (Chaskin & Joseph, 2012, p. 5). And Murray illustrates how the recent expansion of “urban enclaves such as citadel office

complexes, city improvement districts, gated residential communities, and sequestered shopping malls,” conflicts with the rights of propertyless urban residents to appropriate urban space (Murray, 2008, p. 16).

F. Conclusion

The regenerating neighborhoods of the inner city, central to the municipality’s strategy to transform Johannesburg into a “World-Class African City,” conform to the world-class city aesthetics, valorizing private property and demonizing public property, informality, and visible manifestations of poverty (Roy, 2013; Roy et al., 2011). The gentrification of inner city areas, consistent with global trends, contributes to displacement of low-income residents and limits the abilities of ordinary people to access and appropriate urban space, reinforcing the city’s longstanding social and economic inequities. These neighborhoods conceptualize urban spaces used for the activities of the poor as areas to be “cleaned up” and the urban poor themselves as problematic. The creation of the world-class city demands the sanitization of urban space and the removal of visible indications of poverty; these processes therefore intensify spatial divides and marginalize low-income residents, eroding the right to the city.

III. Background

A. Global Urban Trends

Half of the world's population is expected to be living in urban centers by 2030. The majority of urban growth is occurring in the developing world where five million new people migrate from rural areas to urban centers each month. This global trend towards urbanization presents several challenges to fast growing cities in the developing world. One of the effects of such rapid urbanization in developing countries has been the creation of "global slums," which house close to a billion low-income people worldwide ("Urban Development," 2013). Many of these cities struggle to provide basic services and to build the infrastructure necessary to support rising populations. While these challenges persist, when addressed, urbanization represents an opportunity for economic growth and poverty reduction (Henderson, Roberts, & Storeygard, 2013).

Urbanization seems to be a necessary step for spurring substantial, long-term economic development. Several studies analyzing urbanization in the developing world demonstrate a strong correlation between urbanization, economic development, and poverty reduction. Results from a 2008 World Bank study of 90 countries associates countries with more urbanized populations with lower poverty rates; lower rates of poverty are especially significant in the rural areas of highly urbanized countries (Farvacque-Vitkovic et al., 2008, p. 24). To date, all countries achieving middle-income status have urbanized (Kariuki, 2013). And while cases of "urbanization without growth" exist, few examples of "growth without urbanization" have been documented (Farvacque-Vitkovic et al., 2008, p. 24). Economic gains following urbanization have been realized in combination with well-planned investments in infrastructure, institutions, and human capital. Urban centers

provide “efficient logistics, improved access to skills, support services and finance capital, stronger connections to local and international knowledge and expertise, and more intensive learning and innovation,” making larger macro-benefits including the creation of “economies of scale,” “localization economies,” and “agglomeration economies” possible (Anderson, 2000; Turok, 2013, p. 2).

Urban centers also allow for more efficient delivery of social services. Delivering public services in an urban setting is significantly more cost-effective than delivering the same services in an area with low population density. For example, providing piped water to rural communities, costs roughly three times as much as providing water in urban areas (Kariuki, 2013). Collectively, these factors have the capacity to spur economic development and reduce poverty, but this has not been realized in all cities.

B. Urbanization Trends: Sub-Saharan Africa

Urbanization will likely be the most dramatic change that the African continent will undergo this century. The potential large-scale economic benefits of urbanization have yet to be realized in much of Sub-Saharan Africa, where urban centers are rapidly growing, and where more than half of Africa’s population is expected to be living by 2040. According to these predictions, 40,000 people will move to African cities each day. This is the equivalent of 450 million new urban dwellers over the course of the next thirty years (Kariuki, 2013). In their 2013 work, Jean-Michel Severino and Olivier Ray predict that the concentration of a young, abundant labor force in urban centers will essentially make economic growth in Africa inevitable (Severino, Ray, & Fernbach, 2011). But predictions regarding the long-term effects of urbanization on the continent vary greatly.

Distinct from many other cases of urbanization, in Sub-Saharan Africa, “the pattern of falling overall poverty with urbanization is far less...the population (including the poor) has been urbanizing, yet with little reduction in aggregate poverty” (Ravallion, 2007, p. 27). Martin Ravallion’s 2007 study of the effects of urbanization on poverty demonstrated a positive correlation between urbanization and poverty reduction, except in Sub-Saharan Africa. But the question of how urbanization has affected and will affect economic growth and human development in Sub-Saharan Africa is greatly contested. In a 2003 study, Ambe Njoh revealed “a strong positive correlation between urbanization and human development” in Sub-Saharan African countries (Turok, 2013, p. 28). Conflicting evidence has supported high levels of uncertainty surrounding the relationship between urbanization and economic growth in Africa. Some suggest that the failure of urbanization to produce widespread economic growth in Africa can be blamed on premature urbanization, while others cite a lack of planning and management, as well as insufficient investment in infrastructure. Sub-Saharan Africa’s rapid and, arguably, “premature urbanization” has created numerous challenges for cities (Turok, 2013). Some scholars maintain that unlike other cases of urbanization in the developing world, African urbanization often occurs not in response to the pull of economic opportunities, but instead as a result of push factors like drought, and ethnic conflicts that lead to premature urbanization (Turok, 2013).

In many African cities, infrastructural facilities and services are grossly inadequate to cater to the needs of current or anticipated populations. Many of Sub-Saharan Africa’s urban residents have limited access to water, electricity, and sanitation. It is estimated that 84 percent of urban dwellers in the region have access to drinkable water, 59 percent have access to electricity, and 54 percent have access to sanitation (“Urbanization in

Africa""Urbanization in Africa.," 2012). The “urban slums” or informal communities in sub-Saharan Africa are characterized by an absence of these services. Informal housing is predominantly defined by inadequate, “access to improved water, improved sanitation, security of tenure, durability of housing, and sufficient living area” (Farvacque-Vitkovic et al., 2008, p. 19). An estimated 62 percent of African urban populations live in overcrowded informal communities and 43 percent live below the poverty line (Turok, 2013). These communities not only struggle with the lack of access to basic services, but also with high rates of health problems, crime and unrest, and environmental crises. If current trends continue over the next twenty years, of the 290 million new African urban residents, 208 million are expected to be living in informal communities (Farvacque-Vitkovic et al., 2008, p. 40).

Consistent with global trends, high levels of resource consumption also characterize African cities: “Urban areas, which house half the world’s population, utilize two-thirds of global energy and produce 70 percent of global carbon emissions” (Ajero, 2012, p. 18). Some African cities have higher pollution levels than many cities in the developing world at a later stage in the industrialization process, and cities such as Accra, Abuja, Dakar, and Lagos have pollution levels well above World Health Organization (WHO) standards (Kariuki, 2013). Urban transportation in the region is largely insufficient and expensive, and inadequate transportation between urban centers is often cited as impeding urban economic development (Glasser and Farvacque-Vitkovic, 2008).

Despite the improved cost and ease of providing services to urban populations, services—including health care and education—remain insufficient to support rapidly growing populations. While urbanization offers huge potential gains in terms of economic

development, it could prove disastrous in Sub-Saharan Africa if viable solutions to the problems associated with urbanization do not emerge.

C. Johannesburg's Urban Development

The rapid urban growth experienced in South Africa is consistent with many of these global and regional trends. Today, roughly 63 percent of South Africa's population lives in urban areas and a fifth of urban residents live in informal settlements (Huchzermeyer & Karam, 2006, p. 274; "Integrated Urban Development Framework," 2014, p. 89). The United Nations estimates that 7.8 million people will be added to South Africa's cities by 2030 making urban areas home to 71 percent of the South African population, increasing to 80 percent of the population by 2050 ("Integrated Urban Development Framework," 2014, pp. 10, 89). Since the late 1990s, Johannesburg's population has grown by twenty thousand residents per month, and these trends have not slowed (Murray, 2008, p. 91). "By 2005 the number of new households was growing at an average annual rate of 6.7 percent" (Murray, 2008, p. 91). But municipal authorities have failed to meet the demand for decent and affordable housing. In 2004, the State of Cities Report estimated that over 22.5 percent of Johannesburg's households lived without formal shelter (Murray, 2008, p. 91). While the ANC-dominated government promised to redistribute white-owned land to South Africa's many landless black people, and to make improvements to the national housing stock, results have been unimpressive. As of 2008, only 2 - 3 of the promised 30 percent of land had been transferred and the 1.6 million new formal dwellings constructed by the ANC government between 1995 and 2005 remain grossly inadequate. Over those ten years, informal settlements surrounding South Africa's urban centers grew by 30 percent (Murray, 2008, p. 91).

The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), launched by President Nelson Mandela in 1994, aimed to address the complex socioeconomic problems in South Africa following apartheid. The RDP promised to build homes, free of charge for those living on

Figure 2. Aerial View of Johannesburg (2014), from Times Lives website: <http://www.timeslive.co.za/local/2014/08/05/magnitude-5.3-earthquake-shakes-central-south-africa-rocks-joburg-buildings>.



monthly incomes of 3,500 South African rand (ZAR) or less. In addition to failing to meet demand for housing, RDP housing has tended to conform to the patterns of spatial segregation present under apartheid (Wainwright, 2015, p. 5). Although the Bill of Rights contained in the 1996 South African constitution guarantees a right to adequate housing, unequally distributed and insufficient amounts of housing in South Africa highlights the persistent legacy of apartheid and the frustration experienced by those who have been waiting for the ANC led government to respond to the needs of ordinary people within the country (Schneider, 2001).

Income inequality and unemployment in South Africa contributes to problems

surrounding access to housing and service provision. Using the definition provided in the National Income Dynamics Study (see Table 1) 66.2 percent of households in South Africa are low-income, earning less than R5,599 per month (roughly 560 USD), while only 3.9 percent of households earn more than R40,001 per month (roughly 4,000 USD).

Table 1. Household income distribution in South Africa (2008). Data from National Income Dynamics Study.

	Low-Income	Middle-Income	Upper-Income
Income intervals (per capita)	R0 - R1,399	R1,400 - R10,000	R10,001+
Income intervals (total household)	R0 - R5,599	R5,600 - R40,000	R40,001+
Class size (millions of households)	9.5 million	4.1 million	0.5 million
Percentage of households (%)	66.20%	29.90%	3.90%
Percentage of total income (%)	21.00%	47.30%	31.70%

*Total household income is calculated from per capita household income multiplied by an illustrative household size of four persons.

Data From: Visagie, J. (2013). Who are the middle class in South Africa? Does it matter for policy? *Econ 3x3*.

High poverty rates and high levels of unemployment accompany Johannesburg’s rapid population growth. Half of Johannesburg’s households earn below R1600 (roughly 160 USD) per month and unemployment in the city continues to hover close to 40 percent, with national unemployment estimated to be close to 25 percent (*Country at a Glance South Africa*, 2013; De Wet, Patel, Korth, & Forrester, 2008; Murray, 2008, p. 91). As is the case in many cities throughout the world, rapid urbanization in Johannesburg has been characterized by “environmental degradation, unchecked horizontal spread of informal settlement patterns, and unhealthy living conditions” (Murray, 2008, p. 91). While these issues are symptomatic of larger challenges surrounding poverty and socio-economic inequality, anti-urbanization and slum eradication policies often cite these conditions as support for their arguments. In Johannesburg such policies have targeted low-income communities and restricted the abilities of low-income individuals to access the city (Huchzermeyer, 2011).

D. The Founding of “the City of Gold”

Johannesburg’s location lacks many of the features that would normally spur city building. While many cities owe their origins to nearby ports or proximity to major transportation routes this is not the case for Johannesburg, which also lacks access to rivers, mountains, and coastline. But while Johannesburg seems in many ways an unlikely place for a city, the discovery of gold in 1886 began a chain of events that would eventually lead to a sprawling city with a population of over nine million by 2014 (*The World Bank DataBank*, 2015).

After the discovery of gold in the Central Rand Goldfield, thousands flocked to the emerging mining settlement that would later become the city of Johannesburg. Johannesburg was the sight of the first large-scale, deep-level gold mining operations in South Africa and the epicenter of the world’s largest gold rush in history (Harrison & Zack, 2012, p. 2; Murray, 2008). The small mining camp quickly grew into a “bustling town with banks, shops, hotels, and boarding houses, a stock exchange, and the inevitable saloons and brothels” (Harrison & Zack, 2012, p. 7). Ten years after the discovery of gold, Johannesburg’s population had grown to 102,000, making it the largest urban center in sub-Saharan Africa at the time (Harrison & Zack, 2012, p. 7).

Mining became the backbone of South Africa’s economy and fueled national development, thereby tying Johannesburg’s early history to the fluctuating worldwide demand for gold (Harrison & Zack, 2012, p. 1). Mining remained the foundation of the national and local economy until 1948, when demands for supplies during World War II caused manufacturing to overtake mining as the largest sector of the economy. This same year, the National Party rose to power in South Africa and introduced the first apartheid

policies (Harrison & Zack, 2012, p. 2). But even with manufacturing at the forefront of the national economy and a waning mining industry in Johannesburg, the city continued to grow. Johannesburg, home to the headquarters of mining companies and the national stock exchange, continued to draw profits and people to the city (Harrison & Zack, 2012, p. 6).

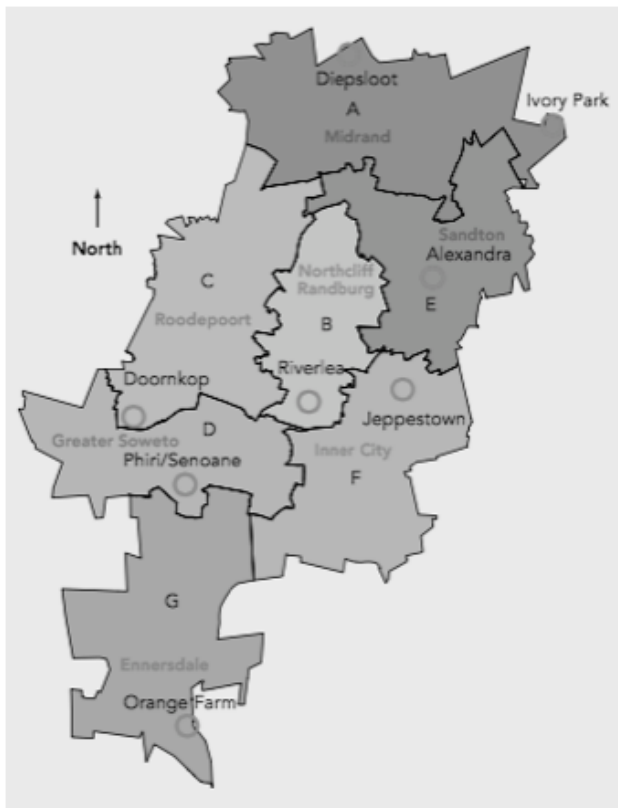
E. History of Segregation Prior to Apartheid

Policies enforcing racial segregation were in place long before the beginning of apartheid in 1948. While Johannesburg lacked an organized local government for the first ten years of its existence, this did not stop the city from establishing and enforcing racial segregation as early as 1887 (Garner, 2011, p. 18). And by 1904, the patterns of spatial and social segregation that shaped the city of Johannesburg were already solidly in place (Harrison & Zack, 2012, p. 8). The mining industry played a central role in forming and perpetuating strict racial segregation prior to the apartheid, especially through the creation of segregated urban areas that would provide “a template for the socio-spatial engineering of the National Party government in later years” (Harrison & Zack, 2012, pp. 8-9). Many of these early policies would be incorporated into legal structures and expanded upon during the apartheid years (Harrison & Zack, 2012, pp. 8-9).

More than two decades prior to the introduction of apartheid, black neighborhoods were systematically destroyed by the local government and huge numbers of people were forcibly removed from the city center (Garner, 2011, p. 18). The Native Urban Areas Act of 1923 prohibited black Africans from purchasing or renting land in designated white areas; the local authority began to develop segregated housing estates for black communities and initiated a series of forced removals. By 1933, the entirety of the Johannesburg municipality was labeled as a “whites only” area. The Slums Act of 1934 cleared mixed-race inner city

neighborhoods, displacing black communities to the newly constructed townships on the southern periphery of the city that would later become Soweto. Until the apartheid era, Colored (mixed race) and Indian communities remained in the inner city in areas like Fietas (Harrison & Zack, 2012, pp. 8-9). But under apartheid many years later, these communities were also forcibly removed from the inner city and pushed into peripheral townships. White mineworkers who had come to Johannesburg from abroad lived along the edges of the mining belt in bungalow communities. Afrikaner communities grew in the western part of the city, as poor Afrikaners transitioned from rural farming to the city; and Jewish migrants from Eastern Europe and the Russian Empire built communities to the east of the city.

