University of KwaZulu-Natal

Place, Race and Belonging:
A case study in Albert Park, Durban

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For Lorkin, Clive and Robynne – my inspirations

Kira Erwin

DECLARATION

Submitted in fulfilment / ~~partial fulfilment~~ of the requirements for the degree of ………………………….. , in the Graduate Programme in

…………………………. , University of KwaZulu-Natal,

South Africa.

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. I confirm that an external editor was / was not used (delete whichever is applicable) and that my Supervisor was informed of the identity and details of my editor. It is being submitted for the degree of ……………………………………………. in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Science, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other University.

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Map 1: Albert Park Aerial View
(Original image from Google Earth 2011 Street names by author)

Note: In 2009 the Durban Municipality changed some of the street names in various areas including the center of the city, however all the participants in this study continued to refer to these streets by their former names. To avoid confusion for the reader in the data extracts I have stuck with the old names. Please see the list below for the street names that have changed in the Albert Park area, and their corresponding new names:

St. Georges Street   Maud Mfusi Street
St. Andrews Street   Diakonia Avenue
Broad Street   Dr Yusuf Dadoo Street
Smith Street   Anton Lembede Street
Victoria Embankment   Margaret Mncadi Avenue

(http://www.durban.gov.za/durban/government/renaming/old-and-new-street-names)

Introduction

In the early 1980s, when I was around five years old, my family moved into a small flat in the city of Durban in an area known as Albert Park. I have vague memories of my parents putting up a safety bar on the window so that my sister and I would not fall out of the high rise block on St. Georges Street (see *Map 1*). I also remember my mother"s growing concerns that too many men were hanging around the bottle store below our block and drinking in public, but more than anything I have very fond memories of living 800m from the large public park after which the area is named. Even though our time there was relatively short Albert Park continued to feature in my life in one way or another. The *Tropicale* restaurant in the park where you could order hamburgers and milkshakes from your car window (now long since demolished) was a favourite family outing. *The Rift* nightclub in St. Georges Street in the early 1990s was part of my teenage music education amongst other revelries, and around the millennium my younger sister was involved with a music festival that was held for two years running in the park itself. Some places weave themselves into our personal narratives at defining moments. Even at the tender age of 5 years old there was something both exciting and overwhelming about living in the heart of the city; what today often has the dubious honour of being called the inner-city. Although not planned from the outset it was perhaps this attachment that drew me back to Albert Park when thinking about my doctoral research.

The research I knew was going to be about how people were continuing, redefining or subverting notions of race. Growing up under apartheid and living through the transition to democracy created within me a fascination with change in society. Of course all societies are webs of ever changing interactions, but something about this change was mesmerising. In the lead up to 1994 and indeed afterwards change is part of a mass consciousness amongst people living in South Africa; viewed negatively, positively or both – large scale societal change is the inevitable. This was not just about the shifts in social relations on an everyday level, but a realisation that all people of South Africa needed to renegotiate what it meant to be a part of this new vision. I raise the excitement of possibilities, not to present some uncritical view

of South Africa as a miracle nation healed after the atrocities of apartheid (as indeed Alexander warns us against doing (2002:138)), but because it does I believe still motivate many academics and scholars, myself included, to question with a sense of urgency the continuation of race thinking in the political and popular imagination. I use the term race thinking as being synonymous with racial ontologies or with racialism, where the starting premise is the belief that all humans can be categorised according to a given racial type or group. Whilst the notion of which groups of people form a „race‟, and the essentialist characteristics attributed to racial groups changes depending on the social context, the core belief in separate „race groups‟ underpins all these social variations. Ontology I believe best describes the strength and prevalence of race thinking in South Africa. The omnipotent ontological underpinnings of "[r]ace under apartheid operated not merely *like* or *as if* a religion. It was also, and more basically, a theology in the classic conception" (Goldberg, 2009:526, emphasis in original).

Certainly the new South Africa holds possibilities that could counter the old order of racial oppression; scholars such as Paul Gilroy who writes on race and identity mostly in the European and American context suggested that South Africa‟s transition may "generate an alternative sense of what our networked world might be and become, a new cosmopolitanism centred on the global south" (2005:289). However the substance, or lack thereof, given to this vision of a non-racial society is in itself contested. Increasingly after 1994 came the realisation that these possibilities had to negotiate the landscape of so many continuities of inequality. So much has changed, and so much has stayed the same. The transition from apartheid is far more than a move from a racist to a non-racist society; it is a move from illegitimate political rule to democracy, a shift from inward facing economic strategies to engaging in the, often ruthless, global economy, as well as, at least constitutionally, a move away from a profoundly conservative and traditionalist state. Under apartheid race was used as a powerful mechanism through which to distribute privilege and justify oppression. Now that we no longer have state sanctified racism, how are people making sense of race in their everyday lives? In a country where people read race off each other‟s bodies with such habitual ease, how far are we towards a society where race does not dominate a multitude of everyday interactions?

This desire to explore these changes formulated two core research questions for this doctoral study:

- To examine how racial identities were being reconstructed and/or deconstructed;
- to explore how new emergent identities were either transcending or reifying the narrow racial categories carried forward into post-apartheid South Africa.

There seemed no better place to explore these questions than within the multifaceted urban area of Albert Park; a city space continually under flux through a constant flow of people arriving and departing. An urban environment that as will become evident is historically and in the present a contested space.

For readers familiar with the vast and rich academic literature on race and identity the use of *race* in some places, instead of „race", may have already caught the eye. I do not place inverted commas around the word race as the content of my argument clearly illustrates that race is a social construct and not a given biological or cultural category into which people can be allocated. I do however place inverted commas around the racial categories used in South Africa, such as „white", „black", „indian" and „coloured", or when the word race denotes an act of classification itself, such as referring to a „race group". The inverted commas here are a reminder of the problematic and contested process of treating individuals as representatives or members of a group that have been assigned homogeneous and essentialist characteristics. Increasingly strong academic voices demand of us that we think critically about race in society, specifically to expose the power relations and inequalities behind race, and importantly to recognise and resist the habitual practices of essentialism in all its manifestations. One way of breaking out of the common sense ritual of fixing race as immutable difference is through acknowledging the fluid and dynamic nature of social constructs, as well as the multiplicity of social identities in everyday life. In *Chapter 1* the literature that forms the theoretical framework for this research is unpacked and critically discussed. Here various authors are used to support the argument for positioning multiplicity, interconnectedness and change at the core of research on race and identities in society.

From early on in this doctoral project, and certainly increasingly as I engaged in the theoretical debates above, the practicalities of moving these propositions into my own research began to challenge me. After all what was clear to me was how science more broadly, and social science research more specifically, were integral parts of the historical construction of race, and indeed continue to contribute to its centrality in humanity in many ways. What then did it mean to move this type of critical race theory into thinking about the rituals of research; notably, how we select participants, ask questions, think about our own identity and analyse findings? What does research that takes seriously the challenges posed by critical theory on race look like when translated into epistemological and methodological considerations? My writings in *Chapter 2,* titled *Methodological Thinking,* tackle the epistemological heart of doing research on race that sets out to disrupt rather than solidify race thinking. I examine what we can learn from the international and local literature and experiences of researching race and race thinking best to confront these challenges in the South African context. In doing so an argument is made for the use of life history interviews and ethnography as particularly apt methods enabling a more productive engagement with the dilemmas and complexities of doing research on race for this study. I also rather boldly, although not uniquely, argue that researchers should engage in the epistemological possibilities and value of erasing race, whilst continuing to resist and unmask the discriminatory effects of race itself.

How these more abstract debates are played out in the research process is then analysed using data extracts from the study. The second part of the chapter delves into the specifics of the ethnography and life histories carried out in Albert Park, and how these narratives and interactions profoundly illustrate the multiplicity of identities in everyday practices. The organic flow and unpredictability in ethnography brings with it unexpected shifts in the field of research; particularly since I argue against asking direct questions on race and towards focusing on narratives of lived experiences to investigate how and why race becomes relevant in certain situations and not others (see *Chapter 2* for a concise argument for this decision). So, whilst I set out to study whether people"s ideas around race were changing or not in this heterogeneous space the everyday conversations often raised issues of class and gender and importantly of urban decay, security of tenure, crime and security. It is in

dialogue with this local context that people construct social identities, which in turn offer explanations for experiences of change in the neighbourhood, identities that intimately police exclusion and belonging in Albert Park.

It is important not to underestimate how researching in a specific *locality* shapes the research process. The specificity of the area means that data and findings are representations of how people interact with each other within a particular material environment. In *Chapter 3* the reader is offered an overview of some of the material realities that dialectically shapes the nature of social relations in Albert Park. This includes a contemporary history of the area moving from apartheid Group Areas Act into democracy, and addresses in detail the legacies of this transition on the current issues of housing in the area. In this chapter the reputation of Albert Park as a dangerous and crime ridden city space in dire need of urban regeneration is critically debated, with the aim of acknowledging the multitude of diverse livelihoods that share this city space. Yet there is no denying that Albert Park has within it buildings and infrastructure that are at best precarious forms of housing, at worst unacceptable living conditions for which some residents continue to pay rentals. It is hoped that the reader gains a sense of the tensions and frustrations from various agents in negotiating these conditions, whilst remaining cognisant of the structural frameworks, such as the legal processes required by private ownership, which actively enables both the decay of city infrastructure and the social identities that form in conversation with this. What I illustrate in *Chapter 3* and in more depth in *Chapter 4* is how the everyday acts of racial classification in South Africa are intricately linked to notions of place and geographic space. The fourth chapter provides a substantial part of the analytic findings; it indicates how emergent identities around place play an increasing role in residents‟ perceptions of themselves and others. These place identities, loosely constructed around being perceived as having an urban identity as opposed to a township or rural identity, are frequent devices through which to „make sense of one‟s world‟.[1] In many ways the specific form they take in recognising and moralising difference between identities

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[1] Geographically many townships are part of the urban environment and hence would constitute as belonging to an urban identity, in a similar way that the inner-city area of Albert Park would. However, the historic and contemporary ideological and material segregation of townships gives townships a semi or quasi urban identity, for a more detailed argument for this see page 112 in *Chapter 4*.

follows closely that of race in South Africa, specifically in the case of discriminating against people seen as having faraway place identities and who „belong" to another country. In short, how these identities are constructed and mobilised to police belonging and exclusion in Albert Park is examined, and importantly asks of the consequences of this mobilisation, for example on the issue of crime and security in the area. Place identities then build both new forms of commonalities that connect residents as well as mechanisms for constructing difference, making them a complex and ambiguous force in disrupting race.

In *Chapter 5* I take up the discussion on race through grappling with the above mentioned complexities and ambiguities. Here I analyse in depth the interconnected and intersected nature of social identities through unpacking the contradictory forces within race and place. Some place identities, such as urban identities, may well be disentangling themselves from race through class and other affiliations, yet the axis of difference on which these identities rely are contrasted against township identities, which remain tangled in race in intricate ways. These contradictory meanings attached to race are then further examined through the use of race in the everyday language of participants. Analysing how and why participants make use of race, rejects a prescriptive reading of the data. Instead I argue that race carries multiple and often conflicting meanings, yet always linked to negotiating power relations. Nowhere is this clearer than in the frequent use of multiracial metaphors in the everyday talk of participants, such as the „rainbow nation", that sit side by side in the next sentence with blatant essentialist and racist statements. In the last chapter I raise deep concerns about remaining within a multiracial paradigm in South Africa; particularly in light of the way race and culture are increasingly seen as proxies for each other. This type of „rainbow" multiculturalism constructs a binding couplet of conditional multiracialism on the one hand, and racism on the other, which serve to reproduce racial difference and race thinking as banal normative practice and performance. A serious challenge to racial ontology is required if we are to move outside of these ties that bind. Drawing from the findings of this case study in Albert Park a way forward is suggested, led by the state, which enables the recognition of interconnected and fluid identities and actively supports more cosmopolitan dialogue and connected livelihoods.

I would kindly ask that the emphasis on tackling, rather than avoiding, the dynamic spaces of multiplicity is also extended to the reading of this thesis. The structure of this thesis does not follow too tightly a traditional framework of locating the findings in only some chapters, or externalising them from the methodology. Rather data and its analysis enter the text as it relates to, is shaped by and in turns shapes theoretical and methodological considerations. As I argue in *Chapter 2* critical and reflective ethnographic research requires the acknowledgement of the complicated interconnections of entwined identities. This means that even in the writing up of findings social identities and how they push, support and dismantle each other are found throughout the thesis. For example there is no section in this thesis titled *Race and Class*, or simply *Class*; the intersections between class and race in various manifestations are however analysed within sections of *Chapter 2*, *Chapter 3*, *Chapter 4* and *Chapter 5*. With this in mind the next page begins the journey of entering into the social space of Albert Park through the theoretical lens of *Chapter 1*.

Chapter 1: Conceptualising Race, Exploring Possibilities

In this research project I examine how racial identities are being reconstructed and/or deconstructed within the multifaceted urban area of Albert Park, paying specific attention to how new emergent identities are either transcending or reifying the narrow racial categories carried forward into post-apartheid South Africa. Whilst this study has a specific geographic location, investigation of this kind requires a wide scope of theoretical contextualisation. The theoretical framework, through necessity, draws on debates and literature in social constructivism, science and popular discourse, race and identity, multiculturalism, social geography and various epistemological and methodological considerations from these fields. Since the focus is on how racial identities are being reconstructed and/or deconstructed within this specific geographic area, this chapter aims to provide a theoretical framework for critical research on race and race thinking. It offers an introduction to the research topic and an analysis of the relevant theoretical debates that inform this study. It examines what kinds of structures and discourses have provided support to and shaped scientific, biological and cultural understandings of race, within a specific South African context as well as more broadly. More importantly it examines how and why social identities are built on perceived racial differences, which enables race thinking, and its codependent racism, as a divisive tool for maintaining unequal power relations in society.

In South Africa researching race and race thinking takes on a particular specificity. It is entangled in the project of nation building, deeply entrenched in politics, written into policies, continues to mediate everyday interactions, and questions how we define our humanity in this geographic location. For those interested in historic analysis, the distant and recent past provides rich evidence as to how and why racial ontologies and racist policies can shape state structures and life experiences. The present of course also holds interest; South Africa has undergone a unique moment of regime change that builds on non-racialism as a „founding provision" on constitutional paper, but grapples with the practicalities of moving out of the horrors

of apartheid towards a democratic state. [2] Undertaking this exercise requires reflection on the role of research as an agent for change, deliberate or consequential, in state institutions and policies. Whilst acknowledging that researching race and race thinking is an important endeavour in this context, this chapter critically examines some of the theoretical literature and concepts that underpin research on race, race thinking and racial identities in society, and in doing so situates this project within these broader conceptual debates. Presenting this theoretical framework has another purpose, it creates a platform from which to introduce some of the difficult questions around how these conceptions are played out and reshaped in the micro context of the research process itself. Confronting and analysing the challenges of moving the critical reflections below into our research practices is the task of the next *Methodology Chapter*.

Why Race Still Matters

With a colonial history soaked in racial codification (Seidman, 1999:426) and subsequently entrenched by apartheid, it is not surprising that sixteen years after the first democratic elections race still matters in South Africa. As apartheid built on and refined colonial and scientific discourses of difference, race was chiseled into the everyday experiences of all South Africans. In present day South Africa race continues to be intertwined with thinking on culture, gender, language and economic income, amongst other cultural markers and social identities. That race still counts is also evident in the continued use of racial categories in state policies and data collection. In short, this taxonomy continues to „say something" about our sense of self and of other (although what that „something" is, is widely contested). Of course race is not always an important identity in South Africa; similarly it may start out as a mediating factor in social interactions and become irrelevant as the interaction draws on other commonalities and differences that hold more value in a certain social context. However, the frequency with which race is used in state (Bentley and Habib, 2008:9), media and popular discourses, as well as its embeddedness in other social identities, often highlights it as the primary identity through which South Africans interact and negotiate power relations and resources (Alexander, 2007:92; Bouillon,

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[2] The South African constitution can be viewed at http://www.info.gov.za/documents/constitution/1996/96cons1.htm

2002:18). Apartheid is part of a living past; there are still generations of South Africans who experienced its violent oppression and unequal privileges first hand. Furthermore, complex networks rooted in apartheid segregation continue to provide social and cultural capital, which in turn serve to nurture privilege, entrench poverty, and reproduce ideas around racial difference. We need to remind ourselves that all people in South Africa, past and present, were and are affected by the sickness of the previous racist state. Whilst this may be seen as a product of our history, it is also important not to lose sight that the current manifestations of these identities were constructed through a long process of state engineering. Remembering this opens up future possibilities. For this reason understanding how and why race continues to matter is an important social endeavour, both in terms of social justice and in working towards the constitutional goal of a non-racial society[3].

Contemporary research into social inequalities and justice highlights how existing state practices serve to reinforce segregation of people by „race group", for example government low cost housing projects for the most part maintains the spatial mapping of apartheid (Murray, 2008:101), nullifying opportunities for creating open and diverse spaces of interaction. Here past and present structures synergise enabling the solidification of racialised ontologies. Another small but important example of this is the police Accident Report form inherited from the cumbersome bureaucracy of the pre-1994 government. Even in 2010 this form, filled out at your nearest police station, requires both drivers" „race", even for a minor car accident. Why? For the most part these cases are handled by insurance companies that simply require a police accident report number – the value this particular variable adds to an insurance claim or even police statistics is surely laughable. This stowaway of the past is not innocent.[4] It reiterates that race matters in the present. It does this through demanding a dual performance of racial classification: firstly, it requires self-identifying from the reporter of the accident, indicating that race is a noteworthy part of self-identity. Secondly, it requires labeling the other party, and

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[3] As will be examined in Chapter 5 this concept itself is ill defined (Maré, 2003:14) and critical debates on its meaning remain isolated scholastic incidents rather than open political debates and part of public discussions.
[4] David Theo Goldberg (2009:515) talks about the "haunting of the new South Africa by race", but I prefer to think of these past objects as more tangible agents since they continue to effect and infect structures and institutions rather than appearing as troublesome ghosts.

here the reporter of the accident is given the expertise and authority to categorise another person. That both these performances are played out at an office of the state – the local police station – gives them the „legitimacy" of a legal requirement.

The ritual of confidently assigning race to the self and to others, repeated in so many official and non-official forms, is just one way in which race is tacitly normalised as part of the South African experience. All South Africans are expected to tick one of at least four racial boxes in a variety of bureaucratic forms, the state census, university applications, medical records, accident report forms at the police office. In addition the state requests racial demographics from many organisations and invariably a manager, teacher or human resource staff will collate racial demographics on their staff or students. This practice of racial self-classification, coupled with the bureaucratic classification of others through „visual hunches" closely parallels the classification practices of apartheid (Alexander, 2007:100). Once again race is in the eye of the beholder, a gaze that continues to have profound consequences for people"s lived experiences. Researchers also engage in this practice when they target participants because of their perceived race, often as an attempt to „represent" people"s views in societies, sometimes in a blatant desire to make a claim about how „black", „white", „indian" or „coloured" people think, feel, act or select products for consumption.

That this type of box checking has, for the most part, remained unchanged or unchallenged, suggests that for many South Africans this type of information is not just necessary but expected. For example, A.J. Christopher notes that in the 1996 census "such was the legacy of official racial classification, however, that 99,1 per cent of the population duly indicated membership of one of the four apartheid categories" (2001:460). Yet, what learning does this example hold for contemporary researchers? If these small left over check boxes of the past impact on how we see ourselves in the present, then we need to think very carefully about how our present actions may be creating check boxes for our future. If race mattered then, and race matters now, how do we wish it to matter going forward? Exercises in imagining the future are part utopian thinking and part social engineering. This type of „imagineering" asks critical questions of scientists researching issues of race in contemporary South Africa. It demands reflection on the types of check boxes we

may unthinkingly, or purposefully, be constructing in 20, 40, 100 years from now. As will be argued in the following chapter as researchers we need to question how our epistemological and methodological frameworks re-enforce, subvert and/or challenge essentialist notions of race.

The Meaning of Race

A racialised ontology deploys a taxonomy of difference where humankind is seen as made up of distinct racial groups. Even though there is no scientific base for this ontology, hence the understanding of race as a social construct, belief in a race thinking paradigm impacts on people‟s lived experiences and produces consequences as if it were real (Mason, 1999:19). The pervasive and tacit use of race within everyday discourse suggests it carries widespread understanding, to some extent this negates the need for a clear definition since it is something everybody „knows‟ (Appiah, 1990:3). Even within the social sciences writers analyse and examine the concepts of racism, racialism and race thinking without outlining or agreeing upon the definition of race itself (Mason, 1999:21). Definitions of race are often constructed using a few historical references or context specific understandings, and as such may present too narrow an explanation (Miles, 1989:60). On the other hand generic explanations of racism and racialism requires understanding of the dialectical nature of the human psyche, where rational logic and irrational belief systems simultaneously reside in the individual (Appiah, 1990:8), as well as how these ideologies are reinforced through context specific social structures. The complexities and dynamic nature of social constructs makes the concept of race problematic, if not impossible, to define.

Whilst hard to define, ideas of race are seldom flexible in popular discourse and are usually powerfully linked to essentialist notions of bodily and cultural difference. Indeed the power of race thinking is that it provides a core conceptual framework of difference shared by people who accept the paradigm, and constructs loose but easily recognisable „life scripts‟ or social identities for „race groups‟. These identities, mostly defined by hegemonic groups in society, prescribe what it means to be, for example, „black‟, „white‟, or „asian‟ in specific contexts, and are often referred to as

fixed essential roles that offer an explanation of the ways things should be. This is juxtaposed by how identities are embodied in lived experience where they are fluid and multifaceted, enabling a multitude of appropriations and uses. Undertaking a serious exercise to fix a definition of race would be inherently flawed since social constructs are dynamic and dialectical ideologies that inform, and are informed by, people"s interactions. Any exercise that attempts this should also carry a flashing warning sign, for if history is to teach us anything, the desire to define difference often acts as justification for gross human atrocities. In light of this there are more pressing questions to ask, as Hacking (1999:5) reminds us when analysing social constructs: "[d]on"t ask for the meaning, ask what"s the point".

What is more important is how this construct shifts and reconstitutes in a multitude of power strategies depending on the broader social, political and economic milieu. These blurred, but powerful, social frameworks can be appropriated and used for political agendas to both constrain and enable the actions of individuals and groups. Here lies the heart of the complexity of researching race. Any analysis of race faces the difficult task of unpacking an ideology of difference that simultaneously incorporates discourses of science, biology, culture, religion, nationality, gender and class, as well as numerous other political, social and economic identities. Methodologies that specifically isolate a particular facet of social identity through directly focusing on questions of race (either in interviews or questionnaires) are in some ways inherently troubled by trying to untangle a single variable from the complex relationship or mishmash of ideas played out in race thinking in South African, and arguably in many other societies.

The emotive and historically destructive use of race in South Africa, and other countries, may suggest that race is at the centre of debates around identity, but it is important to note that this is not *always* the case. Of course lived experiences are far more complex, layered and nuanced in terms of how people both construct and appropriate identity. The fluidity of identity within various social contexts requires recognition that specific aspects of identity do not always position themselves as primary. It is the very interconnectedness of multiple intertwined identities that is important to understand, and isolating only race, ethnicity, gender or class runs the risk of incorrectly squashing people"s lived experiences into ahistorical narrow boxes,

negating fluidity and obscuring emergent identities.[5] If we take cognisance of this then careful epistemological deliberation is demanded.

At the risk of stating the obvious, racialising all or some aspects of an individual, group or society is never innocent; it is always a move towards gaining social, political and economic power, whether this is at a state level such as the apartheid government or the Nazi regime, or in the everyday struggles for political recognition that litter the multicultural landscapes of many countries. Diverse ways of using race have enabled discriminatory policies and practices. In essence the history of race thinking is a macro narrative of power relations and hegemony, as well as a prevalent explanatory tool for a myriad of personal everyday narratives. Investigating how race is constructed and used in society can significantly challenge the ontology of recognisable and differentiated „races". A brief analysis of the multifaceted social history of race thinking is a starting point for this, as is this more localised study of Albert Park. The following section attempts to offer such an analysis, with the view that any research on race by necessity requires this theoretical framework. Primarily this serves as a reminder of how racial constructs are always intricately tied up with power and discrimination, and importantly how these broader historical perspectives continue to inform the micro contexts of more specific studies such as presented here.

Historical Analysis

The dominant framework that serves to legitimise race thinking has oscillated between biological and cultural „evidence", but never, as shall become evident, strayed far from rooting itself in the politics of the body. The tenacity of race as a measure of difference is to some extent a product of its history. There is undoubtedly evidence of recognising difference in early accounts of Western and Eastern explorers (Jenkins, 2004:18), however the use of race as an ontological tool only comes into being in the 18th Century. Gilroy reminds us that using race to signify

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[5] See Essed for an analysis of how even anti-racist movements concerned with equality and eradicating racism can fall into this trap of squeezing social experiences through a racial prism, not only does this stifle the aim of social justice but "[o]ne-sided emphasis on only race or ethnicity underscores the very determinism that is characteristic of racism in the first place" (2001:498).

"common characteristics in relation to type and descent is a relatively recent and absolutely modern invention" (2000:31). This invention has its birthplace in the long halls of Western science, where the quantification of the body created categories on which to superimpose social and moral difference. This flirtation with science, the body and race continues in various contemporary forms. In identifying this pattern it is also prudent to note that presenting a history of science and race as a continuum may unfortunately give the illusion that only one scientific or social paradigm on race exists at a time. In fact conflicting ideologies about race often coexist within society and within the individual (Billig et al,1988:103 and Appiah, 1990:7).

Biological Explanations

The European Enlightenment saw the rise of a new ideology of individualism, where all human beings had universal rights to freedom and equality. These ideas had huge ramifications for the political, social and economic structures of European societies. Indeed many of these concepts still form the cornerstone of democracy, liberalism, and human rights today. The ingenuity, and consequent dilemma, of such a utopian universal individual was to present a homogeneous being unmarred by systems of stratification such as class, race and sex (Stepan, 2003:331). Theorising an abstract subject for universal rights was in striking conflict with the social order of the time (Laqueur, 1997:229). During the 18th and 19th century class divisions were a pre-requisite in order to maintain capitalist growth; similarly liberalism under a patriarchal system meant that women were still excluded from many political and social rights. And certainly the exploitation of the colonies was in stark contrast to the notion of freedom and equality for all. For individuals, often suppressed through a combination of race, class and/or gender, the ideal of human rights was not a lived reality. Explaining this hypocrisy required highly persuasive ontological tweaking. Through science then "a novel construal of nature comes to serve as a foundation of otherwise indefensible social practices" (Laqueur, 1997:229). Empowered by the growing status of science new methodologies and scientific propositions of biological, moral and intellectual difference between men and women (Laqueur, 1990 and Stepan, 1990), the working class and the bourgeoisie (Jones, 1980:144), and „white" and „non-white" people, enabled the rewriting of history to validate this social discord.