Figure 3. Johannesburg's Administrative Regions. From Johannesburg Poverty and Livelihood Study by Thea De Wet et al., 2008, University of Johannesburg.



In the 1930s, the city council created sub-economic housing estates for low-income whites in the areas formerly occupied by mixed-race communities (Harrison & Zack, 2012,

pp. 8-9). As early as 1904, hills to the north of the mining belt, free from dust and noise, were home to the wealthy white elite. To this day, the city remains divided along a north-south axis, with wealthy, predominantly white suburbs to the north and poor, predominantly black suburbs to the south (Harrison & Zack, 2012, pp. 8-9; Parnell, 1988).

During the 1930s, the inner city boomed. Beautiful buildings lined the streets, businesses thrived, and those fortunate enough to be included in the social and economic benefits of urban life took pride in their city. The city of Johannesburg truly embodied the wealth and power of the British Empire at that time (Garner, 2011, p. 18). Johannesburg captured the world's attention in 1936 when the city was selected to host the Empire Exhibition, marking the fiftieth anniversary of the discovery of gold in Johannesburg (Robinson, 2003).

F. The Apartheid Era

By the time the National Party rose to power in 1948, Johannesburg had already been subjected to decades of segregationist policies. The city council had succeeded in destroying most of the racially mixed neighborhoods by the late 1930s, and the city's mining workforce was almost entirely segregated. But apartheid was violent and relentless in its attempts to destroy any remnants of integration, and the policies implemented under apartheid left a profound and lasting impact still visible in the spatial configuration of the city (Harrison & Zack, 2012, p. 14).

In 1950 the National Party passed the Population Registration Act that mandated racial classification of people by the government, and the Group Areas Act which required separate residential and commercial areas for Black, Coloured, Indian, and White South Africans (Kentrige, 2013, p. 140). When Dr. T. E. Tonges, Minister of the Interior, first

introduced the Group Areas Act in 1950, he explained, “Points of contact invariably produce friction and friction generates heat and may lead to a conflagration... It is our duty therefore to reduce these points of contact to the absolute minimum which public opinion is prepared to accept” (Wainwright, 2015, p. 3). These policies necessitated the creation of new racially segregated spaces, as well as the forced removal of some groups from existing residential areas (Kentrige, 2013, p. 140). Sophiatown and the Western Native Township, which served as cultural melting pots up until the 1950s were destroyed, and those who had lived there relocated to segregated areas as stipulated by the legislation (Harrison & Zack, 2012, p. 14).

In 1961 South Africa severed ties with the British Commonwealth and became a republic. Still under apartheid, the white-owned economy continued to prosper and expand rapidly. The city flourished throughout the 1960s, and construction accelerated to transform the colonial city in the 1970s (Garner, 2011, p. 17). Skyscrapers dominated the new skyline of the Central Business District (CBD), adding to it the famous fifty-story Carlton Centre in 1973, which remains the tallest building in Africa (Beavon, 2010, p. 5). The building included office spaces and an elaborate belowground shopping mall that connected the skyscraper to the luxurious Carlton Hotel (Beavon, 2010, p. 5). The CBD teemed with businesses, restaurants, and nightlife, all catering to the needs and wants of the white population. The 1970s also saw the city transformed by the development of an expansive network of freeways designed to connect the growing urban sprawl to the north of the city to the CBD (Harrison & Zack, 2012, p. 16). Johannesburg’s improbable beginnings as a chaotic mining camp, less than a century prior, were all but forgotten in the wealth and abundance that now characterized the inner city (Garner, 2011, p. 19). While the world-

class CBD thrived, non-white communities on the periphery of the city declined. Residents displaced from the inner city and forcibly relocated to townships on the urban fringe had inadequate access to housing, and essential services, and faced long-distance commutes for work and access to shops. The Group Areas Act barred black people from living within the city and owning businesses or property in urban areas (Harrison & Zack, 2012, p. 16).

The Natives Act of 1952, required all black people over the age of 16 to carry a pass book, which functioned like an internal passport, and contained a photograph, place of origin, tax and employment information, and a detailed record of encounters with police. Pass laws restricted the movements of the black population and the flow of black labor, particularly in urban areas (Savage, 1986). Influx controls kept the population of the city artificially low and other policies controlled the size of townships and squatter settlements on the periphery by prohibiting rural migrants from moving to Johannesburg.

Figure 4. Harrison Street (1950), from <http://kateloves.co.za/1950s-johannesburg>.



Largely intended to help uphold racial segregation policies, these policies also limited social and welfare expenditures for the predominantly non-white workforce (Harrison & Zack, 2012, p. 16). During apartheid “almost one million people of color were evicted from supposed ‘white’ areas, and as a result, net urbanization hardly increased between 1950 (43 percent) and 1990 (48 percent); indeed in the 1960s there was a net outflow of Africans from urban areas” (Davis, 2006, pp. 51-52). Ultimately, however, the growing economy’s demand for labor interfered with the vision of “white cities” and “black homelands.” Black workers, necessary for labor, could not be removed completely from the city, and peripheral townships grew with an increasing demand for labor (Davis, 2006, pp. 51-52).

Figure 5. Inner City Johannesburg (1950), from <http://kateloves.co.za/1950s-johannesburg>.



The people of South Africa lived under apartheid for over forty years. And not until 1986, under severe domestic and international pressure, were the pass laws repealed; the Group Areas Act followed suit five years later (Davis, 2006, p. 60; Rex & Visser, 2009). But in the prior decade and leading up to founding of a new democratic government in 1994, the city of Johannesburg underwent yet another period of great transition (Garner, 2011).

G. The Decline of Inner City Johannesburg

By the late 1970s, signs of impending inner city decay appeared. Large corporations located in the inner city began to relocate their headquarters to the northern suburbs; the northward migration of businesses accelerated in the 1980s, and by the 1990s the inner city

was in crisis (Murray, 2008, pp. 67-68). As the inner city stagnated, the communities on the periphery rapidly expanded.

Johannesburg's declining inner city was not alone; as the end of the 20th century approached, post-industrial cities around the world experienced urban decline. During this time, inner city businesses abandoned industrial facilities and modernist office buildings, and urban apartment dwellers and retailers gravitated towards more spacious, lower-density suburbs. In cities throughout the world, suburbs were made more accessible and convenient by increased ownership of private vehicles. And in many inner cities, buildings that had been constructed during the early and mid 20th century were outdated and unable to meet the changing needs of cities (Garner, 2011, p. 10). Businesses required newer, more efficient buildings outfitted with modern designs, faster elevators, etc. In some cities buildings were upgraded and redeveloped, but in other inner cities businesses opted to build new buildings away from city centers, leaving the inner cities hollow (Garner, 2011, p. 11). But, the factors contributing to inner city decay in Johannesburg were more complex than in many other post-industrial cities. In addition to the economic incentives that led to suburbanization, South Africa was faced with mounting social and cultural pressures as the apartheid system gave way to a budding democracy (Garner, 2011, p. 11).

By the 1980s, corporate businesses and large-scale retailers were quickly abandoning Johannesburg's inner city, opting to build new buildings on the cheap vacant land to the north of the city. This brought businesses closer to their customers, many of whom had already moved to the suburbs in search of cheaper housing alternatives and more space (Garner, 2011, p. 11). In the 1960s and 1970s, white first-time home-buyers were offered significant subsidies to incentivize young families to move out of the inner city and to buy

homes in the suburbs (Garner, 2011, p. 19). But prior to the relocation of businesses in the suburbs, residents had struggled to access businesses in the CBD. The city's heavy traffic and limited parking were the direct result of poor city planning decisions made in the 1960s which included the removal of the electric tram system and a limitation placed on the number of parking spots allowed to accompany new building projects (Garner, 2011, pp. 11, 20).

As large and small white-owned businesses flocked to the suburbs, the resulting "urbanization of suburbia" reversed the longstanding relationship between the urban center and the periphery. New rival "edge cities" including Sandton, Randburg, Rosebank, Kempton Park, and Fourways grew up along the peri-urban fringe. These centers became magnets for the majority of new capital investments in the Johannesburg metropolitan area replacing the CBD, which had previously been the business center of the nation and the whole of sub-Saharan Africa. Disinvestment from the inner city dramatically transformed the once vibrant city center leaving in its wake under-utilized spaces, plummeting property values, vacant buildings, deteriorating infrastructure, and overlooked facilities (Murray, 2008, pp. 67-68).

Figure 6. Johannesburg Suburbs. From Affordable Housing Institute, 2015.



Until 1990 Johannesburg remained firmly at the center of the apartheid economy. But during the transition to democracy, political uncertainty and unrest fueled a massive migration to the suburbs. As white businesses and families left the city center and relocated to the suburbs, many buildings not able to be sold for adequate prices were left vacant or simply abandoned. But vacant buildings in the CBD did not remain empty for long. As racial barriers to the city were lifted at the end of apartheid, impoverished work seekers from the peripheral townships, previously barred from access to the city, sought centrally located housing (Garner, 2011, pp. 12-13). Former township and rural residents, as well as migrants from neighboring countries, moved to the inner city in search of housing near

economic opportunities (Murray, 2008, pp. 70-71). The inner city experienced a period of rapid and dramatic social change; this left the city council of the early 1990s ill-prepared and unwilling to take the steps necessary to adapt to the changing dynamics of the city, or address the needs of the large numbers of impoverished work seekers now streaming into the CBD (Garner, 2011, pp. 12-13).

As an institution that catered only to the needs of white residents, the municipality lacked legitimacy and found itself unable to enforce its bylaws and uninterested in planning for the needs of the city's new residents. The municipality's response to the rise of slumlords and the hijacking of abandoned buildings throughout the inner city was inadequate. Slumlords profited in the absence of oversight, exploiting tenants by collecting high rents while failing to do the necessary upkeep and maintenance of buildings. In addition, landlords and management agents frequently collected fees for water and electricity from tenants and neglected to deliver these fees to the municipality. In combination, political instability, failing local government, financial meltdown, and overcrowding in the inner city led to a collapse of service delivery and neglect of basic municipal infrastructure. By the time the first democratically elected local government took power in the mid-1990s, Johannesburg was a failed city.² And before long, the inner city became mythologized by wealthy, white suburbanites as a crime-ridden, notoriously dangerous, and dirty place (Garner, 2011, p. 13).

The separation of white interests from the fate of the city resulted in scenes of urban blight. The new residents of the city lived amongst the boarded-up high-rises, broken windows, and littered streets that had replaced the inner city's beautiful buildings and

² "The decision to demarcate local government into four separate regional councils, with the inner-city straddling several of these, complicated matters further." (Garner, 2011, p. 21)

pristine streets. Massive disinvestment and the rising poverty rates in the inner city led to plummeting property values and rental rates. Convenience stores, fast-food outlets, and long-stay boarding houses that catered to the needs of the city's new low-income residents replaced the elegant shops, restaurants, and hotels that had previously catered to a wealthy white clientele. Many seeking shelter were forced to make homes in the vacant spaces of the inner city, setting up living quarters in abandoned or unused factories and warehouses, often in the presence of unsafe building conditions. And informal street traders, hoping to scrape out existences in the city, occupied sidewalks, corners, and traffic stops (Murray, 2008, pp. 67-68).

H. Post-apartheid Johannesburg

The democratic era beginning in 1994 brought with it a series of complex transformations, and haunting reminders of the past. The northern edge cities continued to grow steadily, receiving the lion's share of capital investment as the inner city further declined. Housing shortages and a lack of employment opportunities in the black townships squeezed more people away from the periphery and toward the city center. With this, the number of people crowding into abandoned and deteriorating buildings grew rapidly. The demographics of the city continued to shift as informal street traders and new immigrant communities from throughout Africa grew up within the inner city. Xenophobic attitudes made immigrants frequent targets of criminal attacks and racial tensions continued to define the city; white representations of the inner city as a violent, unsafe place intensified (Garner, 2011, p. 21).

In the early 2000s, the inner city became a battleground for the competing forces of decay and decline, gentrification, opportunity, and exclusion. Housing opportunities for

low-to middle-income households expanded in the inner city with the conversion of buildings. Meanwhile the promising emergence of a black middle class caused some movement out of township areas and into wealthier suburbs. Meanwhile, the new government constructed subsidized housing on the periphery of the city, creating new concentrated pockets of poverty (Harrison & Zack, 2012, p. 16). While some urban planning and development strategies of the post-apartheid era have focused on spatial, social, and institutional integration, and attempts to incorporate marginalized, under-developed neighborhoods into the city, Johannesburg's persistent spatial, class, and racial divisions indicate that hopes for inclusionary development have not be realized (Landman, 2013, p. 2). Inequitable access to housing and services in the city, once symptomatic of the repression and segregation of apartheid, now reveals the limits of formal desegregation and the new democratic government's ability and will to address these problems.

I. Gated Communities and Northern Suburbs

While gated communities have been prevalent in Africa since the mid-1940s, when many colonial governments contracted western city planning firms to design plans for colonial cities, the prevalence of gated communities has grown rapidly in South Africa over the past two decades (Huchzermeyer, 2011, p. 28; Zhu, 2010). Gated communities, also referred to as — gated cities, gated residential developments, enclaves, gated enclaves, guard-gated communities, fortified enclaves, and common interest developments (CIDs) — restrict public access using a combination of walls, gates, fences, and private security to create exclusive spaces (Atkinson & Blandy, 2005). Gated communities are “walled or fenced housing developments, to which public access is restricted” (Atkinson & Blandy, 2005). These developments are, “characterized by legal agreements which tie the residents

to a common code of conduct and (usually) collective responsibility for management” (Atkinson & Blandy, 2005). Gated communities have become very common in and around urban centers in South Africa and have more recently emerged in rural settings where such developments boast an abundance of amenities and leisure activities (Spocter, 2013). Some scholars argue that the privatization of space and security realized through gated communities is a direct reaction to the inability of public authorities to secure public space and growing fears that white spaces are becoming increasingly unsafe (Morange, Folio, Peyroux, & Vivet, 2012). A growing lack of faith in the city to provide basic services leads private neighborhoods to provide these services themselves (Zhu, 2010, p. 2).

Private security has been one of the fastest growing industries in South Africa since the late 1980s and is central to the formation and maintenance of gated communities and the northern suburbs. More than 8,800 private security companies exist in South Africa, employing more than 411,000 people (Clarno, 2013). Most homes in the northern suburbs are equipped with house alarms set to automatically notify the contracted “armed response” security company if there are any disturbances, and almost every house is separated from the road by high walls topped either by spikes, razor wire, or electric fencing. The privatization of services, like security, that would normally be considered the responsibility of governments calls into question the role of government in the transformation of cities (BÉNit-Gbaffou, Didier, & Peyroux, 2012). Rowland Atkinson argues in his work that gated communities undermine the responsibility and ability of both local and national governments to create some level of equity between wealthy and poor neighborhoods (Atkinson & Blandy, 2005, p. 5).

On a global scale, the rise of gated communities has been accompanied by a loss of

social diversity within neighborhoods, segregation, and a redirection of crime towards those who cannot afford to pay for private security. In addition, services for many poorer areas suffer as a direct result of gated communities. Many of these communities engage in privatizing fiscal arrangements and revenues and opting out of municipal services (Atkinson & Blandy, 2005, p. 9). In Johannesburg, wealthy suburbs have followed a pattern of increasingly exclusionary behavior in the post-apartheid era beginning with a boycott of redistributive tax policies followed by the creation of gated communities and residents' associations, and the establishment of residential city improvement districts (CIDs): "CIDs are private organizations authorized by the state to impose compulsory levies on property owners within a defined geographical area. This money is used to supplement municipal services such as trash collection, street lighting, and security" (Clarno, 2013, p. 13). These measures represent attempts to maintain authority over increasingly narrow geographical spaces of white elitism (Clarno, 2013). This raises important questions about what the implications of privatization of space and security in South Africa will be in terms of the greater development of the country, standards of living, infrastructure, income distribution and poverty. But as gated communities continue to grow to the north of the city, there is a parallel movement originating amongst some suburbanites who have taken an interest in revitalizing the inner city and moving to new urban neighborhoods designed to cater to middle and upper class lifestyles.