Through developing a scientific language of inferiority that demoted some humans and elevated others, social inequality was masked as natural „fact" (Jones, 1980:142). The creation of a „natural" hierarchical classification of the human species portrayed the racist paradigm as a logical and rational representation of the „order of things" (Goldberg, 1990:302). Throughout the 19th century a racist paradigm, firmly supporting the above premise, openly existed within both the mainstream public and scientific discourse (Boonzaier 1988:58; and Hirschman, 2004:393). South Africa"s scientific (both natural and social) writings closely followed the racist paradigm of the dominant Western academic thought (Boonzaier, 1988:59). Indeed in the 19th century South Africa was seen as a "striking example" of Social Darwinism in practice (Jones, 1980:143). Although South Africa, during this time, did not engage in forms of eugenic policies to the extent of Europe or the USA, the parallels between scientific and popular belief in racial difference firmly entrenched the notion of race into a system of legislative and administrative separation (Dubow, 1995:6).

This scientific codification of race rests on two interrelated ontological premises: the first is the *taxonomy premise*, this presents taxonomies of the human species as a viable and methodologically sound endeavour in the search for universal „truth". The echoes of this argument still resound when there is an acceptance that the human species can be divided into racial groupings, and underpins all forms of race thinking including multiracialism and racism. This first premise does not immediately presuppose discrimination between different categories, although it is worth noting that a cursory glance at history has shown it to be dangerously volatile, transforming into genocide with bloodcurdling ease. The belief that races exist in society, whether used in discriminatory ways or not, theoretically underpins racism (Appiah, 1990:16; and Hirschman, 2004:410). The second premise, the *attributing premise*, extrapolates a hierarchy from this taxonomy, attributing certain traits and characteristics to different races, with some races attributed more social value than others. It is important to identify these two premises as separate, but interrelated, ontological frameworks as they have to some extent in the 20th century begun to unravel and are challenged in different ways. Certainly it would appear that whilst the *attributing premise* has been challenged in numerous ways the first premise has, whilst presenting itself through different guises, remained relatively stable.

Cultural Explanations

At the end of the Second World War there was an international divergence away from openly racist practice and policy. Appalled by the atrocities of the Nazi regime the scientific community vigorously started to dismantle the notion of race as a biological fact (Stepan, 2003:334). The lack of sound scientific evidence for the biological variables of difference that underpinned the *taxonomy premise* moved both natural and social scientists to reshape race as a social construct; a construct that was now recognised as supporting a complex system intertwined with power and domination (McCann-Mortimer et al, 2004:411). A new era of international human rights embodied in the United Nations, reconstituted the liberal notion of freedom and equality, supposedly without its previous hierarchal and discriminatory structure (Hirschman, 2004:399). Although there are exceptions it would appear that scientific discourse on race had done a complete turn around, cutting the biological roots of race that they had worked so meticulously in cultivating in previous centuries. However, the socialisation of visual differentiation, a system so meticulously drawn up and quantified by racialised science is far harder to dismantle than rewriting texts and policy. In theory this shift should have falsified both the *taxonomy* and *attributing premises*; in practice, however, there was still a tacit use of both. Since the social structures and interactions remained unequal the underlying driver of difference was re-explained as cultural rather than biological, thereby enabling discriminatory and sense-making practices to continue. Nowhere is this clearer than in the case of apartheid South Africa.

Paradoxically as this major shift in scientific thinking was happening in response to Nazi atrocities, South Africa was cementing race into every nook and cranny of its state architecture (Boonzaier, 1988:63). This is not to suggest that South African intellectual and political minds were not affected by the change in thinking about race. The Population Registration Act of 1950 admitted the impossibility of establishing a precise scientific marker for race and, instead, used the far more efficient and flexible tool of social standing to categorise people into fixed „racial categories" (Posel, 2001:55). Since the desire to assert biologically distinct „races" has its origin in attempting to explain and justify social and cultural differences, this shift towards cultural explanations provided a continuum of otherness. Alluding to

biological difference through cultural, economic and political differences meant that scientific findings disproving the biological existence of race did not play a primary role in ending apartheid. Of course this is not surprising given that race and specifically racism is informed by a multitude of different historical ideologies and not science alone (Stepan, 2003:333).

Bio-cultural Explanations

Cultural explanations, however, are often based on visual identification and interpretations of the body that enables the assignment of a cultural grouping. In South Africa racial classification during the Population Registration Act was left to state officials who through a hodgepodge of somatic „evidence‟, such as skin colour and hair texture, and social connections, such as language and community networks, reclassified people into one of four racial categories (Posel, 2001). Aligning race along cultural, class or national lines during this period was not unique to South Africa. Often, within various contexts, this bio-cultural model "compounds rather than resolves the problems arising from associating „race‟ with embodied or somatic variation" (Gilroy, 2000:24). Here the body is reinterpreted through the banal socialisation of race thinking in everyday experiences, interactions with social institutions and state apparatus and the lived reality of social inequality. The eye then is trained to „see the obvious‟, a selected visual difference. As Gilroy (2000:42) succinctly states "when it comes to the visualization of discrete racial groups, a great deal of fine-tuning has been required". This interpretation of race refocuses on cultural collectivity whilst simultaneously drawing from the older discourse of the biological, thereby reframing, yet firmly maintaining, the *taxonomy premise*; continuing to provide a mechanism through which to structure and explain social inequalities.

In the late 20th century various powerful social movements and events such as feminism, the civil rights movement, and the end of apartheid in South Africa have consistently challenged these practices of inequality, yet the belief in difference remains. The growing value placed on democracy and human rights in the 20th and 21st century clashes with the lived realities of societies structured around difference. It would appear that whilst science created the foundations for race thinking and

racism it has not been as effective in dispelling these pseudo–scientific myths from the popular discourse.

Possibilities for Change: The Biological Revolution and Genetics

Interpreting the physical body through a racial lens is present both in biological and cultural explanations of racial difference. This has led some theorists such as Paul Gilroy (2000:20) to argue that the demise of race may also lie in new technologies of the body. He proposes that the focus on genes and cellular agency repositions our understanding of what it means to be human or belong to a species. Could the recent decoding of the human DNA and discoveries in genetics present a more serious challenge to the race paradigm than post World War II science? Recent genetic findings theoretically advocate *similarity* rather than difference, both within and between species. The major findings of the Human Genome Project (HGP), in 2003, are that all humans share 99.9% of their genetic material (Liebert, 2003:121), in addition the 0.1% does not map to any form of racial difference. At the first announcement of the HGP findings in June 2000 Craig Venter, the chief scientist for Celera Genomics, the private partner of the HGP, stated that genetic research showed race to have no scientific foundation (McCann-Mortimer et al, 2004:409). This new science provides genetic evidence that dispels the reliability of visual cues as a tool for ethnic or racial classification. This statement is far from revolutionary. Lone voices and choruses alike had been saying this from as early as the 1920s and 1930s (Dubow, 1995:54 and McCann-Mortimer et al, 2004:410). However, in a world where genetics is redefining what it means to be human (Gilroy, 2000:20) the implications for race and race thinking of this groundbreaking coding may hold some potential to finally sever race from its underlying biological implications to a far greater level than ever before. Indeed it appears to highlight the enormity of the fallacy of difference when we start to uncover shared characteristics not just between ourselves, but also with other species. Certainly these findings have again fuelled scientific debates on race in both the natural and social sciences. Could the movement of this scientific knowledge into the wider public discourse provide support for those opposed to the continuation of a racialised paradigm? At this point

it is useful to ask questions more specifically on the role of this scientific information in challenging race in a post-apartheid South Africa?

Post-apartheid South Africa has officially and in many ways institutionally moved away from the *attributing premise*. However, the *taxonomy premise* is frequently drawn on by politicians, media commentators and used in everyday discussions to explain difference. Of course this is a context preferable to that which existed under the apartheid regime, but in practice the reaffirmation of apartheid constructed ‚race groups‟ provides fuel for countless small acts of racial discrimination. If science legitimated and added credibility to race thinking and discrimination in the past could it not assist in toppling race from the apex of the current South African social imagination? This is an important question to ask in a nation that constitutionally advocates non-racialism and rejects racism as a violation of human rights, but continues to label and act on the idea that the human species can be divided into fixed identifiable ‚races‟.

The credibility and validity awarded to scientific knowledge, particularly in but not restricted to Western culture, makes it a powerful tool for sustaining social ideologies (Fay, 1996:12; Barnes and Edge, 1982:233). Authors such as Saul Dubow (1995 and 2006) offer a detailed analysis of this process in the South African context. But scientific knowledge or, more precisely, its focus interpretation and use are always a product of its social context.[6] For example, Darwin‟s theory of evolution initially provoked a shift in thinking on human origins that took a liberal approach by focusing on our similarities and common ancestors, but later was injected with political undercurrents to quantify a hegemonic system of inequality and difference (Jones, 1980:141). Likewise contemporary genetic findings that indicate immense commonalities between all species, let alone humans, are tools that scientists who discredit or support notions of race use to validate their arguments (McCann-Mortimer et al, 2004:412). There is also a rift between scientific and popular discourse on race, as seen in the bio-cultural model of race that suggests changes in

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[6] See Bourdieu‟s (1981) insightful article titled ‚The Specificity of the Scientific Field‟ for a critique of the internal subject politics of the scientific field, where he argues that those who are recognised as holding scientific authority cannot maintain their position without imposing a definition of science that serves their particular interests and fits their perspective.

scientific knowledge may not immediately impact on popular understandings of race. Certainly the new information on genetic similarity is experiencing a lag in translating into popular understanding (Gilroy, 2000:21). The HGP website and other accredited Internet resources such as the African Genome Education Institute website (Web 3) provide a direct flow of information from the scientific sphere to the public. Since the availability of information is not a major concern as a barrier to exit then perhaps it is prudent to examine the *medium* of dissemination as a barrier of entry for the public.

Using the Internet as a valuable channel of information in South Africa is questionable. Firstly, a lot of the debates around race and genetics on these websites are done within an American context. The understanding and use of racial terminologies does not always correspond with South Africa"s common-sense understanding of this notion. If this information is to shift thinking on race it needs to be critically interpreted in relation to its implications and meaning for South African identity and politics. The African Human Genome Initiative, driven by the Human Sciences Research Council (Web3), provides a good starting point for an analysis of this kind, although it should be noted that the bulk of the information is weighted towards ethical and medical concerns and not on refuting the validity of race. Secondly, initial exposure to this project, through more traditional forms of media such as TV, newspapers or radio, is needed to spark interest in this information. When the genome was decoded the media did not play a decisive role in initiating critical discussion around these scientific findings (Khan, 2004:22). Thirdly, and most fundamentally, awareness of the current debate on race and genetics require access to the Internet and computer literacy. Although South Africa"s Internet connectivity rate is one of the highest on the continent it still demonstrates a strong urban bias and the cost of connectivity makes this resource inaccessible for those who are unemployed or in low-income positions; for example in 2005 an estimated 75% of the population had never used the Internet (Thlabela et al, 2006:25). In 2010 the Internet penetration rate had only just reached 10% of the population (World Wide Worx, 2010). This geo-economic information bias is also present within the education system; with access to information technology and computer skills training unevenly distributed among South African schools (Khan, 2004:15). Scientific literacy within schools presents another major obstacle to accessing this knowledge. The apartheid legacy is evident in the poor enrolment and success rates for gateway

subjects such as physical science and mathematics (Khan, 2004:18). Without a proper understanding of the complexities of genetics and its interaction with the social environment there may be a tendency to misunderstand genetics and use it as a form of reductionism.

Another cause of this knowledge lag is that it is still a contested area within the scientific community. Despite scientific evidence that refutes racial categorisation there is still contemporary research in sociobiology and evolution psychology that attempts to link social or cultural behaviour to biological difference. There is also a lack of consensus as to the feasibility of a racial variable in the natural sciences. The ongoing medical debates in the United States and the existing practice of diagnosing and treating people according to race, such as the specially prescribed hypertension drug for „black" Americans (Duster, 2005), is one example of how this biological revolution has in many ways brought race back to a measurement of the body, although now at a cellular level.

Scientific debates tend to accentuate difference rather than similarities (Dubow, 1995:58). This weakness extends to sociological writings that focus on the dichotomy of „otherness" in identity politics instead of actively denaturalising race (Gilroy, 2000:30). In the medical field, intentionally or unintentionally, research findings in „racial groups" that reflect social and economic variables are carelessly presented as biological differences (Royal and Dunston, 2004:5). Even within the *Nature Genetics* (Web 1) supplement, specifically distributed in October 2004 to tackle the issue of race and genetics, the non-committal and often confusing messages between and within some of the articles presents a half-hearted challenge to moving beyond race. For example in the *Journal of Genomics and African Society* Anton van Niekerk (2004:42) states "[r]ace, particularly in Africa, as also in many other parts of the world, is a genetic trait that has often been elevated to the central defining feature of a person"s humanity" – this statement, whether intentional or not, seems to imply that race *is* indeed a genetic trait. Without a more unified scientific front that presents genetics as a means to openly confront notions of race the likelihood of mobilising a non-racial paradigm in the public discourse is severely weakened.

Ethical considerations on how this information should be presented to the general public have played a role in dividing the scientific community. A history of eugenics provides a warning on the abuse, misinterpretation and political manipulation of genetic knowledge. The pressure on the scientific community to distribute information on genetic findings responsibly and ethically is profound; the HGP website‟s large section on the ethical, social and legal impact of this research is testimony to this (Web 2). No doubt such pressure requires substantial forethought in deciding how and why genetic findings are released. The concern around access to genetic technology is not only through the imagined horrors of a more calculated state-run eugenics program, but also in how it affects individuals‟ sense of identity. Socially accepted definitions of heritage and a sense of belonging to a social group that conflicts with genetic definitions may cause extensive psychological, social and economic damage (Stepan, 2003:340).

Besides the multi-layered ideological and structural barriers to entry and exit of scientific knowledge, the real difficulty in challenging the paradigm of race lies in the current conflicting ideologies between science and lived experience (Stepan, 2003:337). Scientific findings are integrated into popular understandings *if* they serve to verify everyday experiences. Dubow (1995:9) illustrates that just the existence of a, largely inaccessible, body of scientific knowledge during apartheid was valuable for „white‟ South Africans to buy into beliefs about their superiority. Indeed one of the criteria for maintaining ideological beliefs is that they in some way reflect and explain reality, whether the explanation is logical or not is irrelevant (Miles, 1989:80). The discord between new scientific information on similarities, and lived realities of a stratified society, results in the reproduction and reshaping of older discourses of difference. These may take the form of re-interpreting new scientific information to fit back into apartheid racial categories, or constructing explanatory models of difference based on culture, language and/or nationality rather than new cellular findings. In South Africa, where a solid argument could be made that racialising society before and under apartheid was an economic project to create a highly rigid class system (Seidman, 1999:423), changes in scientific discourse may have little impact unless coupled with changes in economic structures. Ideologies that support social gain for powerful groups and legitimate existing power relations are often resistant to change (Appiah, 1990:7). Glaring inequalities continue to follow the

racialised blueprint of apartheid (Alexander, 2007:99), and the abundant examples of how race appears to correlate with people‟s economic standing, social experiences and, as will be argued later in the thesis, places they are seen as belonging to reinforces the race paradigm. For South Africa, grappling to achieve equality and redress with a past built on racial difference, moving beyond race requires a Herculean shift in social belief, practice and structure (Posel et al, 2001:xiii). This suggests that without state commitment to similar goals science alone holds little agency for change. Although, as will be discussed further on, it may not be prudent to completely write off the possibilities for change from science.

Critically examining past and present scientific positions enables some insight into why and how race has been constructed, particularly in South Africa. This context offers epistemological foundations necessary for any data collection process, where research respondents in the micro politics of everyday interactions may use subtle, and not so subtle, references to these meta-narratives of the body. It also enables the researcher and reader to identify how social identities constructed through race thinking are being reified, subverted and/or challenged in post-apartheid South Africa. This context is particularly relevant for a study of Albert Park, which has since the 1980s – but exponentially after 1994 – transformed into a heterogeneous urban space; here diverse and multiple social identities are appropriated and enacted by residents as they negotiate this rapidly shifting city area. Of equal importance is how these identities are used to explain urban change and shifting power relations in the city. For a more in-depth understanding of the pervasive and obstinate use of race as a social differentiator you need to enter the field of politics, more particularly the current politics of identity and its philosophical umbrella of multiculturalism.

The Politics of Identity

Academic analysis of race thinking and racialised practice has more recently fallen under the umbrella of identity politics and multiculturalism, particularly in research coming from Europe, Canada and the USA. As argued above, race and culture have been integrally constructed so that the use of one identity often tacitly suggests

something about the other. Multiculturalism as a political programme attempts to address the lived reality of changing global spaces where many different social identities emerge, transform or are perceived as being under attack, and is seen as a contemporary liberal redress to past and present ethnocentric Western practices. These debates speak of a tension in liberal politics, between a neutral approach that favours individual over group identities, and the politics of recognition of multiculturalism, where group rights are seen as fundamental to the good life of the individual. Although these tensions are often simplified "in political and moral thinking nowadays" so that "it has become commonplace to suppose that a person‟s personal projects can be expected to be shaped by such features of his or her identity and that this is, if not morally required, then at least morally permissible" (Appiah, 2005:65). Increasingly, for both politicians and civil society, the ever-finer line between recognising diverse groupings in society and avoiding perceptions of difference that lead to exclusion must be carefully navigated (Brah, 1992:141). These debates also draw upon the older theoretical conflicts between relativism and universalism. Whilst these somewhat unproductive polarities point to extreme positions found in political thought and social theory, it is not useful to present the argument as an either/or solution.[7] It is crucial to recognise the dangers of both these polarities, since the intentional neglect *and* the insistence of difference cause extensive damage to individuals and groups within societies (Beall, 1997:10).

Whilst it may be tempting to say that liberalism as a political philosophy has made its own uncomfortable theoretical bed, it is more accurate to point to the familiar discord between liberalism in theory and liberalism in practice. The discord between the supposed equality of liberal democracies and the stark realities of local and global inequalities, facilitate the use of group identities as viable, albeit volatile, tools to both uphold and challenge the status quo. Individuals who hold social or economic capital can draw on the commonly ascribed attributes of their own, as well as other‟s social identity as a means of explaining their privilege. Where power and resources are denied to groups of people, their social identity often becomes a political rallying point, a banner from which to fight for equality and rights. Societies, such as

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[7] Anne Phillips book *Multiculturalism* Without *Culture* (2007) offers an insightful and critical discussion on these debates and tensions.

apartheid South Africa, where imposed racial categories structured gateways and obstacles to better social and economic resources, create a complex nexus of identity politics. For example, the apartheid category of „coloured", whilst undoubtedly discriminatory, did not fall under some of the oppressive laws that applied to people classified as „black". Assuming a „coloured" identity, and in some cases fighting to be re-classified as „coloured" (Posel, 2001:62), meant escaping stringent pass laws and forceful relocation out of the cities to the Bantustans (Goldin, 1987:238). The acceptance of a „coloured" identity by those classified as „coloured", for a variety of economic, resistance and survival strategies, has an important impact on the legitimacy of this identity. It changes what comes into existence as an imposed identity to an owned identity. Appiah (2005:110) names this common social phenomenon the "Medusa Syndrome", where the imposed category is further solidified into a fixed homogeneous representation.

The historical administration of difference as a means of political control, coupled with the dichotomist tendency to think in terms of self and other in Western philosophy, creates persuasive racialised ontologies from which to explain and understand the social world. Certainly avoiding the practice of race thinking is a difficult undertaking, this is evident in that even some anti-racists operate within a racial paradigm, frequently essentialising and dehumanising racists, where "the denunciator uses the very category of its denunciation" (Body-Gendrot, 1998:850). In short a tautological trap of accepting a racialised paradigm may be found in both movements for racial segregation and those against racism. It is important that this statement is not misinterpreted. It does not serve to ignore the painful experiences of racism or condemn the anger at, and protests against, racist thought and behaviour, nor does it belittle individuals who choose to appropriate an imposed identity as a strategy tool to gain access to rights and essential goods for livelihood. Rather it strongly suggests that we extend a criticality to all forms of race making, remembering that whilst these social identities are nuanced mechanisms for social and political empowerment in society, they simultaneously play into the power matrix of fixed incommensurable cultural difference.

In South Africa the popular media has shifted extensively after 1994, and now openly attacks racism and discrimination, yet race thinking and the race paradigm on the

whole remain uncontested. This common sense thinking does however, if you choose to use a racial lens, reflect the social structure of South Africa. Whilst there has been transformation since 1994 that attempts to remove the social, economic and geographic fault lines of the capitalist apartheid system, there are still enormous visible reminders of different social experiences in South Africa. As mentioned previously social and economic inequalities to a large extent remain bound by the structural framework of apartheid segregation (Alexander, 2007:99). Acknowledging this it is understandable that race is used as a driver for redress and transformation in South Africa, however, using race as a primary mechanism to drive transformation does not cultivate a more holistic understanding of identities as fluid and permeable. Instead, as we have seen recently, it fosters a form of protectionism of racial identities, a desire to further codify them so as to include only „authentic" members.[8] It is prudent to analyse the problematic future this trajectory may move towards. If we are to move beyond race thinking in South Africa more equitable social structures and access to resources are sorely needed; the challenge here is how to advance the necessary social change without reinforcing the old patterns of fixed racial difference.

Without openly challenging the notion of race in South Africa we are left having challenged only the inequality created by these social boundaries and not the boundaries themselves, again leaving the first premise of *taxonomy* available for translation into the *attributing* premise in the near future. At what point do we hold a mirror up to this "Medusa Syndrome" and attempt to open up the possibilities for a more flexible understanding of the multiplicity of identities? We need a detailed grasp of the dialectical relationship between social structures and race thinking in post-apartheid South Africa, and how race with its complex and loaded meaning is used as an agent of power within this disparate society. Research, such as undertaken in this project, on how and why race thinking is reproduced and/or subverted in the context of everyday lived experiences may offer insight for the first

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[8] One example of this type of protectionism over who gets to classify people into a specific racial category can be seen in the responses to the Pretoria high court ruling that Chinese South Africans would now be classified as „coloured", and therefore benefit from the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) Act and the Employment Equity Act (see for example the Mail & Guardian article *Black business and professional organisations on Wednesday rejected the Pretoria High Court's recent ruling defining Chinese South Africans as black people* (2nd July 2008)).

formative steps away from a society where many micro and macro interactions are still mediated through a racial lens. Indeed it may be possible that there are already emergent identities that reject racial stereotypes, forming around shared experiences and commonalities that better reflect a post-apartheid context. This study aims to explore whether this is the case in Albert Park. Whilst the possibilities of examining this process within this heterogeneous urban location may be unique to this study the call for moving beyond race is not.

Driving Change – Beyond Race and Cosmopolitanism?

Extensive intellectual, innovative and to some extent idealistic thinking is required if we are to escape the web of race thinking. Imagining, and then enacting, a political culture not sustained on racial difference requires finding a balance "between claims of universalism, frequently, but not always, masking structures of power and the separatist patrol of identity politics, using experience as the authority and grounds for exclusion and the silencing of others" (Body-Gendrot, 1998:854).

This dilemma is particularly complex in South Africa where the habitual reproduction of race thinking appears to designate the only mechanism through which to deliver transformation and equity in this new democracy.   But this habit is, as all habits are, an uncritical performance of the very categories that were used to create and legitimise inequalities of the most unjust kind. Gilroy succinctly emphasises this dilemma when he argues for a move beyond race, which "must step away from the pious ritual in which we always agree that „race‟ is invented but are then required to defer to its embeddedness in the world and to accept that the demand for justice requires us nevertheless innocently to enter the political arenas it helps to mark out" (2000:52).

One way that race may lose its saliency is that emergent identities better suited to negotiate local, regional and global power networks will forge new commonalities. Pockets of this possibility could be seen in the labour and anti-apartheid movements during the 1970s and 1980s, where at times race was rejected as a mechanism for mobilisation in favour of collectives protesting as "students, workers, township

residents, women" (Seidman, 1999: 428). Post 1994 South Africa has also seen large social movements mobilised around health and medical treatment, such as the Treatment Action Campaign. [9] Likewise environmental, and anti-globalisation movements are seen as building new commonalities across social divides.

In a similar vein authors such as Gilroy (2000) and Appiah (2005) call for a political philosophy of planetary humanism or cosmopolitanism. Here new and existing forms of transglobal identities and movements are recognised as building commonalities that dispel the myth of essential and fixed identities. These may be found in a reconstitution of the body through genetic technology, strong social and health movements such as have been formed around HIV/AIDS, or international labour and environmental movements (Gilroy, 2005:290). Looking to transnational movements as drivers for change is a common feature in contemporary theory on race, ethnicity and nationalism. These movements are seen as crossing boundaries and therefore demystifying difference or at the very least reducing their potency as useful political resources (Body-Gendrot, 1998:855). For many theorists these ‚identities without borders" are imbued with much hope to transform power relations in the contemporary global society. However, the extent to which they challenge racial categories in South Africa is debatable. Access to technologies and global information that enable these borderless identities are mediated by social standing and wealth. Indeed it could be argued that a certain level of wealth is a pre-requisite if one is to access these cosmopolitan spaces that appear to transcend nation and social borders in meaningful ways (physically or virtually visiting and engaging in these discussions requires finance). Whilst they may still offer some resistance it is rather optimistic to leave this paradigmatic revolution to these forces alone, especially if the state and popular discourse continue to perform pervasive race thinking.

So what of the practical strategies for commonalities that could make the cosmopolitanism that Appiah and Gilroy speak of a political project? How do we go about re-educating the "human sensorium" so that it no longer appreciates racial

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[9] Interestingly the activist networks and discourses of human rights formed during the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa provided an efficient and effective base from which to mobilise protest campaigns for the TAC (Friedman and Mottiar, 2005:532).

difference (Gilroy, 2000:42). More specifically, in South Africa, how can we remove it from its hegemonic apex in social identities, so that it becomes a less useful tool and therefore not brought to the fore as an integral part of social mediation? And, perhaps more pressingly, whose responsibility is it to drive this re-education project? Indeed there is, I feel, a strong argument to be made for state intervention to begin the dismantling of race. Embarking on a social campaign or redesigning social policy to reverse this solidification of race is a step closer to non-racialism.

The Role of the State

Neville Alexander (2007:101) puts forward a similar argument when he states that:
> … without denying the importance of contestation and initiative by subaltern groups, the state – especially the democratic state – has the paradigmatic prerogative, ie, it sets the template on the basis of which social identities are fashioned.

Gilroy also argues strongly for state responsibility in moving society towards cosmopolitan goals when he advocates that they are not only viable but demanded if we adhere to an "authentic democracy" (Gilroy, 2000:12). In essence this proposition is built on the reinterpretation of liberalism and universalism, which also opens it to critique. Commentators on Gilroy"s approach, such as Robotham (2005:565), warn that moving beyond race will once again, through legal and moral rhetoric, continue to mask the social, economic and political oppression practised by the dominant classes. Robotham is correct to point out the hypocritical history of such liberal concepts, and certainly Gilroy is on shaky ground when he draws on a loosely defined notion of "authentic democracy". However, Robotham misses the core of Gilroy"s argument and neglects to take his own historical approach to its inevitable conclusion – both past and contemporary politics provides evidence that continuing to fight racism whilst remaining in a racialised paradigm is a dangerous downward spiral. In short it leaves the taxonomy of difference open for future mobilisation, a future wrapped up in discrimination, inequalities and social injustice.