J. Conclusion

Throughout Johannesburg's history the dynamics of the northern suburbs, the southern communities on the periphery, and the inner city have been defined by extreme social and economic divides. Twenty years since the fall of apartheid, dreams of a fully integrated, and

equitable South Africa have fallen short. Wealth remains concentrated in the northern suburbs, where residents have invested in increasing levels of private security; informal communities and government housing remain marginalized on the periphery, cut off from economic opportunities, and deprived of adequate services; the inner city, once a shining example of white wealth, became a symbol of inequality and neglect in post-apartheid South Africa. Today the inner city is a contested space in which emerging patterns of socio-economic displacement masquerade as reinvestment in integration.

IV. Remaking Johannesburg

Since Johannesburg's founding in 1886, the city has undergone several periods of transformation. Even before the collapse of apartheid in the mid 1990s, five periods of crisis shook the city and caused the municipal authorities to turn to comprehensive urban planning schemes for solutions. These periods took place (1) after the South African War (1899-1902), (2) following the First World War and continuing through the 1920s, (3) after the Great Depression, (4) throughout and following the Second World War, and (5) at the height of apartheid in the 1960s and 1970s. At each of these points, the city undertook large-scale rejuvenation projects and city builders looked to Western urban planners for inspiration. These projects largely focused on achieving urban "progress," and sought to replace decaying sites and buildings with new structures. To address the ills of the city, municipal authorities have focused almost exclusively on top-down citywide planning projects (Murray, 2008, p. 62).

Starting in the 1960s, large-scale corporate enterprises like DeBeers, Gold Fields, and the Johannesburg Stock Exchange left the inner city and most upscale service industry businesses closed; during this time, the use of buildings and public space in the inner city changed and the residential population of the inner city began to undergo dramatic shifts. As white residents and businesses left the center of the city — which, under apartheid, had been reserved exclusively for the white population — the inner city became a massive scene of urban blight; skyscrapers fell into disrepair, crime rates soared, and vacant buildings became informal housing. Property values and rental rates rapidly declined. As the demand for plush office spaces in the inner city plummeted, demand for low-income family housing exploded. Homeless families and individuals seeking shelter filled the unoccupied and

neglected spaces in the inner city and began setting up living quarters in abandoned or unused factories, warehouses, and buildings. Informal street traders occupied sidewalks, corners, and traffic stops in hopes of earning a living (Murray, 2008, pp. 67-68). The physical deterioration of buildings and public spaces, the development of squatter settlements, and climbing crime rates culminated in declining property values and an overall lack of investment in the inner city (Murray, 2008, pp. 69-70). The decline of the inner city not only disrupted the ambitions of large-scale property owners and others with large financial stakes in the inner city, but also tarnished the reputation of post-apartheid Johannesburg as an emerging world-class city.

In the midst of major crisis in the late 1990s, the City of Johannesburg (CoJ) set out to re-envision the inner city as “the Golden Heartbeat of Africa” (Murray, 2008, p. 71). Launched by Deputy President Thabo Mbeki in 1997, “the Golden Heartbeat of Africa” campaign placed inner city regeneration at the center of its agenda (Reddy, 2012). A coalition of large-scale property owners, municipal authorities, and urban planners launched a proposal for urban revitalization in hopes of halting the mass exodus of businesses from the inner city, cleaning up the built environment, and stabilizing investments. The coalition’s plan was largely corporate-driven, linking “personal safety and business security with site-specific clustered development and social homogeneity in the use of urban space” (Murray, 2008, p. 71). These revitalization efforts were firmly grounded in a complex set of assumptions surrounding what it meant to be a “globally competitive” and “world-class” city. Many of the cosmopolitan ideals used to envision the future city were adopted from North American and European city planning models. Development of the city in the post-

apartheid era has therefore been highly concerned with “international best practices” for city building (Murray, 2008, p. 71).

In 1999, the municipality launched the Inner City Spatial Framework with the express purpose of addressing inner city spatial degradation and economic failings. Soon after, the Inner City Economic Development Strategy began the process of identifying target areas for urban renewal. By the early 2000s, the municipality had sponsored and helped to direct upgrades in several areas of the inner city. Focus areas included Newtown, Constitution Hill, Braamfontein, Greater Ellis Park, Jeppestown, High Court Precinct, Civic Precinct, Rissik Street Post Office, Pageview/Vrededorp, and the Fashion District (Garner, 2011, p. 21). Newtown, a cultural-heritage development, was intended to revive tourism in the inner city.³

In 2001, the municipality established the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA), which was mandated to “implement capital projects that would achieve urban regeneration goals in declining areas of the city” (Garner, 2011, p. 22). That same year, the municipality introduced a new Inner City Task Team designed exclusively to manage the daily workings of the inner city and specifically mandated to address four essential challenges: “crime reduction, informal trade management, service delivery coordination, and revenue collection” (Garner, 2011, p. 24).

Recognizing the importance of regeneration and service delivery to achieving the vision for Johannesburg’s as “a world-class African city” by 2030, the CoJ put the Integrated

³ “The re-emergence of the inner city as tourism zone for Johannesburg is linked to wider initiatives which have been ongoing since the late 1990s to physically regenerate and economically revive the inner city economy. One recent initiative that is linked to a boutique hotel development is the establishment in City and Suburban (the eastern edge of the CBD) of the Maboneng Precinct as a focal point for arts and creative industries, which are re- using former light industrial buildings. The use and upgrading of the Ellis Park area for hosting major national and international rugby games as well as a venue for FIFA World Cup also has been a further stimulus to revival of the inner city as a tourism zone.” (Reddy, 2012, p. 47)

Development Plan (IDP) in place in 2004. At this point, the city articulated its plan to restore “the inner city as a catalyst for economic growth, job creation and tourism by creating an enabling environment for people in a decent, secure, livable space within a creative city” (Reddy, 2012, p. 7). This vision evolved into the Inner City Regeneration Charter,⁴ developed during the Inner City Summit in April 2007. The charter describes the plan to rebuild Johannesburg:

...in a balanced way in order to accommodate all people and interests. A city which remains the vibrant business heart of Johannesburg as a whole, but which balances future commercial, retail, and light-manufacturing development with a large increase in residential density. A city which works as a key residential node where a diverse range of people from different income groups and backgrounds can have their residential needs met – not a dormitory for the poor or an exclusive enclave of loft apartments, galleries, and coffee shops... the inner city must be a place of primary entry into Johannesburg but also a place where people want to stay because it offers a high quality urban environment with available social and educational facilities, generous quality public open spaces and ample entertainment opportunities. It must be a city that serves as both the key transportation transit point for the entire Gauteng Global City Region, but also as a destination point where people want to walk in the streets. A city where prevailing urban management, safety and security concerns are a thing of the

⁴ As mandated by the Inner City Regeneration Charter, the City of Johannesburg allotted a R2 billion budget for regeneration between 2007 and 2012 with a R100 million operating budget for urban management (Garner, 2011, p. 25).

past...fast-changing city centers that accommodate a wide range of functions and interests in a dynamic mix do not have to be places where waste is not collected, by-laws are not enforced, buildings are in decay and public spaces deteriorating, and where many people cannot walk in the streets free of the fear of crime. Regardless of the functions and people it accommodates in the future, Johannesburg's inner city will be well managed, safe, and clean.

(Garner, 2011, pp. 24-25)

The municipality's central aim, to increase and sustain investment in the inner city and to increase property values is to be accomplished through five key focus areas:

(1) intensive urban management, including improvements to service quality, strict enforcement of by-laws, management of taxis and informal traders, and sound credit control; (2) upgrading and maintenance of infrastructure to create an environment attractive to both residents and businesses; (3) support for those economic sectors that have the potential to thrive in the inner city, and encourage growth in those sectors; (4) discouraging 'sinkholes,' meaning properties that are abandoned, overcrowded or poorly maintained, and which in turn 'pull down' the value of entire city blocks by discouraging investment; and (5) encouraging 'ripple effect' investments that can lift an entire area. ("Reshaping Johannesburg's inner city," 2015)

The central players involved in the regeneration of the inner city include: "city officials, urban planners, large-scale property owners, real estate developers, and corporate builders, along with their hired cadre of architects, landscape designers, engineers, advertising experts, real estate agents, and public relations specialists" (Murray, 2008, p. 25). While

often led by conflicting motivations and interests, these parties share a common vision for Johannesburg as a “socially progressive, racially harmonious, aspirant world-class city with a postindustrial, high-tech future of cosmopolitan urbanity” (Murray, 2008, p. 25). Since the launch of the Inner City Regeneration Charter, the CoJ has actively encouraged various stakeholders to develop safe, clean, livable, creative spaces in the inner city, oftentimes by entering into public private partnerships between government entities and urban development and management companies (Reddy, 2012, p. 6).

In the fifteen years since the CoJ committed to a plan for urban regeneration, pockets of the inner city have been transformed. The JDA’s area-based regeneration strategy has achieved many of its objectives in target areas. Increased levels of investment in the inner city between private developers and public agencies combined with a growing interest amongst middle class suburbanites in an urban lifestyle have allowed for the development of thriving regenerating neighborhoods. Residential development in these areas of the inner city is shifting to meet the needs of the changing inner city population. All of Johannesburg’s regenerating neighborhoods are privately developed and managed, with the exception of the Newtown Cultural Precinct which is a government-designed and publicly-funded project (Reddy, 2012, p. 7). New businesses have sprung up in these areas to cater to the needs of young, upwardly mobile residents flocking to the city to access professional opportunities and experience an urban lifestyle. Other signs of regeneration, including public art installations, retail businesses, fine dining restaurants, hotels, and office spaces, have clustered around the transforming neighborhoods of the inner city. The city has invested in upgrades to public transportation infrastructure, which has since expanded to

include the Rea Vaya Bus Rapid Transit System and the Gautrain (Garner, 2011, p. 25).⁵

Debates surrounding the expansion of transportation infrastructure in the city have centered on questions of which communities should benefit from these upgrades. The Gautrain, which connects Pretoria, Johannesburg, and the O.R. Tambo International Airport, has been criticized for its failure to serve the highly populated Gauteng townships, where transportation challenges are most severe.

Regeneration of the inner city has also been driven by municipality-led efforts to “clean up the city,” often resulting in the evictions and harassment of low-income residents. The CoJ evicted an estimated 10,000 low-income residents from 122 properties in the inner city between 2002 and 2006 (K. Tissington, personal communication, April 9, 2015). In 2013, the CoJ implemented Operation Clean Sweep targeting “bad buildings” and informal trade in the city. The controversial operation consisted of large-scale evictions of residents living in targeted “bad buildings” and subsequent building demolitions as well as police harassment of thousands of informal traders to discourage informal trade in the city (Nxumalo, 2013). Many of the “bad buildings” targeted during Operation Clean Sweep were former factories or office spaces that had been converted into residences; many of these residences were overcrowded, unsafe, and lacked access to proper sanitation. One report estimates that there are currently 1,300 such buildings in the CBD housing over 250,000 people (Serino, 2015). Referring to the municipality’s efforts to displace residents and informal traders, the Johannesburg Police Commissioner, Oswald Reddy promised, “when we have returned to normalcy, we won’t have to crack down anymore” (Murray, 2008, p. 226). In a city that has been defined by intense racial and class segregation it is

⁵ The desire to present Johannesburg as a world-class city during the FIFA 2010 World Cup served as the inspiration for the creation of the Rea Vaya Bus System.

important to ask, what era of Johannesburg's development Police Commissioner Reddy considers to be normal? Is Reddy referring to the years under apartheid when all black residents were pushed to the periphery and denied access to the city or to the city's early days as a mining city? Calling for a return to normalcy in Johannesburg evokes the city's long, violent history of enforcing segregation and promoting systematic inequality. Similarly, when asked how the city's homeless and unemployed would be able to afford housing, Johannesburg's executive mayor from 2000 to 2011, Amos Masondo responded, "the city will not tolerate 'transients' who do not pay their dues. You can not use human rights to promote anarchy" (Murray, 2008, p. 183). But adopting a human rights perspective to condemn the city's attempts to criminalize the actions of individuals and communities attempting to access basic needs such as shelter, and opportunities to earn income in the city is appropriate and necessary.

In 2008, property developer and CEO of Propertuity Development, Jonathan Liebmann, responded to the CoJ's call for regeneration of the inner city and began developing the Maboneng Precinct — a mixed use neighborhood comprised of refurbished industrial buildings (Reddy, 2012, p. 9). With the development of the Maboneng Precinct, regeneration spread to the eastern side of the CBD.

V. The Maboneng Precinct

The Maboneng Precinct, located on the eastern side of Johannesburg's CBD, is one of the inner city's trendiest regenerating neighborhoods. Maboneng, which means "Place of Light" in Sotho, is located within a formerly industrial area in the suburbs of Jeppestown and City and Suburban (Walsh, 2013, p. 403). The neighborhood, which includes mixed-use commercial and residential spaces is privately owned and managed by a single developer, Propertuity Development (Trangoš, 2014). Maboneng, described by Propertuity as an alternative to the exclusive neighborhoods and gated communities of the northern suburbs, is presented by the property developer as an opportunity for former suburbanites to "Join the City Lifestyle" lacking for middle- and upper-income people in the years following apartheid (Trangoš, 2014). The businesses in the neighborhood, which include restaurants, cafes, boutiques, galleries, and a local grocer, are designed to cater to young black and white professionals. However, those residing in the areas surrounding Maboneng tend to have low-incomes, like most inner-city residents, and the surrounding areas are characterized by high rates of unemployment, poverty and insufficient service provision (Reddy, 2012). As Maboneng and other regenerating neighborhoods continue to grow and expand, the future of low-income inner city residents in the surrounding areas remains uncertain.

In 2008, property developer and CEO of Propertuity Development, Jonathan Liebmann, responded to the CoJ's call for regeneration of the inner city and began developing the Maboneng Precinct — a mixed use neighborhood comprised of refurbished industrial buildings (Reddy, 2012, p. 9). Liebmann's development firm purchased and renovated industrial buildings in the area while the JDA performed other improvements, upgrading

street pavements, adding lights, cleaning the freeway columns (now one of the distinct features identifying the border of the Maboneng Precinct), and installing 15 CCTV cameras (Reddy, 2012, p. 38).⁶

A. Propertuity Development: Jonathan Liebmann

Born in Johannesburg, 32-year-old Jonathan Liebmann is the founder and CEO of Propertuity Development, and the entrepreneur behind the Maboneng Precinct. Liebmann gained a taste for property development as a very young man, turning his first property investment at the age of 18. In his early career, he owned a mobile coffee shop, and later a chain of laundromats, which expanded to 17 stores over the course of three years. His successful expansion of his laundromat business gained the confidence of an unidentified international private equity financier, who would provide the funding to launch Maboneng ("Two Hundred Young South Africans," 2011; Walsh, 2013, p. 403). Liebmann explains that his moment of realization came when he converted an old factory space in Milpark into an apartment for himself, allowing him to imagine, "a new, profitable life for Joburg's stockpile of empty industrial buildings" (Compton, 2013, p. 2; Pitman, 2013). Liebmann's entrepreneurial spirit and experiences travelling internationally solidified his vision for a regenerating neighborhood in the inner city. During an interview Liebmann explained to me that the neighborhood was largely, "born out of my person needs. I traveled a lot around the world and when I came back to Johannesburg I kind of new that something was missing. I was living in the suburbs like most middle-income people and I was missing that kind of urbanism of street life and mixed-use, mixed-income, city-life really..." (Liebmann, 2014).

⁶ The JDA also partnered with private firms to renovate Jewel City, the precinct to the West of Maboneng, committing R24 million to the project (Rogerson, 2014, p. 190).

When asked what cities most inspired his vision for Maboneng, he responded, “I guess I’ve been to most places,” and went on to cite Berlin, New York, Venice Beach, the Vila Madalena neighborhood in Sao Paulo, and Cape Town. He was quick to follow with a reassurance that his inspiration comes from many African cities as well. When asked about his favorite African cities, Liebmann responded, “Maputo is cool” and then paused before adding, “I haven’t traveled that much around Africa. I’ve spent some time in Accra. I think the important thing about African cities is that they’re lacking fundamentally on basically every level from an infrastructural point of view, yet on an energetic level they’re interesting. There’s some beauty in the chaos I guess.” Liebmann’s understanding of “traveling most places” interestingly did not seem to include travel on the African continent, or travel to the cities that had supposedly helped to inspire his vision for Maboneng.

Liebmann comes from a family of successful business people. His father, Benji Liebmann had a career as an investment banker and now heads the NIROX Foundation, which supports contemporary art in South Africa. His mother worked as an interior designer and his brothers work in finance and retail (Mabandu, 2013). During the apartheid era, Liebmann’s parents reportedly owned property in the area of the inner city he has renamed Maboneng (Norgaard, 2015).

Backed by an international financier,⁷ who funded Liebmann in previous ventures, Liebmann founded Propertuity Development in 2008, and focused his efforts on buying up available real estate within the blocks he targeted for redevelopment on the eastern side of the CBD (Pitman, 2013). Liebmann explained the importance for Propertuity establishing a “critical mass” early on in the area by “buying up stock in the neighborhood” (Pitman,

⁷ Although Liebmann frequently references his international financier in interviews, this individual is never mentioned by name. Some hypothesize that the financier is a family member (Pitman, 2013).

2013). Owning a sufficient number of buildings justified, “the cost of upgrading all the infrastructure, the lights, the trees, the pavements, the security and the like” (Pitman, 2013). Liebmann’s ability to involve artists and creatives early in the development of Maboneng proved a successful strategy. This strategy was not unique to Maboneng, however, as artists have been catalysts for change in many regenerating neighborhoods throughout the world. But, as the neighborhood has grown and developed Liebmann’s vision has expanded to include young professionals and entrepreneurs. Liebmann believes that using entrepreneurship, as the foundation for regeneration in Maboneng will prove essential to Maboneng’s success: “I think a lot of regenerating communities have had artists as the catalysts, which is good, artists play a role, but I think in this modern, globalized, corporate world there’s such an opportunity for small business” (Liebmann, 2014). Liebmann, who views himself not just as a property developer, but as a community developer functions as the “de facto mayor of Maboneng” (Compton, 2013, p. 2). Ultimately, Liebmann envisions the urban lifestyle Maboneng aims to provide, as one that would allow residents to live in “an integrated space where they can go downstairs, watch a movie, eat in a restaurant, walk everywhere and ride on a bicycle” (Pitman, 2013). In many ways, this lifestyle sounds similar to the one Johannesburg’s gated communities seek to provide.

B. The Precinct

The Maboneng Precinct began with Arts on Main, a pilot project that confirmed the potential for future expansion of the neighborhood. The building that would become Arts on Main, was purchased from the D.F. Corlett construction company in 2008 and opened in

2009 with galleries, design stores, and a restaurant (Compton, 2013, p. 2; Nevin, 2014).⁸

With the success of Arts on Main, Main Street Life followed in 2010. Main Street Life, a redeveloped 1970s warehouse at 286 Fox Street was converted into 194 apartments, three restaurants, a boutique hotel, an independent cinema, a live theatre, and a rooftop boxing gym (Compton, 2013). Main Street Life and Arts on Main attracted artists, entrepreneurs, suburbanites and tourists to the inner city, and the success of these developments has sparked the growth of the Maboneng Precinct. Maboneng has expanded rapidly, as Propertuity has purchased, renovated, and converted former industrial buildings in the six-city block area between Berea, Commissioner, Main, and Albrecht Streets.

Figure 7. The Maboneng Precinct, Kruger Street. From Johannesburg's Hip Transformation by James Bainbridge, 2013, British Broadcasting Corporation.



Propertuity has established two City Improvement Districts (CIDs) within the area to supplement municipal service provision ("The Maboneng Precinct: Property Growth

⁸ William Kentridge, a prominent artist and Mikhael Subotzky, a photographer, filled the first studios at Arts on Main.

Report," 2013, p. 2) . City Improvement Districts, also known in South Africa as Special Ratings Areas (SRAs), function as nonprofit organizations in “defined geographic areas within which property owners agree to pay a levy for supplementary and complimentary services set to enhance the physical and social environment of the area” (“City Improvement Districts," 2009; Peyroux, 2006). The levies collected within the CID from property owners may only be spent within the specified CID area on supplementary services above and beyond services provided by the City of Johannesburg. These services usually include “security, cleaning and maintenance of public spaces, marketing, physical improvements and special programs to address aspects such as transportation, access and parking” (Peyroux, 2006, p. 10).

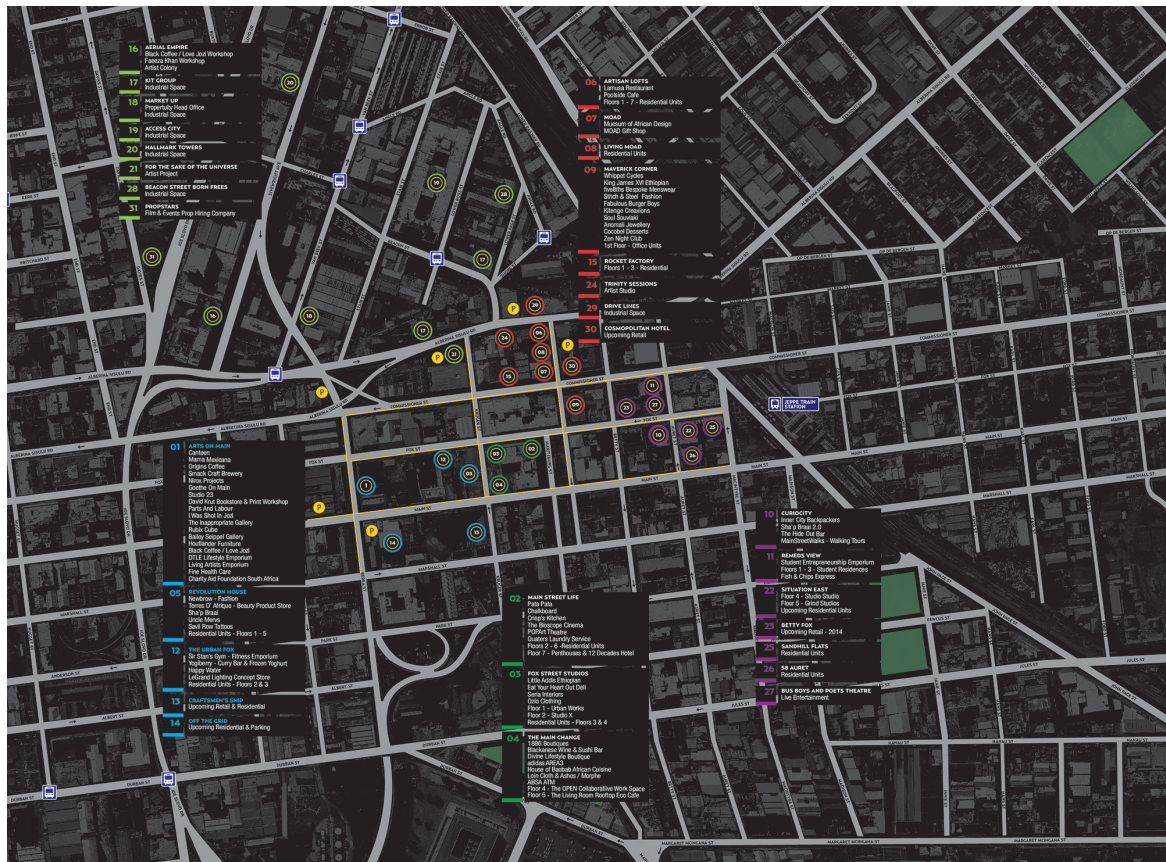
Figure 8. The Maboneng Precinct. From Johannesburg’s Hip Transformation by James Bainbridge, 2013, British Broadcasting Corporation.



Propertuity, the sole developer behind the regeneration of the area it calls Maboneng, owns between 25 and 50 buildings within six city blocks. The 2013 Maboneng Precinct Property Growth Report indicated that at the time Propertuity held 25 buildings in the area

("The Maboneng Precinct: Property Growth Report," 2013). Guy Trangoš, a researcher at the Gauteng City-Region Observatory indicates that the precinct is made up of 34 buildings (Trangoš, 2014). And in an interview with Jonathan Liebmann in September of 2014, Liebmann explained, "we're always buying and developing and selling, so the number is always changing, but we've got around 50 buildings on some level" (Liebmann, 2014). Propertuity's real estate portfolio is roughly "60 percent residential, 20 percent industrial, 10 percent commercial, 10 percent retail ("The Maboneng Precinct: Property Growth Report," 2013, p. 12). Estimates on the current number of residents in Maboneng also differ, ranging from 500 to 1000 residents; the low-end

Figure 9. The Maboneng Precinct. From "Maboneng Precinct," 2015.



estimate is cited by Propertuity in the 2013 Maboneng Growth Report, and Jonathan

Liebmann gave the high-end estimate in an interview in September of 2014 (Liebmann, 2014; "The Maboneng Precinct: Property Growth Report," 2013). Liebmann made it clear during this interview that, "that number is growing significantly" and Propertuity projects that 3000 residents will be living in Maboneng in the future (Liebmann, 2014; "The Maboneng Precinct: Property Growth Report," 2013). The costs of renting an apartment in Maboneng range from R 2750 (roughly 275 USD) per month for student dormitory style accommodations in the Remedys View building, to R 25,000 (2,500 USD) per month for a penthouse in the Fox Street Studio building. Apartments are also available for purchase and currently range in price from R 420,000 (42,000 USD) for a 33 square meter loft style apartment in Main Street Life to R 3,900,000 (390,000 USD) for a 282 square meter penthouse apartment in the Townhouse building.

The precinct houses almost 100 businesses including 24 restaurants and bars, 12 galleries, an independent cinema, a live theatre, several clothing boutiques and retail shops, an athletic club, and a spa. In January of 2015, the neighborhood also saw the launch of SPARK School, a primary school and Common Ground, a neighborhood park. The 2013 Growth Report estimated that 500 people are currently employed in the neighborhood and projected that businesses in Maboneng will employ 1,500 people in the future. Propertuity predicts that employment opportunities will be created in the neighborhood in the coming years through "construction work in the buildings, employment in the buildings for building managers, cleaners, security ...and through new businesses being set up in the buildings." ("The Maboneng Precinct: Property Growth Report," 2013, p. 11).

Maboneng's goal to provide, "a safe and secure environment for tourists, visitors, businesses and residents" has been accomplished through large investments in private

security in the neighborhood. Urban Genesis, contracted to provide security services for the neighborhood, stations guards along the perimeter of the Maboneng Precinct creating a permeable boundary. Additionally the neighborhood is monitored through CCTV and by patrol vehicles, and all apartment buildings use biometric access control. Crime in the inner city has fueled the paranoia of the wealthy northern suburbs for the past thirty years, but Maboneng's 24-hour security features are designed to give a sense of comfort to residents. Liebmann acknowledges that while, "crime in South Africa is out of control... the perceived crime in the city is not as bad as people think," explaining that, "statistically, you have a higher chance of falling victim to crime in Sandton than you do in the city. So it's been partly a matter of changing people's perceptions" (Pitman, 2013).

Figure 10. Freeway Underpass in Maboneng Precinct. From My Day Job: Jonathan Liebmann, 2013, <http://10and5.com/2013/10/31/my-day-job-jonathan-liebmann>.



Liebmann has also been outspoken on his belief that, “the divide between rich and poor will always lead to crime” stating that the “upliftment of the area” will eventually “bring greater opportunities” to low-income inner city residents in the surrounding areas, and that “this is a long-term solution to the issue of crime” (Pitman, 2013). But is Maboneng designed to realize this vision, and, if not, will its security strategy become increasingly restrictive in the years ahead?

Known for its art, food, and shopping, the Maboneng Precinct has become a tourist destination, for both domestic and international travelers. During the weekly Sunday Market on Main, residents and visitors alike wander through the market and the neighborhood’s many galleries, shops, and restaurants buzz with energy on the weekends. The Sunday Market on Main, held in the Arts on Main building, centers around food, fashion, and art. The first floor of the market is dedicated to food stalls, which sell a variety of take-away ethnic foods including Ethiopian, Indian, Chinese, Mexican, Japanese, and Portuguese cuisines. Many of the Maboneng restaurants set up food stalls at the Sunday market, providing a convenient way for visitors to sample the neighborhood’s wide variety of cuisines. The upstairs area is dedicated to a fashion market, which sells couture and vintage clothing, and jewelry. The prices of food and goods at the market are far closer to the prices found in the wealthier suburbs than the rest of the CBD, making most things unaffordable to the average inner city resident (Reddy, 2012, pp. 74-75). Popular weekend attractions also include rooftop and block parties, which often feature well-known foreign DJs, trendy clothing, pricey drinks, and high cover charges.

C. Policies and Initiatives

Over the course of Maboneng’s development, Propertuity has been very successful in its

efforts to promote and brand itself as an inclusive and conscientious developer and quick to counter characterizations of the precinct as an exclusive neighborhood that drives the gentrification of the area. Propertuity describes its approach to regeneration on its website as follows:

We take a community focused approach to development, with the understanding that the contributions of a neighbourhood's inhabitants to its identity are as pivotal to its success and sustainability as the redevelopment of buildings. We strongly believe that by taking a curated and inclusionary approach to the repurposing of buildings and the surrounding urban environment, regeneration provides the infrastructure for collective encounters and new engagements resulting in unique and energetic neighbourhoods where businesses and residents prosper. ("Propertuity: Leading Urban Regeneration," 2015)

Propertuity invests a great deal of resources into the marketing and branding of Maboneng. The Brand and Culture Manager for Propertuity, Haleigh Evans, and the marketing department are responsible for shaping the perceptions of Maboneng in both local, and international media. And Propertuity is diligent in its policing of Maboneng's image. Propertuity's initiatives and policies are frequently cited in promotional activities and used to propagate an image of Maboneng as an ethical developer, concerned with bettering the inner city for all residents.

D. Displacement

Propertuity's image as a responsible property developer relies on the firm's well-publicized policy of not purchasing inhabited buildings. On a sunny morning walking

around the Maboneng Precinct with Alice Cabaret, the director of the nonprofit Global Regeneration Initiative for Neighborhood Development (GRIND) and urban strategist for Propertuity, Cabaret explained the rationale behind the company's policy against buying inhabited buildings: "It isn't good press for Maboneng to do this (to buy residentially occupied buildings). It's not what we're about..." speaking more quietly now as we walked past residents on Fox Street in the heart of the Maboneng neighborhood, she added, "it is quite a hassle to have to move people who are squatting in a building. The law says that the company buying the building must pay to move people into temporary housing set up by the government. It becomes a mess to do this, so we don't. There are tons of abandoned buildings in Johannesburg and more than enough to buy up and renovate unoccupied buildings without having to buy ones that have people living in them, formally or informally" (Cabaret, 2014). Despite Cabaret's explanation, it is unclear if Propertuity has followed this policy consistently.

Guy Trangoš, a researcher at the Gauteng City-Region Observatory, described in an interview that while rumors of evictions in Maboneng persist, substantiating these rumors has proven to be very difficult. Trangoš explained, "evictions in Maboneng, which has a policy of not buying inhabited buildings are very hearsay oriented. People often have a friend, who has a friend, who has been evicted, but it's been challenging to actually verify stories. Some people say that Jonathan has actually paid people off to get them to leave, and that some people have simply been evicted, so it's hard to say where the truth lies" (Guy Trangoš, GCRO). Although rumors surrounding evictions in and around Maboneng rarely receive media coverage, these rumors continue to gain traction amongst local residents and activists in Johannesburg. While Nevin's research in Maboneng was unable to substantiate

the rumors surrounding residential evictions, she found evidence of businesses that had been displaced as a result of Maboneng's development. Nevin notes, "though it seems that no residential evictions occurred in the area due to the development of Maboneng, businesses were displaced because of it. Several informal businesses that had been located in the Maboneng area, such as those that can still be found in areas adjacent to Maboneng were displaced by expensive stores and restaurants, such as *Blackanese*" (Nevin, 2014, p. 191). Trendy restaurants, cafes, theatres, and boutiques catering to a very different population replaced the existing local businesses. Nevin notes that, "an important form of dislocation did occur, then, in the form of labour and production that was lost to the area. Maboneng's forms of production, primarily concerned with entertainment and art, are markedly different from the busy informal and formal stalls, workshops, and trade in the areas encircling it and that would have been present in the area of the precinct before Maboneng took it over" (Nevin, 2014, p. 191).