Of course state engineering invokes a nervous tension; it is a subjective proposition that can easily swing into odorous territory. It does however present an opportune moment for radical change in a country where the state is actively engaged in nation building (Grest, 2002:38). Certainly I am not advocating here a nation-building project that forges a new meta-identity as a South African, which in itself may be a problematic activation of crude nationalism (Bouillon, 2002:18); rather an engineering of social spaces for the emergence of cosmopolitan identities. Up until now non-racialism has been used as a kind of window dressing for the state – albeit a rather contradictory one in that it still demands racial demographics,

> [n]on-racialism, then, like the emperor"s clothes, is what the state wears to represent itself to the world, how it looks. Joseph"s technicolor dreamcoat, not the high priest"s uniform of any one subgroup or sect. The cloak of national citizenship should be for all to see, for any citizen to take on. At home, in private, one can assume any sectarian uniform, in concert or competition with others, so long as the multi-colored public cover of national unity is respected, indeed embraced, particular identities no matter (Goldberg, 2009:532).

If the state can, as Alexander (2007:101) implies, set "the template on the basis of which social identities are fashioned" then it will have to do more than provide a weak umbrella concept of non-racialism, especially one that often appears in conflict with the multiracial vision of a rainbow nation. What is needed is a political agenda to move into new territory that debunks essentialist thinking about individuals and collectives and crucially reflects on how policies impact on existing heterogeneous spaces or can create or stifle cosmopolitan dialogues. It is here that research can offer important contributions.

The Role of Research

Earlier in the chapter the role of science as effecting change in society was presented as complex and multifaceted, leaving its ability as an agent for change ambiguous without supporting state structures. Whilst this complexity is important to remember it is not prudent to write off the revolutionary potential of scientific knowledge. Certainly it may not be the Achilles heel in race thinking but it can

challenge it in profound ways. The credibility and validity afforded to scientific findings provides a resource for social, economic and political policies and projects that attempt to shift essentialist paradigms. In this sense it offers useful insights for more self-reflective macro state policies and planning, bringing acknowledgement and awareness of how policies impact on people"s ideologies of differences and sameness. One imaginable future is a form of state-supported cosmopolitan thinking where Stuart Hall"s (1991:57) assertion "that we are all complexly constructed through different categories, of different antagonisms, and these may have the effect of locating us socially in multiple positions of marginality and subordination, but which do not operate on us in exactly the same way", is a popular and common premise from which to negotiate social interaction. Just before the turn of the millennium Gay Seidman (1999:434) bemoaned the fact that "[a]t the individual level, we have remarkably little sense of how South Africans experienced, responded to, or even challenged apartheid's rigid racial categories in their daily lives". [10] This statement holds critical value for post-apartheid South Africa, how are people in this new democracy „experiencing, responding to or challenging the continuation of apartheid"s rigid racial categories in their daily lives?"   Whilst there is little doubt that exclusionary and essentialist practices and structures still exist within South Africa, there is change, which in turn requires epistemologies able to "find a way of accounting for the transformations that are also taking place" (Nuttall, 2004:731). Moving beyond research that uncritically relies and builds on racial categories and rather investigates how identities are reformulated in either rapidly or gradually transforming spaces enables glimpses into possible future social relationships. Leaving this unexplored in favour of studying „race relations" means the opportunities of nurturing alternate and less essentialist experiences are lost to social scientist and policy makers alike. Making a conscious and ethical decision to drive this change requires an in-depth understanding into how and why racial classifications are used in the myriad of informal interactions of everyday life; communicating how micro and macro understandings of race intersect, contest and reinforce one another. Social science research can, and should, offer a contribution to this.

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[10] Lee Stone and Yvonne Erasmus"s report *Race thinking and the law in post-1994 South Africa* (2008) is one example of research that does attempt this.

An important starting point in critically analysing race thinking in micro interactions is to consider how these theoretical debates get played out in our own practice: the research process. Work that offers insights into what these debates mean and demand in the process of carrying out research and collecting data is, at present, scarce (Howarth, 2009:408). The possibilities for effecting change lie not only in contributing to „self-reflective macro state polices and planning" as suggested above, but also in contributing to self-reflective social science and research findings, where we can shift consciousness in ourselves and those with whom we interact in our research. Here self-reflection on how we go about our investigations means we can start to challenge essentialist thinking through the micro interactions and dialogues between researcher and respondent, and between writer and reader. These smaller, but as powerful, drivers of change are tackled through a critical reflection on the methodology and research process undertaken in this study; it is to these reflections that the thesis now turns.

Chapter 2: The Practice of Research – Methods & Methodological Thinking

Exploring identity construction in post-apartheid South Africa, in this case in Albert Park, is motivated as much by a deep interest in methodological thinking and practice as it is by investigating if, how and why thinking around race has changed in South Africa, and more specifically the urban space of Albert Park. Indeed the dilemmas of research on race raised in the previous chapter demand epistemological and methodological considerations. The necessity to think critically and carefully when doing research into race, race thinking and racism stems from the role research of this kind plays in the construction of race as a category of import and interest. Researchers themselves are, from various standpoints, already engaged in a political project of constructing these identities. Research findings, since they are broadly perceived as scientific evidence, hold status and authority in many societies, which in turn makes them a powerful tool in shaping national and international policy, as well as providing valuable leverage to discredit and/or legitimise certain understandings of race in society – although as discussed previously within the limits of the state context. Besides the ethics of being accountable about what we, as social scientists, put „out there" in the public domain, research into race poses another complex concern. The ontological premise of social constructivist research on race faces the dilemma of reifying the very constructs it claims are socially constructed, at times making research of this kind a contributing factor in maintaining racial categorisation rather than a critical or challenging voice.

These epistemological and methodology concerns are addressed through critically reflecting on some of the academic debates in the field and, more specifically, reflecting on how these issues have manifest in my own research process. In turn this discussion provides a rationale for the use of ethnography and life histories as useful methodological fits for researching race and race thinking in the context of this doctoral study. Fifteen formal interviews, in which a tape recorder was used (something that made exact transcription possible) were conducted for this study and drew on life history interviewing techniques. These complemented the many hours

of informal conversations with not only these fifteen participants but also many other people whom I encountered during the months spent in Albert Park. In the second part of the chapter more detail on the methods themselves is offered, and the benefits and tensions of carrying out life histories and ethnography in Albert Park are further examined.

Section I – Theory and Practice

The Academic Debate

Advocates for continuing the use of racial categories in academic research argue that these categories are powerful identities that mediate people‟s experience and produce structural frameworks in social institutions, therefore they are legitimate and meaningful categories from which to collect data, particularly since they are used to overtly and tacitly organise power in society (American Sociological Association, 2003). Eliminating racial categories from research would therefore limit social scientists‟ ability to expose unequal and unjust practices. Likewise it would rob the oppressed of viable political identities from which to rally against dominant and exclusionary ideologies and policies.[11]

In 2003 the American Sociology Association (ASA), responding to some of the arguments presented above, published a statement offering a rationale for their support of the continuation of using racial categories in social science research. They do however recognise that some research may be used to further racial differentiation and discrimination and suggest that "although racial categories are legitimate subjects of empirical sociological investigation, it is important to recognize the danger of contributing to the popular conception of race as biological" (American Sociology Association, 2003).

In my view this is too narrow an understanding of how race is socially constructed. As was argued in my previous chapter essentialist notions of race are often built upon an ideology of cultural difference, for example that „black‟ people think, act and

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[11] Don Robotham‟s (2005) response to Paul Gilroy‟s concept of Cosmopolitanism discussed in the previous chapter is one example of this argument.

should be treated in a certain way. Indeed, under apartheid a substantial portion of social science research, often used to support racist legislation, focused on documenting social and cultural differences. Webster highlights how state and industry influences on social science drove findings that served to explain differences and differentiate "African workers" as belonging "to a different *culture*" (1981:104, emphasis in original). For example the creation of *Volkekunde*[12] as an academic field studied and constructed cultures as essentialised homogeneous units (Dubow, 2006:266).

Taking this into account it is vital to acknowledge that culture when used as a homogenising category of race thinking is as damaging and provides as much fuel for both structural inequality and everyday discriminatory interactions. For example, "[w]hen culture is treated (as in much popular usage) as something from which we can predict a whole swath of human behaviour, this edges disturbingly close to the racist treatment of skin colour or physiognomy as predictors of human behaviour" (Phillips, 2007:56). We need to expand the critique to move beyond, and indeed be highly critical of, research that contributes to any fixing of race within essentialist categories, whether overtly biological or not. For Gunaratnam (2003:29) this means acknowledging that

> [p]rocesses of essentialism and their uses in research can be witnessed in the driving impetus to categorize the bodies, experiences, practices, and even the thoughts, of individuals and groups in relation to „race" and ethnicity.

It is important to note that research that uses racial categories in an uncontested manner may well resonate with the lived experience of individuals and groups (Gunaratnam, 2003:33), since it echoes the essentialist notions found in popular and common sense understandings of race. However, scholars who call for a post-race position raise the concern that, even where social justice is an objective, research of

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[12] *Volkekunde*, an Afrikaans university discipline practiced under apartheid, was loosely built on social anthropology but assigned "overwhelming explanatory power to the phenomenon of ethnicity" and the representation of "bounded cultures" (Sharp, 1981:19). See John Sharp"s (1981) article *The Roots and development of* Volkekunde *in South Africa* for a critical reflection on how some of the practices of *Volkekunde* did not diverge so far from mainstream South African social anthropologists, many of whom politically distanced themselves from this field.

this kind can simultaneously re-enforce the notion of race as fixed social categories, unwillingly oiling the very mechanics of oppression they wish to dismantle. Whilst the ASA (2003) stance that "[a]s long as Americans routinely sort each other into racial categories and act on the basis of those attributions, research on the role of race and race relations in the United States falls squarely within this scientific agenda" is a well-intentioned position in terms of addressing racism and inequality it needs to be coupled with the awareness of the role of research in maintaining these very categories. Melissa Nobles" analysis of counting race in American census taking in the twentieth century clearly illustrates how arguments of scientific objectivity can be used to mask scientific constructions of race. She convincingly demonstrates how these arguments served to divorce census taking from the extensive history of creating race through census categories and instead posited that the census merely "registered the evident existence of race" (2000:1741).

For example, is it sufficient for a researcher/s simply to state that race is a social construct, yet continue to identify participants as belonging to a „race group"? Likewise, acknowledging the social construction of race and then proceeding to present findings that assume to represent the experiences of a „racial grouping", may serve to solidify the perceived homogeneity of a group rather than unpack why, how, and to whose benefit these constructions are maintained. Acknowledging identities – for example „whiteness" as a continuous and fluid social process whilst securing data from an identified racialised individual, a „white" person – tightens the screws that trap identity into the body politic (Nayak, 2006:416). Certainly the ontology of social constructivism has failed to diminish the multitude of essentialist performances of race in the economic, political, social and cultural arenas (Nayak, 2006:412). It is from this position that a post-race stance asks the question „can we do more?"

Whilst post-race theory can be critiqued, not least because of the tautology implicit in its name, it rightly demands reflection on current academic practices, and presents a "provocative question: can we re-write race into erasure?" (Nayak, 2006:427). Acknowledging the interconnectivity of identities suggests that power relations and structures that create and feed inequalities also require a holistic analysis. Indeed, using race as the lens to expose these practices and frameworks may in fact only highlight a few small elements of these mechanisms of power, or obscure significant

causes of inequality. Methodologies for research into race or race thinking, through necessity, need to be a continuous process of critical reflection; open to new kinds of tools for understanding moments of identity construction *in situ* instead of reproducing existing racial categories. A methodology, in other words, that is comfortable to be continually under construction, one that interacts and develops with, rather than delimits, the research process. Here deliberation on the epistemological complexities, practicalities and ethical dilemmas in doing research on social identities will enable the methodology to reshape itself in reflective ways. A methodology of this kind could conceivably provide a more contextualised and embedded analysis of power relations; in short, strengthening rather than weakening social researchers" ability to „speak truth to power".[13]

This has exciting political and social possibilities outside the realm of academia. So, for Paul Gilroy, moving beyond race as any form of legitimate category opens possibilities where "action against racial hierarchies can proceed more effectively" (2000:13). For example, whilst race may be an important concept in some projects it is also conceivable that other primary indicators such as income group, or more specific indicators such as access to clean water, electricity and medical care are better indicators of areas that require social and economic upliftment and infrastructure delivery than habitually recording racial statistics. In many ways we sit in a unique position where "[t]he large area of overlap between „race" and „class" in South Africa makes this approach possible" (Alexander, 2007:102).[14] Taking this into consideration continuing to use racial categories in research appears to be more an epistemological habit rather than necessity for social justice.

Of course presenting this dilemma as two opposing schools is not productive, polarised arguments can serve simply to maintain current practices rather than fuel innovation and productive contestation in a field. As argued in the previous chapter it is crucial to recognise the dangers of both these polarities (Beall, 1997:10). This I would argue is of particular concern in South Africa where there is a discord between

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[13]What Radhakrishnan (cited in Gunaratnam 2003:35) envisions as "empowerment and enfranchisement of contingent, heterogeneous „identities"".

[14] For a more nuanced exploration of some of the problematic and strategic integrations of class and race in South Africa see Maré (2003:15).

a state that presents itself as non-racial yet continues to preside over a nation that bears – to use Goldberg"s (2009:529) term – a formal racial "structural imprint". It is important to stress here that the choice is not *between* exposing inequality and moving beyond race, but rather "[w]e need to recognise and care about lived experiences of „race" and ethnicity, and we also need to resist and challenge the appetite for essentialism in research" (Gunaratnam, 2003:34). Indeed, it is more useful to think of post-race theory as an extension of, rather than competitor to, research that utilises racial categories (Nayak, 2006:414). Thinking in this way offers a more valuable discussion that calls for attentiveness and criticality about the way we conduct research, what we think we know, how we ask questions, and how we choose to write up and publish findings. In short, tackling the epistemological heart of what it means to carry out research on race.