Shannon Walsh's research on the Maboneng Precinct references an eviction of over forty low-income residents that occurred in the Maboneng Precinct in December of 2012 (Bauer, 2013). Less than a block from the M2 freeway underpass that marks one of the boundaries of the precinct, "an occupied building had its entire residents evicted in the ongoing gentrification of the area. With mattresses and belongings strewn across the streets people did the best they could to survive the elements, clearly with nowhere else to go" (Walsh, 2013, p. 408). *The Mail and Guardian*, which published one of the only articles on this eviction, reported that the Radiator Center Warehouse had been hijacked before residents were "served with an eviction order by the infamous Red Ants and members of the South African Police Service and forcibly removed from their home, apparently without

warning, an opportunity to collect their belongings or any chance to organise alternative accommodation” (Bauer, 2013). An advocate for low-income residents in Johannesburg noted that Propertuity was eager to see the residents removed from the area after being evicted, but evicted residents were hesitant to leave behind their belongings which remained in the boarded up building, worrying that these items would be stolen. Propertuity’s Brand Manager Hayleigh Evans is quoted in the January 2013 *Mail and Guardian* article saying, “Members of the Maboneng community activated their respective networks to provide humanitarian support in an attempt to improve the evictees' situation” (Bauer, 2013). Although neighborhood sources do not believe that Propertuity was directly involved in the eviction, Walsh notes Propertuity’s investment in keeping this event out of the media spotlight. They seem to have been fairly successful in doing this, as it received very little media coverage. Even if not directly tied to the eviction, Maboneng’s close proximity to the eviction highlighted the contrasts between the lives of low-income residents living in hijacked buildings and the trendy lifestyles of residents in the most “talked about up-and-coming urban neighborhood in Johannesburg” (Walsh, 2013, p. 408).

The recent announcement of Hallmark House, the next large project on the horizon for Propertuity has spurred rumors that, if true, would indicate a violation of a Propertuity’s property acquisition policy. Propertuity and architect David Adjaye will convert Hallmark Towers, an industrial building on Siemert Road, north of the Maboneng Precinct. The thirteen-story glass-paneled building, rebranded as Hallmark House, will open in May of 2016, and will feature luxury apartments, a boutique hotel, a coffee shop, a variety of retail stores, a rooftop

Figure 11. Hallmark House Design Image. From Hallmark House: Layers of Elevation, 2015, <http://www.hallmarkhouse.co.za>.



entertainment venue, a spa, a fitness center, and a swimming pool ("Hallmark House: Layers of Elevation," 2015). A neighborhood source indicated that more than a hundred residents had been residing in Hallmark Towers until late 2014.

E. Local Economic and Community Development Initiatives

The Made in Maboneng initiative encourages businesses and residents to buy goods and services locally. Propertuity describes Made in Maboneng as an initiative that “encourages the buying of goods and services supplied and produced in the immediate area. The main objective of the initiative is to create a strong integrated local economy that offers growth

opportunities to all entrepreneurs operating in the community” (“The Maboneng Precinct: Property Growth Report,” 2013, p. 9). In the past, Maboneng has also made rent-free spaces available to promising entrepreneurs attempting to start businesses in Maboneng. This program is intended to alleviate start-up costs for entrepreneurs with limited access to the capital needed to open a business. Other initiatives centered on community development are run through the Global Regeneration Initiative for Neighborhood Development (GRIND).

GRIND, a nonprofit organization funded exclusively by Propertuity, aims to support “the implementation of innovative and inclusive urban projects in neighborhoods undergoing regeneration” (“GRIND Cities,” 2015). Alice Cabaret, GRIND’s founder and director (also employed as the urban strategist for Propertuity), is focused on creating a global exchange of best practices for regeneration between neighborhoods. Cabaret runs GRIND with the assistance of a group of GRIND residents (volunteers) who rotate every few months. GRIND recruits young people, mostly from Europe and the United States, to work in Maboneng for two months implementing self-designed projects focused on urban regeneration. Most residents are asked to propose projects in their applications, most having never been to Maboneng, Johannesburg, or even South Africa. Many of the proposed projects are aimed at strengthening community, fostering inclusivity, and creating opportunities for those who live in and around the neighborhood. Unfortunately, projects tend not to outlast the short two months residencies, and many are never implemented. It is unclear whether this is the result of the organization’s design or results from a shortage of staff or a lack of funding. The most recent projects implemented by GRIND residents have included “the *Urban Basket* fresh produce delivery from local urban farms; *GRIND Works* local employment and skills development platform; the *Community Cube* initiative for

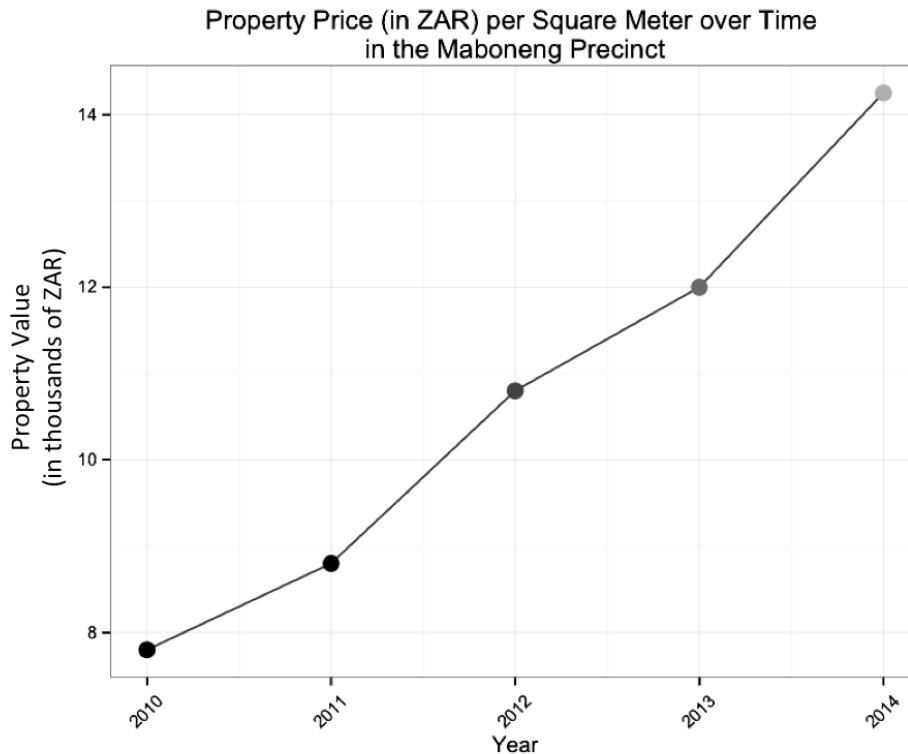
community engagement; *Kata Bolo* pop-up urban soccer; (and) *Woza Waste* management workshops” (“GRIND Cities,” 2015). The Urban Basket, a project designed and implemented by three South African GRIND residents, has been the only project to continue past the two-month residencies; the former GRIND residents continue to run Urban Basket as a business in the neighborhood. But, despite the failure of almost all GRIND projects, the organization frequently references incomplete and failed projects as if they are functioning realities in the neighborhood. GRIND’s website contains detailed descriptions of the projects, along with logos, and photographs, and the organization uses these projects in promotional materials for both GRIND and the Maboneng Precinct (“GRIND Cities,” 2015). During an interview on the Knight Cities podcast, in November of 2014, Cabaret misrepresented many of the GRIND residency projects, referring to the projects as functioning aspects of the Maboneng neighborhood (Coletta, 2015). Through these actions, GRIND reveals itself to be a part of Maboneng’s marketing strategy. GRIND and the residency projects it sponsors serve as fabricated evidence of Propertuity’s community focused, inclusive, innovative approach to regeneration.

F. Financial Profile

Maboneng’s appeal has translated to financial success for Propertuity; the precinct has shown a property price growth rate of 15 percent per year (Trangoš, 2014, p. 2). According to the Maboneng Precinct Property Growth Report, between 2010 and 2013, commercial prices in Maboneng “nearly doubled” and in the first two years after the launch of Main Street Life, residential property prices grew by roughly 30 percent (“The Maboneng Precinct: Property Growth Report,” 2013, p. 5). Property prices in Maboneng grew from R 5000 (500 USD) per square meter in 2008 to R 14,000 (1,400 USD) per square meter by

2014 ("Hallmark House: Layers of Elevation," 2015). In 2013, property was selling at an average 11 percent yield to investors and Propertuity predicted that, “buildings in the neighbourhood will continue to be uplifted, inevitably resulting in properties increasing in value” ("The Maboneng Precinct: Property Growth Report," 2013, p. 5).

Figure 12. Property Prices in Maboneng. Data from Hallmark House: Layers of Elevation, 2015, <http://www.hallmarkhouse.co.za>.



When asked on the *Entrepreneurial Edge* in 2012, “how many years before businesses and people are fighting to get a spot in the center of Johannesburg?” Liebmann replied, “I think it will happen relatively quickly obviously it will be linked to the growth of the economy, but with the shortage of property in the suburbs in terms of commercial property and the fact that development are running out of land in places like Sandton, I think it is going to be quite a quick move back into the city. And I would say that within the next three to five years I think there is probably going to be a tipping point” ("Entrepreneurial Edge," 2012). When asked about future plans Liebmann replied, “I’d like to grow the

portfolio into a hundred buildings and then I can start thinking about expansion into the rest of the city, the rest of the country and the rest of the continent” (“Entrepreneurial Edge,” 2012). If Liebmann is correct, and the inner city is set to become a competitive property market within the next few years, what will that mean for the city’s low-income residents?

VI. Analysis and Findings

The rapid development of the Maboneng Precinct represents a growing desire amongst middle-class suburbanites to access and transform the inner city. In Maboneng this has resulted in the area's transition "from residence by poor and working class black inner-city residents and traders to making it socially and commercially available to the middle class" (Nevin, 2014, pp. 191-192). As is often the case in gentrifying neighborhoods around the world, Maboneng is the product of "middle and upper-class outsiders" who feel compelled to rescue and improve the declining urban landscape and economy. While economic reinvestment in the area now called Maboneng has restored economic vitality to the area and increased local opportunities for housing, employment, and access to arts and entertainment, the neighborhood's design reinforces class divisions in the city, excludes low-income inner city residents from accessing the opportunities present in Maboneng, and may be contributing to displacement of low-income residents the surrounding areas.

A. The Abandoned City

"Before the regenerating neighborhoods, no one had been living in the inner city for 20 years." – Maboneng resident

Instead of encouraging and seeking participation from existing inner city residents, Maboneng promotes the myth that the space it now inhabits is empty and separate from the rest of the inner city. Maboneng justifies the silencing of inner city residents' voices and denies the potential for actively engaging with existing communities. This partitioning of the city and failure to acknowledge the impact Maboneng's developments have had on the surrounding areas reinforces an understanding of Maboneng as a wealthy enclave in the inner city.

The Maboneng Precinct is situated within two of Johannesburg's oldest suburbs, Jeppestown and City and Suburban, but despite the long history of this area Propertuity and many who reside in Maboneng silence the area's complex history to promote and justify Maboneng's development (Walsh, 2013, p. 403). The history of the inner city as presented by the former suburbanite residents of regenerating neighborhoods often omits the presence of the city's low-income residents and depicts the post-apartheid city as a vacant space. Propertuity's narrative of the development of the inner city is therefore limited to a retelling of white interaction with the inner city: the inner city boomed and blossomed during the mining days; it captured the world's attention when the world-class inner city hosted the 1936 Empire Exhibition; it was at the center of South African wealth and power during apartheid; but as the end of apartheid approached crime and urban blight overtook the inner city and businesses and residents fled (Robinson, 2003). The inner city falls silent at this point in the narrative of Johannesburg's development, functioning only as a peripheral force influencing the development of the northern suburbs, which become the new focal point. From the vantage point of the suburbs, the inner city became a "no-go zone," a place considered too dangerous to live in, do business in, or even drive through. Conversations with many of the residents and suburban tourists in Maboneng involved descriptions of an "abandoned" inner city.

The inner city is frequently described as "vacant" or "uninhabited"; and many of the Maboneng residents I spoke with articulated to me that, "no one has been living here" or "no has really been to the inner city" in twenty years. In a television interview on CNBC, Jonathan Liebmann, the CEO of Propertuity, explained, "people that haven't come back to the city, in the last 20 years, represent an additional opportunity for what my company is

doing. We have already managed to attract a lot of people, but the fact that there are so many people that haven't engaged with the city for so long means there is huge room for growth" ("Entrepreneurial Edge," 2012). Liebmann uses the word "people" to refer exclusively to wealthy white people, but this is never acknowledged in his statements. This violent erasure of non-white populations from the narrative of the inner city's development points to the problematic conflation of white history with the history of the inner city, and provides a justification for regeneration.

For the suburbanites flocking back to the inner city, the push to "take back the city" involves the reoccupation of vacant spaces that have been waiting for people to return from the suburbs. As Alice Nevin argues, "as superfluous appendages not needed or wanted in the figured city, the nomadic poor who inhabit these 'placeless' places occupy a kind of ontological state of nonbeing" (Nevin, 2014, p. 194). Thus, a narrative that carefully writes problematic residents out of existence overshadows the concerns for how regeneration might displace or otherwise affect the hundreds of thousands of residents who have occupied the city during this period of so-called "abandonment." To their benefit, property developers like Propertuity carefully present the inner city as a "'blank space' a 'tabula rasa' ... onto which developers could introduce their visions of a re-developed city" (Nevin, 2014, p. 194). In an interview with Jonathan Liebmann, he explained to me: "people like to compare [Maboneng] to other regeneration things that have happened. Typically, in a regeneration model there's existing communities and that's where the concerns of gentrification etc. happen" (Liebmann, 2014). But according to Liebmann, prior to the development of Maboneng, "the existing community was almost nonexistent... In Maboneng, if anything, we're just creating communities" (Liebmann, 2014). This

convenient narrative is disrupted by descriptions of the area prior to the creation of Maboneng, and by the daily interactions between Maboneng and the neighborhoods directly adjacent to the Precinct.

The Maboneng Precinct currently covers a six square block area comprised of roughly 34 renovated industrial buildings, most of which were unused when purchased for conversion by Jonathan Liebmann ("Maboneng Precinct," 2015). The development of Maboneng is described by Alice Nevin as, "occurring in a space that was not formally occupied, although social activities happened here, especially because of its position as a thoroughfare for people going to and from work in the CBD and its industrial surrounds" (Nevin, 2014, p. 191). Most of Nevin's interviews with local organizations, residents, workers, researchers, and police seem to indicate that the area was not residentially occupied, formally or informally, at the time the buildings were purchased for development. However, one of Nevin's community sources believed that the building that now holds the Museum of Art and Design in Maboneng might have been residentially occupied at the time of purchase. Most documented evictions of residents living informally in the area took place on the periphery of Maboneng (Nevin, 2014, p. 191). Although no residents were evicted as a direct result of Propertuity's development of the area, several businesses were displaced. The many informal and formal shops, stalls, and workshops that existed in the area prior to Maboneng have been replaced by new upmarket shops and restaurants, catering to the neighborhood's wealthy and upper middle class residents (Nevin, 2014, p. 191).

While Maboneng insists that it established itself in a completely unoccupied, unused part of the city, the realities of the inner city that surround and permeate the Precinct counter this claim. Maboneng is "an island in seas of decay," an obvious contrast to the buildings,

businesses, and the lifestyles of its residents and those of the surrounding areas (Nevin, 2014, p. 191). Maboneng's border is similarly visually defined by these stark contrasts and by the presence of security guards stationed at each block along the perimeter. While the borders of the Maboneng Precinct are guarded, residents of the surrounding areas frequently pass through the neighborhood. Maboneng is not floating in the middle of an abandoned city, as Liebmann's comments would suggest, but is instead imposed upon the bustling, densely populated neighborhoods that surround it. Fox Street, the center of the Maboneng Precinct, lies only one block to the north of Main Street, a main thoroughfare in Jeppestown. One can walk along the tidy tree-lined sidewalks of Fox Street past boutiques, upscale restaurants, and theaters, and within a minute be standing on a broken sidewalk of Main Street in front of corner stores with barred windows. The sidewalks on this portion of Main Street, though in disrepair, serve as active public spaces where shopkeepers sit and socialize, informal traders set up shop, children play and do homework after school, and a constant stream of commuters hop on and off minibus taxis. During my time in Maboneng, it was very unusual to see the precinct's white residents or visitors on Jeppestown's bustling Main Street; most times exceptions to this rule were driven by desperate searches for parking during the busy Sunday market. In these situations people in the car would swiftly exit, locking their car behind them as they nervously raced across the street into the Maboneng Precinct; crossing the street, they entered one of the only areas in the inner city where one could be inconspicuous, hidden amongst hundreds of white residents and visitors. Main Street Life, a mixed use building on Fox Street in the Maboneng Precinct offers an incredible contrast to many of the buildings within only a few blocks. Main Street Life contains loft-style apartments, several upscale restaurants, two theaters, and a boutique

hotel. But for many living in close proximity to the precinct, the realities are quite different. An estimated 100 people, most of whom are immigrants from Lesotho, live informally in a dilapidated one-story building only one-and-a-half blocks east of Main Street Life on Fox Street. The families in the building lack access to proper water and electric services, and survive on very low-incomes earned primarily through operating an informal recycling business in the inner city. The flat roof of the building is covered with giant bags of recycling collected from all over the CBD; when the bags are filled, they are dragged behind the recyclers on thin, wheeled platforms and sold to a recycling company, roughly a half mile away in Jeppestown. The contrast between the lives of residents in the Recycler's Building and those residing in Main Street Life could not be more striking, but active acknowledgement of this would expose Maboneng to potential criticism and questions regarding how Maboneng might affect the people living on the periphery of the precinct. As such, these realities are silenced or manipulated in the narrative of regeneration within the inner city.

Maboneng has been hugely successful in presenting itself as completely detached from the realities that exist in the rest of the inner city. Liebmann insists that the luxury housing and commercial spaces in Maboneng have not, will not, and could not displace residents and businesses in the surrounding areas, even as Maboneng continues to rapidly expand (Liebmann, 2014). When conceived of as a settlement in the middle of an abandoned wasteland, Maboneng is incapable of encroachment or displacement. But Liebmann's unwillingness to acknowledge the potential negative impacts Maboneng may have on the rest of the inner city is clouded by simultaneous claims that the porous border of the neighborhood offers huge economic and social opportunities to residents and businesses in

the surrounding areas. This thinking could lead one to believe that Maboneng and other regenerating neighborhoods could expand without limit to fill the vacant spaces of the CBD without displacing poor inner city residents, who Liebmann argues will benefit from Maboneng's presence.

Figure 13. Recyclers' Building, Fox Street. Source: Author's Photograph, 2014.



In Propertuity's narrative of regeneration, the residents of the inner city are simultaneously non-existent and the fortunate beneficiaries of Maboneng's presence. While Liebmann's narrative of regenerating the inner city omits the presence of low-income black inner city residents, the neighborhood's high levels of security, impressive marketing strategy, and efforts to appear engaged with the surrounding communities through GRIND, its nonprofit wing, suggest that Maboneng is acutely aware of the presence of poor, black inner city residents and of their proximity to Maboneng. But despite this, those behind regeneration purposefully continue to present the inner city as an abandoned space waiting to be rediscovered and reoccupied by adventurous suburbanites.

B. "I Survived the Inner City"

The suburbanites attempting to "engage with the inner city" through regenerating neighborhoods and their respective events are often described as "adventurous" and "brave" by those invested in the idea of regeneration. At Maboneng's Sunday food and art market, suburban visitors sometimes take photographs with signs or t-shirts that read, "I survived the inner city." This catchy phrase evokes slogans found on souvenirs at amusement parks to commemorate thrill-seekers experiences on the fastest and most stomach-churning rides. In 2012, Nike and the CoJ cosponsored the Run Jozi event in the CBD, with the slogan "take back the streets"; over ten thousand runners showed up for the nighttime 10 kilometer run through the inner city ("City readies for night run," 2012). But events like these, which encourage participants to "take back the streets" or "take back the city," raise questions about who is being encouraged to reclaim the city, and from whom. Like many of the other events based around regeneration of the inner city, most of the participants in the Run Jozi event were from the northern suburbs.

The last Friday of every month, the Critical Mass bike ride makes its way through the inner city. The Critical Mass Johannesburg website describes the route the ride follows through, “Braamfontein, Fordsburg, Newtown, Marshall Town, Maboneng (where we usually stop for a drink), Troyeville, Ellis Park, Joubert Park and Hillbrow,” adding, “and yes it is safe ☺” to comfort hesitant potential participants (“Critical Mass JHB,” 2015). Critical Mass Johannesburg, founded and organized by four young, white males, speaks to a specific demographic. The founder of Critical Mass Johannesburg, James Happe, explains his motivations on the organization’s website: “I want people to use the space that we have in the city of Johannesburg. It’s a really amazing place and ultimately it’s the people getting out and into the city that brings it to life. It’s ours so we should use it. Critical Mass is a big part of that” (“Critical Mass JHB,” 2015). Happe’s words embed themselves in the narrative of the abandoned inner city, left vacant following the white flight to the suburbs. Happe’s claim that “it’s the people getting out and into the city that brings it to life” excludes the hundreds of thousands of people living in the inner city in the decades before current regeneration efforts began. Happe uses the word “people” only to refer to wealthy and middle-class people. Although on the surface Happe’s statement omits the existing population of the inner city, his words “it’s ours and we should use it” can be read as an acknowledgement of the presence of this population. These words reflect the contested nature of the inner city, and again evoke the slogan of, “taking back the city.”

“Taking back the city” embodies the logic that inspires the rides, runs, and guided tours through the inner city, but these events are also motivated by a fetishization of the inner city that in many ways resembles the thriving slum tourism industry in Johannesburg’s townships. Aspects of wealthy suburbanites’ desires to reengage with the city parallel the

motivations that cause tourists to flock to Soweto. Both are, to some extent, forms of poverty tourism, the acts of people desperate to get a glimpse of how poor people in the “slums” live. The tourists themselves are usually so far removed from these realities that the experiences serve as both opportunities for catharsis and as rituals of self-affirmation. For wealthy visitors and residents in the inner city, the proximity to poverty is perceived all at once as undesirable, dangerous, and exhilarating. The slogans “taking back the city” and “surviving the inner city” encourage regeneration of the inner city and commend participation in that process. Under this thinking, attending a Sunday market, going for a bike ride or a run, or living in a luxury loft apartment in a regenerating neighborhood can be portrayed as a heroic act. But to view regeneration of the inner city as a collection of heroic acts violently silences the realities that make regeneration of the inner city challenging, and subsequently casts those who stand in the way of transforming Johannesburg into a world-class African city as villains.

The inner city’s regenerating neighborhoods are the physical manifestations of white suburban reimagining of the inner city. The reimagining of the inner city is presented as a necessary undertaking that must be carried out by heroic suburbanites. Through regeneration, the inner city and the townships — which in many ways serve as the counterpoints to the wealthy suburbs — become the antithesis of a world-class Johannesburg. The wealthy suburban realities, which are defined by a pervasive fear of crime and poverty and by relentless attempts to exclude both, are transposed onto the inner city through regenerating neighborhoods. The regenerating neighborhoods of the inner city, therefore, problematically deny and define themselves against the poor, black bodies and

realities of the inner city while inserting themselves into their midst, ultimately leading to the exclusion of inner city residents from these regenerating spaces.

C. Regeneration or Gentrification?

Jonathan Liebmann and others at Propertuity, contend that the term “gentrification” can’t be used to characterize the changes happening in the Maboneng Precinct. When I asked Liebmann about concerns in the media over how the regeneration happening in Maboneng might affect low-income residents he responded defensively, “gentrification is an American concept, largely, started in American cities, and it actually is completely relevant in American cities because where does somebody actually move in New York? You do get pushed out. Johannesburg is so far away from that it’s frightening. We have 22,000 buildings or something like that in the CBD that are vacant, just vacant. Most buildings are vacant. So you don’t have a problem of supply. Gentrification is essentially a function of limited supply. This place is full of supply. Yes, maybe the government isn’t providing affordable housing and stuff like that, but it certainly isn’t the case that there isn’t affordable housing because there is expensive housing. That isn’t relevant here at all” (Liebmann, 2014). While Liebmann has a point that gentrification, a term developed by Ruth Glass to talk about changing London neighborhoods has been used predominantly to speak about changes occurring in western cities, this concept is now becoming increasingly relevant in South African cities and other cities in the developing world (Glass, 1964).

Urban regeneration and gentrification which both involve the reinvestment of capital into urban areas and upgrades to the built environment may produce some benefits including: upgrades to the built environment, growth of local economies, reductions in crime, increases in education and employment opportunities, expansion of the city’s tax

base, residential integration and the deconcentration of poverty, increased property values, and reduced vacancy rates (Chaskin & Joseph, 2012, pp. 3-5; Godsil, 2013, p. 1; Mathema, 2013, pp. 2-3). Some supporters of urban regeneration and gentrification claim that the return of wealth to inner city neighborhoods benefits everyone involved as, “rising tides lift all boats” (Grabinsky & Butler, 2015a). Others offer a more nuanced approach stating that whether or not low-income residents benefit from gentrification is determined by the particularities of the gentrification process in the neighborhood. “Whether gentrification benefits the poor depends in part on the nature of the process. Gentrification is not all the same. Gentrification can mean “walled-up” and gated communities for the wealthy and it can sometimes create damaging disruptions in the tenuous social fabric of neighborhoods, such that there are few beneficial spillover effects of from gentrification. So while many neighborhoods previously mired in poverty may experience positive impacts from gentrification, others may be directly hurt by it” (Grabinsky & Butler, 2015).

Some research indicates that the negative impacts of gentrification which include: displacement through rent or price increases, loss of affordable housing, unsustainable speculative property price increases, harassment and eviction of low-income residents, homelessness, displacement and housing demand pressures on surrounding poor areas, commercial or industrial displacement, community conflict, increased cost and changes to local services, loss of social diversity, crime, and population loss can be minimized through the implementation of proactive policies, but these opportunities for inclusive development are often ignored (Atkinson, 2002; Atkinson & Bridge, 2005; Davidson, 2008, p. 2388). Stern and Seifert’s work on culture-based revitalization describes the precarious position responsible regeneration must inhabit: “Culture-based revitalization must hit a narrow

target. It must stimulate economic vitality and promote opportunity without generating displacement or expanding inequality. Unfortunately, the most common forms of culture-based revitalization appear to create the worst of both worlds” (Stern & Seifert, 2007). When regeneration hits this “narrow target” the process can contribute to residential integration, address concentrated poverty, and unequal access to education, employment opportunities, and security. The long-term effects the Maboneng Precinct will have on the surrounding areas and the inner city may be somewhat unclear at this point, but to date Maboneng is missing the narrow target for regeneration as described Stern and Seifert. Propertuity’s marketing of Maboneng as an “inclusive” and “integrated” neighborhood, cannot be reconciled with the realities on the ground.

Using Davidson and Lees understanding of gentrification which describes the process as: “(1) the reinvestment of capital; (2) social upgrading of locale by incoming high-income groups; (3) landscape change; and (4) direct or indirect displacement of low-income groups,” Maboneng may in fact best be described as gentrification (Davidson & Lees, 2005, p. 1170). Maboneng clearly meets the first three criteria for gentrification. The development has been the direct result of reinvestment of capital into the area by Propertuity and other businesses in the Maboneng Precinct; the arrival of high-income groups to the neighborhood has resulted in improved living conditions, employment opportunities, and access to improved goods and services for some in the area; and the development of the Maboneng Precinct has resulted in dramatic changes to the built environment over the past seven years. The fourth criterion for gentrification, the displacement of low-income groups has increasingly been a concern surrounding Maboneng’s development, with tensions

peaking in late March of 2015 with a series of evictions and subsequent protests in Jeppestown.

But, Liebmann's response to accusations of gentrification in the media, in which he highlights the 22,000 vacant buildings in the CBD and asserts that the supply of residential and business spaces in the CBD is a non-issue, directly contrasts with his statement on the *Entrepreneurial Edge* in November of 2012 (Liebmann, 2014). When asked by the host of the *Entrepreneurial Edge*, "How long before businesses and people are fighting to get a spot in the center of Johannesburg?" Liebmann responded, "I think it will happen relatively quickly. Obviously it will be linked to the growth of the economy, but with the shortage of property in the suburbs in terms of commercial property and the fact that developers are running out of land in places like Sandton, I think it is going to be quite a quick move back into the city. And I would say that within the next three to five years I think there is probably going to be a tipping point" ("Entrepreneurial Edge," 2012). Liebmann's projection that the demand for space in the inner city will reach a tipping point between November of 2015 and 2017 conflicts with the evidence he used to respond to concerns over gentrification and displacement of low-income residents. Citing twenty-thousand vacant buildings as proof that "this place is full of supply" Liebmann's dismissal of the potential for gentrification in Johannesburg seems not only uninformed or intentionally misleading, as the actual number of vacant buildings in the CBD does not begin to approach this figure, but also seems to be contrary to his views as he presents them in other interviews. The inconsistency between these two responses could be accounted for by the time and experience between interviews. Liebmann's appearance on the *Entrepreneurial Edge* in November of 2012 was separated from our September 2014 interview by nearly two years.

It could also be explained by Liebmann's attempts to cater to two very different audiences. During his appearance on the *Entrepreneurial Edge* Liebmann's comments about rapidly increasing demand for real estate in the CBD may have been an attempt to appeal to financial stakeholders and future investors. Whereas while talking with me, Liebmann might have been eager to dismiss any concerns around gentrification. But, these interviews show two drastically different projections for the future of the inner city and for how low-income residents might be affected by the expansion of regenerating neighborhoods in the CBD. If there is any validity to Liebmann's statements regarding the excess supply of space and buildings in the CBD, then perhaps the potential for displacement of low-income residents is of less concern, at least in the short run, unless Liebmann's projection on the *Entrepreneurial Edge* is correct. A dramatic increase in demand for inner city property, resulting in rising property and rental prices would very likely cause displacement and exclusion of low-income residents from the inner city.

D. The Economics of Gentrification

Inner city regeneration is often triggered by the concentration of capital in the urban periphery. As a result the inner city becomes a prime target for reinvestment and "a new frontier" for capital accumulation. Through regeneration de-commodified inner city spaces are re-commodified. Walsh explains that in Johannesburg, "it was capital flight in the first place in the inner city that now allows for the massive re-financialization of downtown" (Walsh, 2013, p. 404). This flow of capital within cities creates opportunities for urban developers to earn high returns by reinvesting in areas that have experienced disinvestment, thus providing an economic incentive for regeneration (Walsh, 2013, p. 404). The inflow of capital into a regenerating area often initiates a series of changes. During the process

improved housing options are added, businesses catering to higher income patrons emerge, and landlords increase rents to attract wealthier residents and businesses. And the increased value of real estate in the area allows and incentivizes lower-income residents to sell their real estate for a profit. Realizing the opportunity for high returns, owners of rental properties are incentivized to upgrade properties and demand higher rents. Lower income residents, unable to afford increased rent prices are forced to seek out cheaper housing outside of the area. Guy Trangoš, a researcher at the Gauteng City-Region Observatory, believes that the regeneration process in Maboneng will follow this path, ultimately resulting in the displacement of residents in the surrounding areas. Displacement in gentrifying areas is of particular concern, as low-income residents are the least capable of affording costs to relocate. For Trangoš “there is no doubt that investment in old industrial buildings that includes repurposing them into consumables for the property market will increase inner-city property prices. This will have an adverse effect on the residents of Jeppe, the greater area around Maboneng. These residents scrape together small incomes, and despite Maboneng providing what they term as low-cost rental options, they will almost certainly be priced out of the area” (Trangoš, 2014, p. 3). The recent March 2015 evictions of hundreds of low-income residents in the surrounding Jeppetown suburb highlight these concerns over the rapid expansion of the Maboneng Precinct.

E. Evictions in Jeppetown

While many evictions in and around Maboneng are often difficult to track and rarely attract significant media attention, recent evictions in Jeppetown have brought tensions between low-income communities and the Maboneng Precinct to a head. Hundreds of low-income residents of several buildings in Jeppetown received eviction notices on March 17

of 2015 telling them to vacate within thirty days ("An update on Jeppestown protests: Manqoba Mchunu reports," 2015). Many evicted residents have been living in these buildings for over a decade. Residents of ten buildings have reportedly received eviction notices, but the City of Johannesburg maintains only three buildings have been served eviction notices (M. Demian, personal communication, April 2, 2015). Hundreds of protestors gathered in the streets late in the evening of March 17 and into the next day when protests turned violent as protestors threw rocks and burned tires ("Polishing the City of Gold," 2015). Many protestors blamed the Maboneng Precinct for the evictions. Some chanted, "Maboneng must go," and "Sifuna ukudla iSushi noMaboneng!" meaning "We want to eat sushi in Maboneng!" a reference to Blackanese, the trendy sushi restaurant in the Maboneng Precinct, and a commentary on the inequality between Maboneng and Jeppestown (Levy, 2015).