A large part of the arguments presented above, such as Gilroy"s (2000), Gunaratnam"s (2003) and Nayak"s (2006), draw inspiration from mostly a European setting where their work responds to discourses of minorities in society, yet it still holds relevance in relation to South Africa. Here the darkest side of race thinking lurks in the recent past, and the present repetitive performances of race as meaningful difference (in policy, state institutions, advertising and communications, as well as social interactions) continues to create a disjuncture between the constitutional goal of non-racialism and everyday experience. In this context social scientists cannot afford an uncritical and/or passive agenda towards research on race.

Research that focuses on emergent identities may enable initiatives that begin to break down these rigidities. It may also provide the motivation for policy makers and civil society to restructure bureaucratic processes and programmes better to reflect how people in specific and wider geographic areas make sense of their lives. Being open to these complexities offers important insights in how racialised identities are being dismantled or reconstituted in unanticipated ways, which in turn challenges and subverts the ontology of recognisable and differentiated „races" and their use in state structures. Investigating how and why race thinking is reproduced and/or transformed or subverted in the context of everyday lived experiences may initiate the first formative move away from a society where many micro and macro

interactions are still mediated through a racial lens. Indeed there are already emergent identities that reject racial stereotypes, forming collectives around shared experiences that better reflect a post-apartheid context.

Nevillle Alexander (2007:93), in his critique on the continued use of racial categories in post-apartheid South Africa, states:

> We must remember, however, that even though they are constructed, social identities seem to have a primordial validity for most individuals, precisely because they are not aware of the historical, social and political ways in which their identities have been constructed.

If we are to agree with Alexander then research into race can be a consciousness raising exercise, at the very least for the researchers themselves, more optimistically for participants and the wider public. Research that incorporates or focuses on how and why race is constructed in specific ways within a research location, rather than takes perceived racial difference between its participants, and indeed between researcher and participant, as given, offers the possibilities for loosening these ties that bind, revealing what lies behind the agendas of racialised thought and action. Being more critical of our own research processes forces researchers to tackle the epistemological complexities of how race thinking can shape the research process. The section below does not provide definitive answers to these complexities; rather it hopes to raise some of the dilemmas and questions that arise when integrating critical theoretical thinking on race into the research process. More precisely it tackles some of the issues around how we ask questions, go about selecting our participants, and the meanings we attach to our own identity in research settings.

How We Ask Questions

Social scientists interested in methodology have long warned about the necessity to critically reflect on how we ask questions. This awareness needs to extend to thinking about the broader context of social identities within a specific research project. For example, in South Africa the problem of associating questions to race is not that researchers should be colour-blind or afford race no meaning; rather it is that race is *so loaded* with meaning that it may distort people‟s views and opinions in

relation to the research topic.[15] Steven Friedman and Zimitri Erasmus (2008:65) give one interesting example of this when they analyse how survey participants" answers differed in relation to redress and transformation when associated with race and class respectively. In this case, „white" participants are supportive of redress to uplift poorer sectors of society but not if redress is associated with race. Whilst this finding in itself points to the multifaceted meanings attached to race by some participants, what it also shows is that if you wish to explore people"s feeling about transformation you need to think carefully about how you ask questions. Without testing or critically reflecting on how race may skew responses, findings may not reflect the complexity of a topic. The banality of race in South Africa means that too often race is inserted or implied in questions without much thought to how it influences answers and subsequent analysis.

This also applies to qualitative methodologies. Direct questions on „race relations" and racial identities cannot escape the historical and contemporary layers of meaning placed on what it means to be perceived as „black", „white", „indian" and „coloured" in South Africa, but also, on what it means to talk about race. Participants, when directly questioned on racial issues, may carefully monitor the research agenda and the researcher"s attitude, adjusting their responses in a bid to be seen as politically correct rather than reveal what one actually thinks about race. Narrowing the scope of inquiry to talking directly about racial identities also excludes a better understanding of how multiple identities are interwoven. Using a broader topic on which to base interviews, I believe, generates richer empirical data. It is no longer sufficient to define race thinking and indeed racism as overt social practices or structures. The banality and tenacity of these ideologies require recognition of the embedded way in which race thinking is enacted in society. Providing an open dialogue in which people, if they feel comfortable, can discuss their experiences enables various social identities to emerge as important mechanisms through which people negotiate their social environments. Methodologies that offer these possibilities enable researchers to analyse why race is used in some answers and

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[15]South Africa is not the only country in which this may be the case. Studs Terkel (1992) uses the word *obsession* when analysing how Americans think and talk about race.

not others, providing more nuanced understandings of which ideologies and structures enable or shape race thinking.

Influenced by the above theoretical considerations I drew from life history interviewing techniques for the 15 interviews carried out for this study. This method aimed to provide an open space for discussions of people"s experiences of living in Albert Park. The interviews took place mostly in participants" flats, in some cases their offices and in three cases in a public space. All the interviews started from the same anchor question, which roughly phrased asked the participant when they first moved into Albert Park, and was then followed by "what was Albert Park like then". These two open questions were useful in that they enabled a flexible personal narrative through which participants" highlighted experiences they themselves placed value on, rather than the researcher defining the types of experiences discussed, such as experiences focused on race. It also importantly offered a specific platform, or point of departure, from which to spring board into the experiences of living in this urban space. The second question subtly asks for an explanation of change over time – and often just this question alone prompted narratives on how people made sense of the changes they had experienced in the area. Whilst telling stories of the self may not be accurate reflections of the past, and are peppered with re-interpretations, vague memories and purposeful admissions, it is how a participant chooses to construct these stories that are of analytical interest (Brewer, 2000:71).

This narrative approach opened the data to capturing some of the ways that identities intertwine as participants make sense of and negotiate living in Albert Park. At specific moments social identities that receive little airtime in the macro political debates on race, class and gender became the primary focus of self-identity, such as generational or age related identities. Both older and younger participants felt that there aren"t any city initiatives that met the needs for their specific age group, for example getting assistance to pick up state pensions from the post office or offering sports and library facilities for studying (*Interview with Janet and Roger 25th March 2008* and *Interview with Jabulani 1st April 2008*). Questions directed immediately towards racial identities may have closed off these narratives, leaving untold how people interact with each other and the state in this urban space. Adjusting questions to be more open requires a fairly straightforward methodological reshaping,

critically analysing how we select the people of whom we wish to ask these questions is a far more challenging task.

Participants' Identities – Selecting Participants

In South Africa the temptation to select participants as representatives of a „race group‟ is strong. This is not just because race matters as discussed in the beginning of the chapter but because this type of thinking is also driven by a desire for social inclusion and justice. With a history of exclusion and discrimination based on race there can be hypersensitivity towards making sure everyone has a voice. Whilst many social scientists would baulk at the thought of generalising, the temptation to „say something‟ of import about race is strong. As discussed previously race as a category for research is still supported in various ways, and continues to exist in many funding criteria (Gunaratnam, 2003:45). Presenting data that offers simplified categories can also be seen as useful for policy makers, rather than the more messy interplay of variables experienced in everyday life. And of course it makes for good media headlines, especially in South Africa. In South Africa – as Burawoy warns for the American context – research on race and identity may, in this as in any academic field, start to become more about "a battery of disciplinary techniques – standardized courses, validated reading lists, bureaucratic rankings, intensive examinations, literature reviews, tailored dissertations, refereed publications, the all-mighty CV, the job search, the tenure file, and then policing one‟s colleagues and successors to make sure we all march in step" (Burawoy, 2005:260), rather than about critically moving beyond the confines of epistemological comfort. These occupational pressures of doing research in South Africa mean that what was experienced as a fluid interaction of multiple identities between two or more individuals during the research process may become fixed in ink as representing the way „race groups‟ experience the world or each other.

Whilst the desire to „see‟ race is more reparative than punitive in some of these cases, it still does not sufficiently reflect on the dilemma of what happens when you leave the layer of theoretical abstraction and move into the more messy process of identifying a participant. Neglecting to offer an explanation for how the researcher has moved "from the claim that „race‟ was a popular interpretative category of lay life to the empirical identification of „racial groups‟" serves to re-enforce racial groupings

as "naturally occurring" (Carter and Virdee, 2008:662). Again the banal performance of racial categorisation is repeated. Here the researcher uses the taught social clues and visual distinctions that Gilroy (2000:42) talks about to select people they think belong to a racial group – as mentioned in the previous chapter including check boxes in which to categorise participants" racial identity carries consequences. Researchers need to be more cognisant that using fixed racial categories "tend to create and reinforce the identity of population groups that they were initially only meant to observe" (Christopher, 2002:406). In his article on historically analysing the classification of groups in the South African census Christopher (2002) suggests that shifting the responsibility (or control) of defining the self away from the census researchers and placing it in the hands of the participants "may accelerate the emergence of new identities". The appeal to open possibilities for future alternatives is an attractive one, if it is pushed beyond simply shifting the responsibility on to the participant making them check their own racial box. Some researchers may feel that allowing participants to self-identify washes their hands of the awkward process of classification. It does not: ticking an option on a given list still elicits a repetitive racial performance from the participant and serves to inform them that whatever they say will be measured against their racial identity. It is the opening up or removal of classification boxes that offers alternate and more nuanced ways of seeing our social world. As acknowledged earlier, in some cases race may be an important concept related to research, but in *all* cases an explanation of why the research required this variable, and an explanation of the epistemology of identification of participants, should be common practice. It is not acceptable that race is taken as a given that requires little conceptual analysis in social science research. Researchers and scholars need to illustrate a critical awareness of how the abstraction of race interacts with their own practices of engagement.

Some useful tools for finding alternate and less confining ways to identify participants are found in ethnographic methods. Ethnographic methods provide the necessary flexibility and rich data in which to examine the discord between academic theory and research practice, and official discourses of race and lived experiences. Nayak (2006:427) believes that "[t]his is because it is only by engaging in the complicated clutter of daily life that race can be subverted, crossed over and perhaps eventually crossed out". Whilst this statement is useful for defending ethnographic

methodology, it is also biased. I would argue that many other methods once revisited with a more critical epistemological eye could effectively do the same.[16] However, the process driven nature of ethnography undeniably offers a more dynamic space in which to explore new ways of reflecting on the self, identifying participants and gathering data, a core reason for its selection in this study.

As a way of becoming more familiar with the area and the people who live in the city space of Albert Park in Durban, I moved into one of the high-rise flats in St. Andrews Street for a nine month period, and after moving out continued to spend time on the street for the next year and a half, mostly through sitting on a fold up chair outside a small but popular fruit and vegetable stall. Rather than creating a pre-determined check list of people who I thought I should talk to, certain residents became people of interest through my everyday interactions with them. Living there also made the temptation to connect with a „representative" sample from different racial groups much easier to resist. Having reoccurring interactions with possible participants meant that people were approached for interviews because, for example, they work on the street and therefore watch its goings-on from Monday to Friday in the daylight hours, or because they act as a form of gatekeeper to resident spaces, or work closely with the ward councillor[17] in the area – rather than because they are „white", „black", „indian" or „coloured", or indeed male or female. Here, what Essed (2001:504) calls secondary levels of identification, are also acknowledged as important aspects of researching social identities. This is not to say that these participants do not use racial categories or draw on other social identities of age, gender, occupation and class in their understandings, philosophising and interactions in this urban space. But ethnographic methods do allow for the more micro identities of shopkeeper, flat supervisor and pensioner, amongst others, to pull through and offer an explanation for certain ways of seeing and acting in the world than focusing primarily through a racial lens. For example, many residents spoke of a difference between people who „belonged" in Albert Park (generally residents who are seen as good and honest) and

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[16] One example of how this criticality could be integrated into quantitative research is offered by Friedman and Erasmus (2008) in their previously mentioned article *Counting on 'race': what the surveys say (and do not say) about 'race' and redress.*
[17] "Wards are the basic spatial unit demarcated by the Municipal Demarcation Board for the 2001 local elections" (www. statssa.gov.za/census2001/atlas_ward/index.html).

outsiders who visit the area to drink in taverns and do crime, identities that were closely linked to a sense of place and belonging (this finding is further analysed in *Chapter 4*). Likewise identities that were seen as being in conflict were that of being a „foreigner"[18] as opposed to a South African. Both these differentials were related to feelings of personal safety in the area and formed discourses for making sense of changes in the area. For some of the residents, race was interrelated with notions of insiders and outsiders, but often other social identities were used to supersede race in favour of more localised common interests. For example, long term residents have an unwritten rule of looking out for each other (this can literally mean watching the streets from your flat window), particularly in terms of each other"s safety and health.

Opening up the research to the possibilities of evolving identities in heterogeneous spaces, whilst remaining alert to how race plays into these – although never presupposing the meaning attached to race – offers a far more nuanced understanding of how people both draw on and disrupt identities in multiple strategies of sense making and survival. This approach is particularly beneficial for research located in urban areas where social identities interact on a myriad of levels, and reformulate, dissipate or materialize in response to each other (Beall, 1997:3).

Thinking About the Self

Ethnography however also provides a space for self-reflection on the awareness of the researcher"s social identity on participants" interactions and responses. As in the case of thinking about participant"s identities, the researcher"s secondary identities also play an important part of understanding why the research process follows a particular trajectory, and can offer more transparency than superficially stating one"s „racial", gender or class identity. However even when focusing on race Rhodes (cited in Nayak, 2006:425) offers inspiration when stating that whilst still important to take into consideration, "the significance of skin colour was rarely the same from start to finish of an interview and more was gained from considering it as an

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[18] For readability purposes from here on in the text I will not put single quotes around the word *foreign* or *foreigner*. However, it is as important to recognise the contested and problematic construction of this term in, as outlined in the *Introduction* in regards to race, "treating individuals as representatives or members of a group that has been assigned homogeneous and essentialist characteristics".

interactive factor in the dynamic context of each interview than from attempting to isolate it as a variable". This understanding forces the researcher to move beyond the dilemma of reifying „racial‟ classifications. In this sense social identity is viewed as part of an ethnographic process rather than a given that exists exogenous to the interaction between researcher and participant (Nayak, 2006:426). This is not to say that whilst living in Albert Park my being perceived as „white‟ had no relevance; in some ways and spaces I felt it did; but as Vron Ware eloquently puts it, if there is something worth analysing here "[i]t is not about *being* a white women, it is about *being thought of* as a white woman" (1992a:xii, emphasis in original).

One example that illustrates both the benefit and difficulty of shifting the analytical focus towards Ware‟s statement when race appears to offer part of the analytical process is a morning I spent with Priscilla, one of the participants from Albert Park. Priscilla and I had had numerous informal conversations on the street but at the end of a more formal interview session in her flat she asked me to give her a lift to the sheriff‟s office to collect a deposit she had put down on an unsuccessful bid on a flat for auction. The sheriff‟s office had held her money for over a year and the clerk dealing with her deposit constantly avoided her phone calls or was on leave, in short preventing Priscilla from earning interest on her money. When we arrived at the sheriff‟s office she indicated that she would like me to come inside with her, and gestured for me to follow her to the counter. I felt a little silly standing next to her whilst she negotiated for a cheque. At first he suggested that they would do an electronic transfer into her bank account, but she refused to leave without a cheque and when he responded that that would take time she purposefully asked me in front of him if we would be able to wait, to which I agreed that we would. She obviously caught the clerk by surprise at arriving unannounced and at the end of the 20 minutes she left with her money. On the drive back she was really happy and appreciative that I had taken her there and back; she told me that because I had helped her she would in turn help me if I needed anything. In Albert Park reciprocity is synonymous with trust and from then on Priscilla and I have a far more open relationship. During the drive she also told me they must have thought "who is this women here with her" talking about me. I joked and said that I could be her lawyer. Immediately she smiled and agreed: "you see maybe that is what they thought"

(*Field Note 26th May 2010*). The tone of her voice suggested that this is exactly what she had banked on.

But what was it about my presence that Priscilla thought would lend weight to her cause? What did she anticipate the clerk would read into my being there? I am at least two generations younger than her; usually a younger person would not be seen to hold any authority over the more experienced older person, so why did Priscilla, and myself, through my unconscious jest, think that I may be perceived as legal counsel? One possible interpretation is that Priscilla assumed that the clerk would make racialised assumptions. In South Africa I would be labelled „white", and she may have played on the fact that the clerk would assume that a relationship between her and I, especially considering the age gap, would be a professional rather than personal one. Here „whiteness" intersects with class as it is associated with historical advantage through having better access to education and professional careers. Of course that she perceives me as „white" only holds currency because I am contrasted against her own racial classification. In other words if race enters the analysis it is because in South Africa we are labelled, and can label each other, as different. Using race as an explanatory tool in analysing this situation means that I too would have to recognise that Priscilla is labelled differently to me. Growing up in South Africa means that I am acutely aware of the visual cues and social indicators that are used to classify people. I presume that Priscilla is *classified* (rather than *is*) „black", my presumption lies in assessing her skin tone, which is darker than mine, in listening to her speak (she is fluent in isiZulu and English) and because she told me that she grew up in a township outside of Durban. Here I perform the classification rituals of apartheid. I look at her body, I listen to her language and I assess her upbringing and then place her in a category that is meant to represent her. She of course has done the same with me. That as people living in South Africa we can do this is testimony to the prevalence of race thinking.

On first reading the above practice of classification in my own work may appear awkward and contradictory considering the theoretical analysis earlier in the chapter. Yet it is important to include for a number of reasons: firstly, it highlights the difficulty of researching race without performing it yourself, a difficulty researchers need to grapple with rather than ignore. Secondly, rather than a researcher simply assigning

a racial category to a participant, a transparent description of how the researcher identifies people serves to elucidate how people use various strategies through which to construct race – which in turn can be problematised. This also demands contemplation on how the researcher is part of the production of race instead of merely providing a description of it. Lastly, what it asks is that the researcher analyse why at this particular moment their own, or another‟s, classification becomes important. It also demonstrates how one‟s own perceived race can be appropriated by another person and used as a strategic means to an end. The above example suggests that people are able to abstract racial stereotypes from an individual and utilise them for very specific livelihood strategies, whilst simultaneously discarding it during other micro-level interactions. That race becomes part of the analytical process within an institutional context is of vital importance. It is in making an official query in a formal state building where „whiteness‟ in South Africa may be seen to accrue status and privilege. Priscilla‟s success in retrieving her money where she had been unsuccessful in the past would reconfirm the lived reality of institutional racism. It is in investigating these points of interaction with state structures that social science may offer possibilities for more inclusive state projects. This offers far more insight into how race is constructed through dialogue with other individuals and institutions, rather than placing emphasis on *being* „white‟ or „black‟ – in my opinion an impossible state to occupy.

The example given of Priscilla and me raises more questions and demands deeper reflection rather than offering any definitive solution about the complexities of doing research on race and race thinking in society. Nor does this epistemological reflection offer an alternative to the use of racial categories in research; instead the above section aims to emphasise where the analytical focus of a methodological framework on researching race should lie – on the complexities, awkwardness and ethical dilemmas of researching in this field. Analysis of this kind requires engagement in how the broader theoretical discussions in the field of race and race thinking shape the research process and how it in turn reshapes our theoretical understandings of this social construct. More importantly examining both the macro and micro contexts that inform research enables us to start reflecting critically on the role of research in opposing/challenging and constructing possible futures. In turn presenting possibilities to address and dismantle frameworks, both tangible and

intangible, that support race thinking and its inevitable companion racism. Of course this analysis asks for more than that. It argues that we should take seriously the responsibility of social science in constructing future possibilities for thinking about race, and indeed considers the possibilities and value of its erasure; although it is less interested in jumping directly to a post-race agenda or finding another definitive alternative classification device. Instead it calls for debate and action on beginning the process of moving away from essentialised racial categories – in research and policy. It is in the process of *moving* – a process that demands critical reflections and asks hard questions – that we may begin the important journey towards more inclusive, heterogeneous and open spaces in South Africa.

The above methodological framework directs this research project, but of course like all research involving social interactions, unpacking how the project was shaped through the process of practicing specific methods is also important; important in that it enables the reader to critically consider the interpretation and findings of the researcher. The following section then takes this thinking into the more personal realm of undertaking ethnography and life histories in Albert Park, and what it means to get entangled in the lives of others.

Section II – Entangled Lives, Narratives and Ethnography

Collecting life histories is a method often associated with ethnography (Brewer, 2000:71), and certainly there is a synergy here in the open approach to dialogue as opposed to more structured encounters with set questions. Ethnography and life histories also share in common a required acceptance of flexibility and unpredictability by the researcher. Researchers may attempt to shape the conversations with participants through probing questions, with varying degrees of success, but open conversation means the participant too is able to direct topics. Likewise the researcher may have little control over the environment in which these conversations take place. This inability to control for research variables, coupled with the focus on the researcher‟s intense involvement in data capturing, means that ethnography is often critiqued as an interpretive and subjective practice, making it an uneasy fit within the traditional borders of „objective science‟ (Brewer, 2000:21).

These critiques are important in considering the validity of the data, but similarly there are countless rebuttals in methodological text books that argue for the value of ethnographic findings.[19] Recreating these rather aging arguments around which types of methodologies are more accurate or objective, I feel is unproductive, suffice to say that all research is a form of interpretative science. As in any study, the question is not finding the best encompassing epistemological stance or methodological tool for all forms of enquiry, but the better local epistemological stance and methods per specific research questions (Oakley, 1998:724). As argued in the previous section, in certain epistemological research frameworks the openness and flexibility of ethnography is a strength rather than weakness. It is in presenting an informed, convincing and transparent interpretation that makes the data become worth paying attention to, making the task of the ethnographer, not just „good" research practice but, "the artful and creative rhetorical abilities of writers of ethnographic texts…necessary to recognize the authority of ethnographic data" (Brewer, 2000:51). In this sense ethnographers not only get entangled in the stories of others but co-create social narratives for themselves and their readers.

During this ethnography people told me stories of their personal experiences, either through informal conversations on the pavement, which was then written up into field notes, or through more formal life history interviews set up at specific times and places. The number of interviews was not predetermined, in total fifteen interviews were undertaken with separate individuals, many of who also feature in the field notes through additional conversations on the street. As the interviews had enough diversity in points of view and perspectives from different actors yet also started to increasingly reflect similarity and shared opinions, the interview process ended. All the interviews aided in data triangulation (Brewer, 2000:75), since participants" stories would many times overlap or provided additional information to other interviews, my own observations and memories or street conversations – enabling some idea of why different actors construct explanations in specific ways. Some of the people interviewed I had met in the block of flats where I lived or chatted to a few

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[19] See Guba and Lincoln"s (2005) chapter entitled *Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences* for an overview of these qualitative methodological debates, and Holmes and Marcus" (2005) chapter *Refunctioning ethnography: The challenge of an anthropology of the contemporary* in the same edition for a more specific look at how contemporary ethnography is shaped by this thinking.

times on the street, but the interviews also proved useful to explore actors who, whilst living elsewhere, played an important role in what happened in Albert Park. For example the city officials responsible for regenerating this urban space, or a high ranking police officer in the Metro police, who play a large role in participants" views on safety and security. In these cases, whilst the interviews were still open and anchored in talking about experiences in Albert Park, they often focused on the ability of these actors to perform what they saw as their role or function in the area rather than personal life histories.

Interviews are a very particular method of conversation since they, through the process of negotiating a time and place, imply formality. This formality greatly assists in ethical issues such as informed consent. Before each interview I was able to explain my research to the participant (although I was careful to frame this in terms of social identities and neighbourhood change rather than use the term race), as well as offer an opportunity for any questions before they chose to continue the interview. Recording conversations on the street through field notes makes the issue of informed consent a murkier proposition. Although many of the participants in the street conversations were informed of my research aims, there were moments where I was not able to get consent, such as when a new person briefly entered into an existing conversation. I think it is important to admit that often for an ethnographer interrupting these easy going spontaneous dialogues to get informed consent can be both awkward and undesirable, since it can stop the flow of informal everyday talk. For these reasons, as well as in keeping with the anonymity offered to participants in the interviews, pseudonyms have been used for all participants.

Formality in itself brings with it a process of negotiation. There were a few participants with whom I had easy going conversations on the street yet visibly stiffened at the prospect of an interview. For example Priscilla twice cancelled interview appointments on my arrival. There were also some participants whose conversations added great value to this project but whom I chose not to interview – one of the reasons for this was because the relationship had been built through informal conversations and asking for a set time and date would have, in my view, shifted something in this relaxed atmosphere. Alfred, whom I met outside the small fruit and vegetable store where I sat with my fold up chair is one such person:

When I arrived Maya was busy talking to people in her shop, so I put my chair down in the usual place. She already had someone sitting outside her store, an old man reading the newspaper. I greeted him, at first he was a little wary of what I was doing there. When I told him I was doing research he wanted to know who for, he seemed more at ease when I told him it was for my own thesis. This was the beginning of my conversation with Alfred – a genuine in the flesh street philosopher. I asked him if I could chat to him about Albert Park, he agreed and folded his paper. The conversation was a little forced at first but once Alfred relaxed he seemed to enjoy talking. Alfred is a 66 year old retired harbour worker; he wears an English flat cap and smokes a pipe, and has a rather funky bohemian bag slung across his chest.
(*Field Note 29*[th] *October 2009*)

That day Alfred told me how he had moved out of and then back into Albert Park, where he likes to have a beer in the area, about his spiritual beliefs, and his relationship with his daughter in Cape Town who is going through a difficult time with menopause (Alfred had bought a book on how to deal positively with menopause and was reading it so he could support her; he found a lot of pleasure in the fact that all the menopausal symptoms listed on the first page of the book were similar to his experiences of growing old). Asking Alfred at a later date for an interview would have appeared dismissive of his openness that day.

Whether people‟s personal narratives were captured in the more formalised interviews or as part of the ethnographic discussions they always offered rich data on how people make sense of their lives, and as Brewer (2000:71) reminds us "their personal story reveals much about the fabric of social life across time". What did differ in the interviews as opposed to the impromptu conversations on the street, is that during the interviews there appeared to be an unwritten code that both the participant and I adhered to, that we were there to talk about their experiences, so rarely did I talk about mine in great detail. But in the street discussions this invisible code was lifted; that people opened up about their experiences meant that without thinking about it I often did the same. The day I met Alfred my mother in-law, a women I loved and respected, had been in hospital for two days on a life support machine after suffering a massive stroke, it was a difficult time and Alfred offered warm and wonderful condolences (*Field Note 29*[th] *October 2009*). The interaction of

ethnography is about shared stories, making it a rich and fulfilling means of data collection and, simultaneously, personal emotional work. This is not to romanticise ethnographic research in some idealised notion where both researcher and participant benefit from personal disclosure. A history of ethnographic practices illustrates the complexities of power that exists in these relationships, often unbalanced and abusive, as the ethnographer represents the stories of „others" in ways that solidify and pathologise difference from the Western norm (Nayak, 2006:413). The potential to develop personal relationships made possible by the "[p]roximity and intimacy" of ethnography requires "even more complex negotiations of power" (Ali, 2006:475). Critiques by feminists and scholars of race and inequality, as well as the more reflexive turn in the social sciences in general, have demanded more transparency and critical analysis on the role of the researcher and the process of conducting ethnography. For Nayak (2006:413) we are now "better informed about the kaleidoscopic relations of power that permeate all aspects of our research from initial design through to the write-up, interpretation and reading of these narrative accounts". She makes an important point in recognising the shifts in ethnographic practice, but later rightly cautions that there is still difficult and important work to be done on this front when thinking about the ontologies and epistemological practices that underpin ethnography. Whilst the knowledge production in mainstream ethnography has undoubtedly expanded to include more self-reflective practices, these should not be thought of as only belonging to the domain of the present „postmodern era" (Atkinson et al, 1999). Indeed some past ethnographic accounts reflect deep criticality in the dialogue between researcher and participants, as some contemporary work acknowledges fluidity on the surface yet continues to reify difference and homogenise group identity.