Figure 14. Jeppestown Protests, "We Want to Eat Sushi in Maboneng." From We Want to Eat Sushi in Maboneng by Andrew Levy, 2015, Umuzi Photo Club News.



Police chased protestors and fired rubber bullets in an attempt to disburse the crowd and arrested twenty-two protestors ("Private developers and the Red Ants have started evictions in Jeppestown," 2015). To date, the displaced residents have not been provided with alternative accommodation, which violates the right to housing described in Section 26 of the Constitution. "The right of access to adequate housing has been the most-often litigated socio-economic right" in South Africa which has led to "the development of a wealth of jurisprudence in respect of housing and eviction law" (Clark, 2013, p. 7). The case law developed in relation to alternative accommodation requires adequate alternative accommodation be provided to evicted residents (Clark, 2013, p. 3). During the protests, a community leader and resident of Jeppestown interviewed on SABC news explained "We are not willing to move from here. We can't move ... If this private developer and the CoJ, the municipality, decide to evict us they must give the residents another shelter. You can't take residents from under their roof and put them, just throw them, in the street. You can't do like that in this new South Africa. We know our rights and our constitution in this new South Africa. You can't do that" ("An update on Jeppestown protests: Manqoba Mchunu reports," 2015).

Propertuity has been eager to distance itself from these March Jeppestown evictions. Liebmann issued a statement saying, "Our company, Propertuity, or any developments in the Maboneng Precinct have nothing to do with any evictions that have happened in the Johannesburg CBD. We are completely not connected to any building evictions" ("Private developers and the Red Ants have started evictions in Jeppestown," 2015). While Propertuity appears not to be directly involved in any of the March 2015 Jeppestown

evictions, determining which developers are involved in the evictions has proven challenging.⁹ Some in the media have been quick to jump to Maboneng's defense. An article in *the Economist* characterized the anger protestors in Jeppestown expressed toward Maboneng as displaced, explaining that "Maboneng's developers were not to blame for the evictions; they became a target because of their success" ("Polishing the City of Gold," 2015). While Maboneng does not appear to be directly involved in the evictions, understanding Maboneng's role in transforming the eastern CBD into an attractive space for wealthier residents and businesses is crucial. Upgrading the built environment and encouraging investment in the area has not only made the area more desirable to middle – class and wealthy suburbanites, and raised property and rent prices, but has also created an environment which incentivizes investment from other, perhaps less responsible property development companies. In that sense, the residents protesting evictions in Jeppestown may be correct to target Maboneng as the first development that paved the way for future regeneration in the eastern CBD.

F. Inclusive Neighborhood or Wealthy Enclave?

While Maboneng presents itself as an inclusive, integrated alternative to the lifestyle of the exclusive northern suburbs and gated communities in many ways Maboneng resembles the wealthy fortified enclaves of the suburbs. Johannesburg's wealthy suburbs and the informal settlements are representative of the great inequality that exists in the city, but inner city regeneration projects like Maboneng create spaces for possible interaction between the city's poor and the city's wealthy. While "the informal settlements and rich suburbs might be the epitome of South Africa's inequality problem, rarely do different

⁹ ECG Properties appears to be involved in at least some portion of the evictions (Nicolson, 2015).

lifestyles rub so close and so jarringly as in Maboneng and Jeppe” (Nicolson, 2015). The racial and income diversity of the area offers a unique opportunity for integration, and social mobility in the inner city. But high levels of private security and the high prices of goods and services in Maboneng severely impact the movements of those unable to “buy access” to the precinct and excludes the majority of low-income residents from meaningful participation in its development (Culwick, 2015).

The Maboneng Precinct’s 24/7 security features which include private security guards and patrol vehicles, CCTV, and biometric access control for all apartment and office buildings are central to Maboneng’s strategy for providing “a safe and secure environment for tourists, visitors, businesses and residents” (“Maboneng Precinct,” 2015). Urban Genesis, the company contracted to provide security services for Maboneng stations guards along the perimeter of the Maboneng Precinct, about a block apart, creating a semi-permeable boundary to the neighborhood. Security guards keep a close watch on all individuals in the precinct, particularly focusing on individuals as they cross into and out of the neighborhood. Security often turns individuals away from entering or forces “disruptive” individuals to leave the neighborhood. Security guards are responsible for determining which pedestrians, patrons, and visitors are “desirable” and which are “undesirable.” Low-income inner city residents, often harassed by security, are frequently prohibited from walking on sidewalks, lingering in streets, and are even refused passage through the neighborhood, forcing these individuals to walk the long way around the neighborhood, rather than through it. Informal trading, panhandling, windshield washing, and other related activities are not permitted in the precinct.

Alice Nevin’s work documents the harassment of Jeppetown residents by Maboneng

security. One of the Jeppestown residents interviewed in her study, Thando, had several encounters with Maboneng security guards:

Thando's first experience of Maboneng took place one day when he had his laundry done at *Sorted Laundry*, a shop that had been in the area before Maboneng was developed. While he was waiting, Thando went to sit on a concrete balustrade in Fox Street. A black security guard approached him and told Thando, also a black man, that he was not allowed to sit there because 'the white people using the ATM are going to get scared that you will steal their money'" (Nevin, 2014, p. 196).

In another instance, Thando was walking past the Bioscope Independent Cinema, located on the first floor of Main Street Life, when he was approached by a security guard who "instructed him to walk in the street and not on the pavement if he was not going into any of the Maboneng buildings" (Nevin, 2014, p. 196).

But, Propertuity has been diligent in its efforts to silence criticisms regarding its security practices. A volunteer at GRIND received an angry phone call from a Propertuity staff member an hour after posting an entry about the Maboneng Precinct on an obscure blog site. The entry contained interviews with several Jeppestown residents who were discussing experiences being harassed by Maboneng security guards. Although the perspective provided by the GRIND resident in the blog entry was not explicitly critical, Propertuity demanded the researcher remove the blog entry or risk losing their unpaid position at GRIND. The role of security in the neighborhood impedes healthy interaction between the precinct and the surrounding areas in many tangible ways.

As a GRIND resident, I was tasked with implementing a self-designed project over two months in the neighborhood. The project I designed, GRIND Works sought to boost local employment and connect inner city residents in the surrounding areas with employment opportunities in the precinct through networking and free skills training workshops. I placed a resume and job application drop box in the information center, which was seemingly the best location for this, as it had a central location in the neighborhood. When I suggested that we post a flyer outside of the building alerting job seekers that they could drop resumes or other application materials inside, the Propertuity staff opposed it, claiming that it would be disruptive. Instead, they suggested we should inform the security guards of the location of the resume drop, and if people came to the neighborhood looking for work, the security guards could decide if the person was suitable to apply for work.

While Maboneng claims to provide an alternative to the lifestyle offered by gated communities in the northern suburbs, and an opportunity for “authentic” engagement with the inner city, Maboneng functions as a fortified enclave, greatly disrupting the potential for Maboneng’s residents to engage with the city and for the inner city’s residents to engage with the precinct in an organic way. Security is used to determine what types of people are allowed in the neighborhood, to regulate encounters between urban residents of differing classes, and to

Figure 15. Maboneng Information Center. Source: Author's Photograph, 2014.



create a semi-homogenized, sanitized urban space. The residents of Maboneng have access to unchecked mobility throughout the city in ways that low-income residents of the inner city do not. While ever-widening areas of regeneration may force the urban poor to inhabit shrinking spaces around and between these wealthy enclaves, the city's wealthy are engaged in rapidly "reclaiming" urban space.

The privatization of urban space in the Maboneng Precinct mirrors the development of gated communities in the suburbs which is largely attributed to the inability of public authorities to secure public space and growing fears that white spaces are becoming increasingly unsafe and a growing lack of faith in the city to provide basic services (Morange et al., 2012; Zhu, 2010, p. 2). While Maboneng lacks the walls and fences that

define gated communities, invisible borders insulate Maboneng from and moderate interaction with Jeppestown. Like many wealthy enclaves in the northern suburbs, Maboneng has established itself as a city improvement district (CID), which allows Property to impose levies on property owners in the area and to use the funds to supplement municipal services such as “trash collection, street lighting, and security” in the area (Clarno, 2013, p. 13). Maboneng’s development has paralleled the development of other CIDs in which increasing numbers of “private companies take over from the state, doing everything from re-painting street signs, to controlling private security” (Walsh, 2013, p. 406). Through this process, urban spaces are transformed into privatized and commodified enclaves (Walsh, 2013, p. 406).

Martin Murray’s work on social inclusion and exclusion illuminates Maboneng’s failure to contribute to inclusive development in the area:

As a general rule the primary mechanisms for social inclusion into the mainstream of urban life are regular work and stable income, the availability of authorized residential accommodation, and access to physical infrastructure and basic social services. These institutional props are the main instruments that promote social integration and incorporation into the urban fabric and hence anchor urban residents to a rightful place in the city. Where these are absent the centripetal forces of social exclusion, displacement, and marginalization are set into motion. (Murray, 2008, pp. 12-13)

Maboneng largely fails to extend employment opportunities to poor inner city residents and excludes informal trade, fails to provide affordable housing opportunities, and erodes public spaces, banning “undesirable” poor residents from inhabiting and appropriating urban

space within its boundaries. Maboneng therefore does not contribute to integration and inclusion in the inner city, but rather as Murray argues to, “social exclusion, displacement and marginalization” (Murray, 2008, pp. 12-13).

Many longtime residents in the inner city claim that security in the Jeppestown area has greatly improved because of Maboneng’s presence. Although many residents feel that policing continues to be an issue in the area, citing inadequate police presence (despite the close proximity of the Jeppestown Police Station) as well as police corruption, and incompetence, the addition of Maboneng’s private security seems to yield some improvements in crime and safety for residents. Security and crime deterrence have been instrumental in encouraging tourism in the area, benefiting local businesses that rely on foot traffic. Although businesses located within the Maboneng Precinct greatly benefit from improved security and increased foot traffic, it is unclear to what extent businesses even blocks away benefit from these changes. Because of increased tourism on the weekends, the owner of a corner store one block from the precinct was able to open a liquor shop next door. Although Maboneng’s presence has been good for his business, the white shopkeeper said he preferred how things were prior to Maboneng’s development and conveyed worries over what future development in the area could mean for other residents and shopkeepers who aren’t fortunate enough to own the buildings which house their businesses and their families.

G. Myths in Maboneng: Rags to riches

Maboneng’s “Minister of Tourism” and Neighborhood Host, Bheki Dube is a twenty-two year old entrepreneur reportedly from Troyeville and Yeoville, both within three kilometers of the Maboneng Precinct (Hattingh, 2014; Yang, 2015). Dube is the founder

and managing partner of Curiosity Backpackers in the Maboneng Precinct and the owner of MainStreetWalks, an inner city walking tour company. For R 150 (15 USD) per night's accommodation Curiosity provides an affordable place for tourists to stay in Maboneng and offers opportunities for visitors to participate in bicycle and walking tours, community volunteer service projects, and even underground pub crawls that take tourists throughout the inner city and to the Alexandra Township. Through the backpackers Dube hopes to provide tourists with a chance to engage with Johannesburg's inner city in a new way, "I have been given a very rare opportunity to share how I engage with my city with people from all over the world. I'm passionate about giving people an authentic experience, one that is true to how things really are, not just what we want visitors to see" ("Curiosity Backpackers," 2013). The backpackers, which opened in November of 2013, was the result of a collaboration between Dube and Jonathan Liebmann, who described approaching Dube after Propertuity "had been thinking about developing a backpackers offering in Maboneng for a long while. Together with finding an ideal location and an operator with a great attitude and fresh ideas, Curiosity came to fruition fairly quickly" ("Curiosity Backpackers," 2013). Dube's success in operating MainStreetWalks initially inspired Liebmann to approach him about running the backpackers in Maboneng. Curiosity has been presented by Propertuity as "a great success story for local youth entrepreneurship" and Dube is regarded as "one of the youngest and most successful operators in the hub of Maboneng" ("Curiosity Backpackers," 2013). The young entrepreneur often expresses gratitude in interviews for the opportunities Maboneng has provided him, "Thanks to Maboneng, I'm achieving things I thought I would only achieve in 30 years' time. And while many South Africans move to other countries to find opportunities, I only moved a few kilometres" (Hattingh, 2014). He

has been vocal about the positive changes Maboneng has brought to the area, “it’s situated in a vital part of Joburg’s history and heritage, a place once classified as dangerous. We have changed that entire perspective; the area now is an urban space where

Figure 16. Curiocity Backpackers. From *Self-Starters: Curiocity Backpackers* by Lisa Yang, 2014, <http://10and5.com/2014/05/08/curiocity-backpackers>.



entrepreneurs are given a platform to become whatsoever they dream” (“Curiocity Backpackers, Johannesburg,” 2015). Dube’s success as an entrepreneur in the neighborhood is worth examining more closely. Liebmann handpicked Dube to open the backpackers business in Maboneng, and while this decision undoubtedly hinged on Dube’s success in operating an inner city tour company, other factors including the usefulness of Dube’s story in promoting Maboneng’s image a neighborhood that offers opportunities for young black entrepreneurs from the inner city, were likely considered. Dube’s position at Propertuity as Neighborhood Host does not receive pay, unlike other similar positions at Propertuity, and

because Dube does not own Curiosity or the backpackers building, Liebmann maintains control over the company's operations. Dube is a beneficiary of Maboneng's entrepreneurial environment, but is also an essential part of Maboneng's image as an inclusive, integrated neighborhood that offers opportunities to inner city residents. But who has access to these opportunities? And what does it mean to be an entrepreneur in Maboneng?

Liebmann frequently talks about the important role he sees for entrepreneurs in the regeneration process in Maboneng. In an interview Liebmann described entrepreneurship as "a foundation for regeneration" arguing that while Maboneng began as a community of artists, who have traditionally been catalysts for regeneration, "in this modern globalized, corporate world there's such an opportunity for small business" adding that, "there's a very low level of entrepreneurship in South Africa. And regeneration gives you a platform for that" (Liebmann, 2014). Liebmann's observation limits the definition of entrepreneurs to those of a certain class, who engage in a certain style of business. In claiming that South Africa suffers from very low levels of entrepreneurship, he fails to acknowledge the thousands who earn livings in the inner city through the operation of small formal and informal businesses. In Liebmann's conception, entrepreneurs are not poor; entrepreneurs are not uneducated; and entrepreneurs do not operate informal businesses. If entrepreneurs were any of these things, he would not claim that South Africa has low levels of entrepreneurship. To Liebmann entrepreneurs must look, dress, sound, and act in ways that would make them desirable participants in the Maboneng Precinct. Entrepreneurship and business opportunities in the neighborhood are therefore limited by the same factors that limit other forms of participation in the neighborhood.

But, Dube's success is not the only example Propertytuity uses to construct an image of Maboneng as a place where "entrepreneurs are given a platform to become whatsoever they dream" ("Curiocity Backpackers, Johannesburg," 2015). Vusi Kunene, the owner of the Blackanese, Maboneng's sushi restaurant, is a 31 year old from rural Mpumalanga ("Blackanese Like Me," 2015). Kunene, describes being raised by his grandmother "eating pap and morogo – and chicken if we were lucky" ("Blackanese Like Me," 2015). Kunene, who spent time working as a security guard for cars, moved his way up to work in coffee shops, a restaurant at Johannesburg International Airport, and eventually at a top Cape Town restaurant as a server, where he was first introduced to sushi. He would watch the sushi chefs work, almost to the point of distraction, and read extensively about sushi online, but staff were not allowed to sample the food, and Kunene was certainly not able to afford sushi ("Blackanese Like Me," 2015; "Polishing the City of Gold," 2015). Kunene went on to work at another sushi restaurant that gave him the opportunity to try sushi for the first time and to learn to make it. He fell in love with sushi and opened the Blackanese in Maboneng in 2012. While the majority of patrons at Blackanese are white, Kunene says that, "35 percent of his clientele are black professionals. 'At this point, they've got the money. They're exposed to the lovelier things in life. It's about a willingness to experience amazing new things'" ("Blackanese Like Me," 2015). Kunene's story is undeniably inspiring, but its frequent use to undercut criticisms of the neighborhood warrants exploration.

A 2015 article in *the Economist* that references the March 2015 protests in Jeppestown concludes by calling one of the protestors' chants into question. Protestors shouted and held signs reading "We want to eat sushi in Maboneng" a clear commentary on inequality and a

recognition of Maboneng's inaccessibility to ordinary people living in the inner city. But, instead of acknowledging this, the article downplays the importance of this critique noting that, "nonetheless, there is now a sushi restaurant in Maboneng. It is called 'The Blackanese,' and it is owned by a black entrepreneur who was once a security guard for cars" ("Polishing the City of Gold," 2015). By failing to acknowledge the protestors' chant as a reflection of the many ways in which the precinct excludes residents of Jeppestown, the article subtly employs Kunene's "rags to riches" story to demonstrate Maboneng's contribution to social mobility in the area. This story, used frequently by Propertuity to publicize the myth that the precinct offers numerous opportunities to low-income residents, is used in *the Economist's* article to suggest that the protestors in Jeppestown don't understand all of the ways that they stand to benefit from Maboneng's success. It blindly and unforgivably denies the levels of exclusion experienced by Jeppestown residents. In proclaiming "we want to eat sushi in Maboneng" the protestors recognize the implausibility that they will ever dine at a Maboneng restaurant, let alone become the owner of a business in the neighborhood.

Dube and Kunene's stories serve an important function for Maboneng and for regenerating communities throughout the inner city. Dube and Kunene's stories are not representative of Maboneng's larger effort to foster inclusion and social mobility, but rather its desire to present itself in that light. Maboneng may benefit from this image in several ways. This powerful illusion of inclusivity is used to distinguish Maboneng from Johannesburg's gated communities and exclusive suburbs; it attracts liberally minded suburbanites who want to imagine their inner city community as a facilitator of socio-economic transformation; and it provides a glimmer of hope to ordinary inner city residents.

The myth that Maboneng offers opportunity and the possibility for brighter futures for low-income inner city residents in some ways operates like the American Dream in the United States.

America is “the land of opportunity” where anyone can get ahead if they just work hard. This idea remains central to American national identity even in the face of growing income inequality. The American Dream, not only offers hope to low-income Americans who work hard to provide a better life for themselves and their families, but also serves to distract from the processes that maintain and widen the gap between the nation’s rich and poor. Maboneng seeks to avoid criticism from the poor inner city communities it excludes by constructing a myth that the development offers them the chance for a better life. This illusion may be intended to provide another form of security in Maboneng; if poor inner city residents feel that they have something to gain from Maboneng’s existence they may be less likely to target or criticize the development. Unlike the wealthy northern suburbs and gated communities, that explicitly exclude low-income populations, Maboneng balances exclusionary practices with a carefully constructed image as an inclusive, integrated community. Johannesburg’s northern suburbs, which have increasingly invested in private security, built walls and gates, mounted spikes, razor wire, and electric fencing, and outfitted homes and shopping centers with alarm systems, have not been able to eradicate crime or the fear of crime. Many suburbanites live between highly secured spaces, yet still experience an intense fear of crime on a daily basis. The suburbanite led movement to take back the city seems to represent a moment of crisis in Johannesburg’s development. Living behind walls and huge investments in security have failed to provide a genuine sense of security for residents. And so suburbanites have turned their sights to the city. While

Maboneng's security features closely resemble those of the northern suburbs, it adds to its security arsenal the empty promise of opportunity for low-income inner city residents. If this ever has been effective, the recent protests in Jeppestown demonstrate that this illusion is now being exposed.

H. Maboneng and the Black Middle Class

The racial diversity of the Maboneng Precinct, often cited by residents and Property staff as an achievement of the rainbow nation ideal for South Africa, distracts from the other forms of exclusion that operate in the precinct. Low-income individuals can't afford to live in Maboneng's apartments, to shop in its stores, to dine in its restaurants; opportunities for work hinge on the ability to present oneself in a manner acceptable to middleclass and wealthy patrons; and the ability of low-income residents to walk or sit is often even restricted in the neighborhood. Poor, black South Africans, excluded from the inner city under apartheid, and excluded from the wealthy northern suburbs in the decades since, remain excluded in the regenerating neighborhoods of the inner city. Some would argue that this represents a transition in South Africa from being a country divided along racial lines to being a country divided along class lines, but this can also be read as a transformation of the white power structure that allows it to persist in the post-apartheid era. The inclusion of black middle class residents in Maboneng does not indicate an overturning of the white power structure that existed in South Africa under apartheid as some in the precinct would suggest, but instead represents the incorporation of the black middle-class into the existing power structure. Through this transformation, the white power structure is maintained and the majority of South Africa's population remains marginalized and excluded from spaces that are reserved for the elite. The only difference is that now, the

black middle-class actively participates in the exclusion of the poor majority and in the production of exclusionary urban space. This transformation interrupts the solidarity between Johannesburg's black middle-class and the city's low-income residents and contributes to a growing sense of disillusionment surrounding the direction of the young South African democracy that had once offered so much hope.

I. A World-Class Neighborhood

While Maboneng presents itself as an inclusive, integrated community, it ultimately excludes and displaces poor residents in the area and functions as a fortified enclave in the inner city. The Maboneng Precinct is a world-class neighborhood in Johannesburg's inner city that offers residents and visitors access to loft-style apartments, trendy restaurants, happening nightlife, boutiques, and entertainment. But the blocks that make up the precinct are carefully managed to exclude the low-income inner city residents of the surrounding areas. Maboneng boxes out low-income inner city residents, unable to afford access to the neighborhood's housing, goods, and services. In Maboneng, and the other regenerating areas of the inner city, one's right to exist in a space is tied to one's identity as a consumer in that space. Murray explains, "the freedom of consumption is linked with the freedom to move in an uninhibited way through the urban landscape" and, "in this way, the public citizen articulates with the figure of the private consumer" (Murray, 2008, pp. 12-13). Inclusion in neighborhoods that cater to middle-class and wealthy lifestyles is determined by one's ability to pay for access leading to the marginalization, exclusion, and displacement of low-income inner city residents.

The right to the city as reimagined through the regenerating spaces of the inner city belongs to those willing and able to pay to access the city, asserting the right to the city for

the rich over the right to the city for the poor (Walsh, 2013, p. 400). Maboneng and other regenerating communities in the inner city ultimately erode the right to the city, diminishing the ability of low-income residents to appropriate, inhabit, and participate in urban space. But for Liebmann, asserting a right to the city for the wealthy, over a right to the city for urban poor is a necessary step in returning the city to a “healthy” state: “One must be very careful about developing a downtown or inner city that only caters for the needs of the poor. To make a good city the middle income and rich must also be looked after in addition to the poor... Maybe some people should be in the inner city and other should be on the outskirts of the city” (Walsh, 2013, p. 403). Liebmann’s comment, which asserts the right of wealthy residents to access the city, uses the notion of a “good city,” which could otherwise be described as a world-class city (Murray, 2008, p. 25).

Urban regeneration, a central component of the CoJ’s plan to transform Johannesburg into a “world-Class African city” is not limited to upgrades of the build environment, but also entails a reassessment of how urban space is used and by whom. The suburbanite-led movement to regenerate the inner city aims to produce neighborhoods that cater to middle class lifestyles. In an effort to create business-friendly environments and to attract middle-class residents, regenerating areas of the inner city invest in varying levels of security and policies that exclude the city’s low-income residents. One of the most important features of a world-class city, as defined by Ananya Roy, is its absence of slums. The world-class city understands slums as “places of poverty disease and waste” and frames informality as an obstacle to global competitiveness (Roy, 2013). For Johannesburg to become a world-class city, “urban slums”, and the urban poor must be removed from the face of the city. While this could potentially be accomplished through concerted poverty eradication efforts, the

city has repeatedly demonstrated its desire and willingness to marginalize, harass, and displace the city's poor. This decision is evident in oppressive municipal actions, like Operation Clean Sweep in 2013.

Operation Clean Sweep, which aimed to “clean up” Johannesburg's streets, consisted of large-scale evictions of residents of “bad buildings” and building demolitions, and resulted in the harassment of thousands of informal traders, barred from continuing to trade in the inner city by police (Nxumalo, 2013). Murray describes the logic that informs decisions to target poor populations in regenerating areas:

In seeking to fashion the well-managed city, municipal authorities adopt various strategic initiatives designed to impose order, establish boundaries, and define proper use of space. As a general rule, they justify exclusions by appeals to aesthetics (cleaning up and beautifying derelict places), utility (adopting “the highest and best use” of urban space), and functionality (making the city work efficiently and smoothly). (Murray, 2008, p. 13)

Aspirations to become a world-class African city translate into the criminalization of the activities of the urban poor, the criminalization of the poor themselves, and ultimately, the displacement of the poor from areas of the inner city.¹⁰ The municipality is failing to develop solutions to address poverty, unemployment, and inadequate access to housing submerging these problems in appeals to “clean up the city.”

¹⁰ Other city policies aimed at “sanitizing urban space” that have revolved around the criminalization and displacement of the urban poor include Delhi's slum demolitions, Rio de Janeiro's policing of the favelas, and New York's broken windows policing strategy.

VII. Conclusion

On a sunny afternoon in Johannesburg, I met up with Chris, a 19 year-old from the northern suburbs, at Eat Your Heart Out, my favorite coffee shop in Maboneng. We sat at a brightly colored table positioned squarely in the middle of the sidewalk as he described to me how his parents had spent their teenage years partying in Hillbrow, and how they had made the move the suburbs before Chris was born: “My whole childhood, I could see town from my backyard, but I had never been there. It was only a ten-minute drive away, but the first time I came down here I was 16” (C. Woods, personal communication, September 17, 2014). Chris went on to relay his parents’ descriptions of the rampant crime and decay that forced them out of the inner city as apartheid came to an end. Taking a long and deliberate glance up and down Fox street, he reassured me, “Twenty years from now, I think it will all be normal again” (C. Woods, personal communication, September 17, 2014). But, what does that mean in a dynamic city like Johannesburg, a city that has been plagued by inequality and segregation throughout its history? Twenty years after the first democratic election in South Africa, in a city still defined by the spatial legacy of apartheid and its early mining days, what does normalcy look like?

Johannesburg remains partitioned into three distinct areas, the wealthy northern suburbs, the peripheral townships, and the inner city, all defined by extreme social and economic divides. Twenty years since the fall of apartheid, dreams of a fully integrated, and equitable South Africa have not been realized in the city. Inequitable access to land and adequate housing in the country, once symptomatic of the repression and segregation of apartheid, now highlight the limitations of the new democratic government and the incompleteness of South Africa’s formal racial desegregation. Wealth remains concentrated in the northern

suburbs; the peripheral townships continue to suffer from inadequate access to land and housing, insufficient service provision, and a lack of economic opportunities; and the inner city is dominated by the competing forces of urban degeneration and gentrification.

Johannesburg's trajectory over the past several decades has produced a set of conditions that incentivize the city's middle-class and wealthy to regenerate and seize urban space. The demographics of the inner city shifted dramatically as the end of apartheid approached resulting in large-scale disinvestment from the city, but in the last fifteen years interest in regenerating the inner city and reclaiming the city for wealthy suburbanites has grown, threatening to displace the city's low-income population.

By the late 1990s as low-income black residents relocated from the peripheral townships the inner city had gained a reputation as a dirty place, full of crime and danger. In the wake of capital flight and neglect from the municipality that left the city's buildings and public spaces deteriorating, the CoJ formulated a plan to remake the inner city as "the Golden Heartbeat of Africa" (Reddy, 2012, p. 7). Refining its strategy in 2004 with the formation of the Integrated Development Plan, which established a plan to transform Johannesburg into "a world-class African city" by 2030 (Murray, 2008, p. 71; Reddy, 2012, p. 7). Grounding its plans for revitalization in aspirations to become a globally competitive, world-class city, the CoJ committed to reestablishing the inner city as a center for "economic growth, job creation and tourism" (Reddy, 2012, p. 7). In the fifteen years since the CoJ set out to re-envision the inner city, pockets of the inner city have undergone dramatic transformation. These regenerating areas of the inner city have experienced increasing levels of investment between public agencies and private developers, and have provided opportunities for suburbanites to reengage with the city. The CoJ's regeneration

strategy has been accompanied by a suburbanite-led movement to “take back the city,” raising questions about who is being encouraged to reclaim the city, and from whom. But the call to reclaim the city has been rendered unproblematic through the careful construction of the inner city as a mythical abandoned space waiting to be rediscovered and reoccupied by daring suburbanites. This narrative writes problematic inner city residents out of existence and silences concerns surrounding regeneration and the impacts it will have on the hundreds of thousands of low-income residents who have inhabited the city during the period of so-called “abandonment.” Today, the inner city is a contested space in which regenerating neighborhoods masquerade as promising opportunities for integration and inclusion, but ultimately manifest in patterns of displacement.

In 2008, regeneration expanded to the eastern side of Johannesburg’s CBD with the development of the Maboneng Precinct. The six city block area — which features refurbished industrial buildings converted into apartments, restaurants, cafes, bars, art galleries, theaters, clothing boutiques, and retail shops — has established itself as one of the trendiest neighborhoods in Johannesburg, and has become a tourist destination for both domestic and international travelers. While Propertuity insists that Maboneng has developed in an unoccupied, unused part of the city, the bustling, densely populated neighborhoods that surround the precinct disrupt that narrative. The March 2015 protests in Jeppestown have brought Maboneng’s complicated relationship with low-income inner city residents to the forefront, exposing Maboneng’s false image as an inclusive community. Over the course of Maboneng’s development, Propertuity has very successfully promoted and branded itself as an inclusive and conscientious developer, effectively distancing itself from accusations of gentrification and exclusion of inner city residents. While Maboneng

markets itself as an inclusive, integrated alternative to the exclusive northern suburbs and gated communities, Maboneng functions as a fortified enclave that caters exclusively to middle- and upper-income people while actively engaging in the gentrification of the eastern CBD.

Economic reinvestment has restored economic vitality to the blocks that make up the precinct, increased middle- and upper-income housing options, boosted employment, and broadened opportunities to access art and entertainment. But the high prices for goods, services, and housing in Maboneng, coupled with high levels of private security reinforces class divisions in the city, limits interaction with and participation of those unable to “buy access” to the precinct, and ultimately excludes most low-income inner city residents from accessing opportunities in Maboneng. The precinct’s demonstrated lack of commitment to extending employment opportunities to existing inner city residents, its exclusion of informal activities, its choice not to provide affordable housing options, its erosion of public spaces, and its active discrimination against those it deems “undesirable” contribute to social exclusion, marginalization, and ultimately the displacement of low-income inner city residents. This concerted effort to limit the ways in which ordinary individuals inhabit, appropriate, and participate in the formation of urban space in Maboneng, erodes the right to the city and contradicts Propertuity’s claims to be an “inclusive developer.”

The exclusionary nature of the Maboneng Precinct is illustrative of the numerous other private developer-led regeneration projects in the inner city, that form the cornerstone of the CoJ’s strategy to transform Johannesburg into a world-class city. The world-class city project ultimately seeks to remove urban slums and other visual representations of poverty from the face of the city. The municipality’s failure to address poverty, unemployment, and

inadequate access to housing demonstrates its lack of commitment to poverty eradication, and highlight its efforts to further marginalize, harass, and displace the city's poor.

Maboneng, and other private developers have adopted similar strategies in their creation of world-class neighborhoods. Through appeals to "clean up the city" the municipality and private developers have criminalized the activities of the urban poor and even the physical presence of the poor themselves, ultimately threatening to force low-income inner city residents to inhabit the shrinking spaces between the emerging world-class neighborhoods of the inner city. Low-income, black South Africans, excluded from the inner city under apartheid, remain excluded in the world-class spaces of the inner city, once again threatening to displace the city's poor majority to the periphery. In Johannesburg's regenerating neighborhoods the right to the city belongs to those willing and able to pay for access. In these world-class spaces of Johannesburg's CBD, the right to the city for the wealthy is asserted over the right of ordinary people to inhabit, appropriate, and participate in the city.

This research raises questions about the formation and functions of world-class cities globally. To what extent do world-class cities belong only to those willing and able to pay for access? And what processes are used to systematically erode the right of ordinary people to access world-class cities on a global scale? Ananya Roy's words are helpful in understanding opportunities for future research in this area; she encourages posing "Third World questions of the First World, to actively deviate from the old-style practice of evaluating underdevelopment in light of development, and to engage with 'elsewhere' in order to unsettle 'home' and its certainties" (Roy & AlSayyad, 2004, p. 3). Understanding how exclusion operates in Johannesburg's effort to transform itself into a world-class city

can help us to ask questions about how complex processes of exclusion operate in American cities like New York, Washington, D.C., Chicago, and San Francisco to marginalize, criminalize, and displace low-income communities. Furthermore, it encourages challenging commonly accepted notions of what makes a good city, who cities belong to, and how cities are best managed.

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