Living There

This particular ethnography took on two variations from the beginning to the end of the research project. Initially, from November 2007 to July 2008, it was carried out through living in a flat in one of the high rise blocks on St. Andrews Street. Whilst the decision to use ethnographic methods was primarily driven by the theoretical and epistemological concerns discussed earlier, in practice it was more decisively shaped by my identities as a student, and my personal relationships of partner and more recently as a parent.

It is important to acknowledge the academic landscape of postgraduate studies in South Africa. The limited pool of funds for research very rarely enables PHD students a sustainable funding option for focusing solely on their studies, particularly for older students who may also have dependents. Postgraduate funding is available in South Africa but unless you successfully apply to universities outside the country the allocated funds are normally insufficient for a sustainable livelihood without additional income.[20] As a result many South African students pursuing masters and doctoral research are also in the labour market. Certainly in terms of comparing the funding to even first time full time employment income for graduates there is little competition. South Africa suffers from a similar lack of salary competitiveness in terms of attracting and retaining skilled research staff at its public universities (Habib and Morrow, 2006).[21]

This background is important to understand in that it influences researchers" methodological choices and the way in which they engage in their project. For example I argued that my research questions required ethnographic methods, however being *there* would have to take a different form whilst also engaging in work five days a week. Albert Park"s notorious reputation for crime and urban decay meant that it took some negotiating with my partner before he agreed to live there. The rather grubby condition of the flat coupled with a higher rental than we had been paying did not help my case and initially he agreed to stay for a six month period. On arrival he likened it to his experience of forced military conscription under Apartheid: "Go in, put your head down, and then get the hell out". That he agreed to uproot our lives in the interest of my research is something I am still very grateful for.

Working full time and attempting ethnography brought in an interesting dimension to the classical ethnography insider/outsider tension. I was not in the field during

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[20] For example the National Research Foundation offers a postdoctoral scholarship of R60 000 per annum that is open to the social and human sciences, although these applicants compete with the natural and applied sciences as well as engineering and technology applicants for this award (*NRF scholarships and fellowships programme manual for financial support in 2011*).

[21] For a well-rounded argument of how this withdrawal of resources and higher education restructuring has impacted on South African social sciences, and sociology in particular see Michael Burawoy"s (2004) article *Public sociology: South African dilemmas in a global context*.

daylight hours for the majority of every week; I, like most of the other residents got up five times a week, went to work elsewhere for eight hours, and then returned in the evening. Old routines were rebuilt; come home, relax, eat dinner together, watch TV and sleep. This pattern very often meant that I felt far more like a resident than a researcher. Yet simultaneously there were times when I felt more like a boarder in Albert Park, neither resident nor researcher – it was a place to stay but not really where we lived.   In large this was due to having to take into consideration my partner"s experience of Albert Park, which in short he did not always enjoy.   A passionate landscape designer he had sacrificed a garden for a small concrete balcony. As often as possible he suggested we stay at my mother"s in the suburbs, where our pets lived and where my mom had a spare room that fast became ours. This was particularly the case on weekends, really the few days when I could spend daylight hours in the area. Of course it was also my choice to go along with this; in some ways because I felt guilty about moving him into an area he did not really enjoy but admittedly because it was also a return to the comfort of our social networks. The move to Albert Park brought with it changes in our lifestyle, some of which I anticipated and others of which were rather surprising.

Indeed living in the city rather than the suburbs brings a multi-sensory change. The suburban sounds of barking dogs and lawnmowers were swapped for loud taxi music and hooters; the quiet of the night for the roar of heavy duty truck engines starting up at three in the morning, illegally parked outside the flat, to move their cargo to the harbour. Daytime passers-by for night-time revellers: Albert Park has one of the highest ratios" of taverns and bars per square kilometre in Durban (*The Witness* 13th October 2007). At first the night-time sounds that drifted up to us on the 14th floor had a surreal quality to them, but after a month or so the noises became hard to ignore when tossing and turning in bed. Although I never saw this, I had heard from other residents that sometimes tenants threw water bombs on the parked taxis in protest at the loud music emanating from these people movers; a gesture in which I secretly took great pleasure.

The lifestyle changes however extend beyond the auditory, for the nine months we stayed there we were only visited four times by friends, two of those were visits by friends who live overseas and were staying with us during their time in South Africa;

a dramatic reduction in social activity from our previous place of resident. Indeed the reactions we got from friends and acquaintances on our choice of living location were fascinating in itself, responses ranged from uncomfortable silences, gasps of horror, to real interest at „inner city life". I got used to friends substantiating to strangers that I was only there for research purposes when I mentioned I lived in Albert Park, or comments like "you are so brave I get scared just driving past the Albert Park off ramp". Driving down St. Andrews Street with an old friend her first comment was one of amazement as she asked "are you the only white person who lives here?". These reactions are perhaps to be expected in a society still so dominated by race thinking and compounded by the geographic class separation engineered during apartheid. What was unexpected were the tensions experienced of doing ethnography in a social environment within your own city, where I oscillated between the thrill of engaging in a new space and the pull of more familiar social spaces.

This feeling *part of* and *not of* the research location is not a weakness of the study but rather demands some critical reflection on how it impacts on data collection and interpretation. At times what felt like a manic approach of juggling work and study provided a more reflective process, in that it offered distance and a considered stance from my own writing and thinking. But it was also a stressful time, and in many ways the data collection process was hampered by work commitments. When I was eight months pregnant we decided to leave Albert Park and move into my mother"s house. Having a home in which we were planning to stay long term became increasingly important in light of a new baby, and having a family environment with two parents and a grandmother was an attractive environment. Living in Albert Park, whilst not hugely successful in collecting data per se – since only three interviews had taken place and my field notes were erratic to say the least – was also a very important process in making the second and more productive stage of the ethnography successful. It gave me a familiarity and confidence in the area that would not have existed otherwise, but more importantly shared knowledge – as limited as mine was – about Albert Park proved incredibly useful in everyday conversations. Often on first meetings people appeared visibly more at ease when we could share a memory of an event, or they realised I knew some of the people they knew, or knew about the tavern down the road that made all the

noise. These small cues of familiarity established a more open connection with many of the people I met. In much traditional ethnography a key informant plays this role of familiarising the unfamiliar (Brewer, 2000:81), both for the researcher and the participants; in many ways living there had done this for me. In the second stage of the ethnography a woman called Maya greatly assisted me in this.

Being There

After six months maternity leave I started visiting Albert Park at least once a week for a year and a half, normally for a few hours in the morning sitting outside Maya‟s shop on a fold-up chair. Maya, a woman in her late 60s, sells fresh fruit and vegetables in a very small rented street side store on St. Andrews Street. Without Maya agreeing to me sitting outside her store this ethnography would have been compromised in its ability to collect rich data and meet various actors in the area. One of the long standing residents in the area Maya has lived and worked in Albert Park for over 12 years now. She is a formidable presence and frequently describes herself as friendly with everyone in the area and also someone who builds friendships between people, although as I soon found out not all of her relationships are conflict free. On the first day I sat on my fold up chair outside her store I was amazed at how many people she knew, almost all the people who walk past her store greet her, she also has a few regulars who come and visit her to catch up on the goings on in the area, sometimes they buy goods from her, sometimes not. As Maya‟s store became a focal point for my fieldwork it offered wonderful access to a range of residents in the area, a large portion of whom knew each other intimately. Ironically, and possibly unavoidably, whilst all ethnographic introductions through a specific key person enable access and acceptance into the field, they may simultaneously close off other conversations. For example, the type of neighbourly familiarity shared by frequent visitors to Maya‟s store, when experienced from the outside, may have been intimidating. It is unlikely that people who did not fit into this regular group, or for example new arrivals such as many of the foreign nationals in Albert Park are, would sit down for lengthy chats when popping in to purchase goods. Broadening the scope of the street conversations certainly is one avenue for further expansion beyond this study, but for the purpose of my research focus the hustle and bustle of Maya‟s store offered a wealth of rich everyday chatter.

Most of Maya"s visitors sit on a plastic chair she places outside her door every morning. The everyday conversations and the contented silences of watching the busy street created an existing informal and relaxed atmosphere of a street side "chat room", in which my fold-up chair easily blended. That Maya had let me in also made some of the visitors more relaxed in my presence and I am sure that her acceptance paved the way for more open and frank talk. Maya is up at four every morning to collect fresh goods from the Warwick Street market (a market that has many memories for her as her father"s family started farming when they arrived from India), she is hard working, hard talking (some of the swearwords that came from this 60 odd year old made me blush) and in many ways a great humanitarian (although not without the occasional prejudice). She provides more than fruit, vegetables and socialising to some of the residents in the area, running a strict tab system for her regulars she also helps out some of the younger people battling financially in the area. I often saw her giving them vegetables to cook when they had no money for food and once she acted as a negotiator on two young men"s behalf with an irate landlord looking for rent (*Field Note 8th October 2009*). Her credibility meant they got an extension on their rent. The majority of my field notes arise from frantically driving home to write up the morning"s conversations either with Maya herself or with one of the many interesting and diverse people I met sitting outside her shop (I purposefully chose not to use a recording device in the street conversations as I was concerned that it may introduce a disruptive formality to these conversations).

Building this relationship was not always easy going (*Field Note 4th July 2009*). When I was living in Albert Park I had bought fruit and vegetables from her a couple of times, but she had never seemed particularly friendly. Without my partner pushing me to approach her I may not have plucked up the courage to ask Maya. After the first morning sitting outside her shop I felt much more at ease, especially when she agreed that I could visit whenever I wanted. But there were times when I felt I was imposing, days when she did not want to chat or after an initial hello ignored me (*Field Note 3rd February 2010*). Sometimes this was fine as I spoke to other people sitting on the chairs outside the store, but when it was just me sitting alone whilst she pottered around inside I felt awkward and unwanted and struggled not to take the

situation personally. Even at the time I realised how egocentric my response was, since it is I who came into her space. In hindsight this awkwardness is part of coming to terms with the unusual types of relationships built during ethnographies; friendships that have both clear and unclear agendas. Collecting data and the personal satisfaction of working towards my thesis were an obvious spin off of these encounters, but the benefits to Maya were unclear to me. I experienced some moments of insecurities around these ambiguous agendas; whether I was being transparent enough about my being there for research, why she was allowing me to enter into her space, and whether there was not an unhealthy power imbalance between us because of this. There were times when these insecurities made me hesitant to go into the field.

> I have had almost a kind of writer"s block equivalent with going back into Albert Park, what would you call that – researcher"s block. For some reason I had felt nervous and uncomfortable about returning to Maya"s – why would she let me hang out there? Am I not intruding, who am I to watch and extract information from these people? But also tired, there is a performance to ethnography and when you are constantly surrounded by people as I am at home sometimes the last thing you feel like is another engagement with humans – especially one that demands reflection and negotiations.
> (*Field Note 3rd February 2010*)

Ethnography involves interacting with people not just on a short term basis but in the more messy process of building interpersonal relationships. To quote Amanda Coffey "the path between familiarity and strangeness; knowledge and ignorance; intimacy and distance is far from straightforward" (1999:22). Navigating this path requires emotional work; increasingly I realized the important of conceptualising the term „in the field" as a social and psychological space rather than a territorial location. Coffey states that this social interaction "establishes fieldwork as a form of personal identity work" (1999:40). This assessment is correct but the focus on the researcher"s journey does require careful consideration. Firstly, it is important not to lose sight that the impacts of interactions are not unidirectional. Participants too can be profoundly affected by ethnographic encounters. One of my interviews was with Jabulani, an outgoing twenty year old, who since recently losing his mother to AIDS was now living alone (*Interview with Jabulani 1st April 2008*). His interview was less

about himself and more a moving and fascinating account of the vital role she played in this urban space and in his life. Jabulani's obvious grief and sense of loneliness was distressing and my initial reaction was to try and help by giving advice, but I had to remind myself that I am not a trained psychologist. In the end I sympathised but mostly just listened to his story. After the interview he told me that he had not spoken to anyone about his mother in this way and that he thought it helped him to do so. At the time I felt happy to have helped in this small way, but a few months later I learnt that he had tried to commit suicide. I worried whether the interview had brought up too many emotions without offering him support on how to deal with them. Thankfully he now appears much happier; he started studying and moved in with his father (although this relationship has its tensions). This experience was a stark reminder of the powerful nature of ethnographic work where both participant and researcher are challenged through personal interaction. In short it taught me not to be arrogant or naive enough to believe that all research engagements for participants are beneficial, and started me on a process of continuous self-reflection on the ethics of doing ethnography research. It was also a reminder on how memories and personal narratives are integral parts of how people view themselves and their environment, and therefore demands respect and sensitivity. As Adler and McAdams explain,

> [l]ife stories weave together the reconstructed past, the perceived present, and the anticipated future in an effort to provide the self with a feeling of purpose and unity. By explaining how a person has come to be who he or she is over time, internalized life stories function to reinforce a sense of *diachronic integration* in personal experience (2007:97, emphasis in original).

The possibilities for disruption of this personal narrative or indeed the offered space to re-conceptualise life stories through their telling within the research process are areas insufficiently dealt with in most methodology texts.

Secondly, whilst acknowledging that writing the self into the research plays an important role in subverting some of the problematic "positivist ethic of detachment" (Brewer, 2000:69), it can also become an empty ritual that offers little to the analysis. Certainly I am not advocating censoring the researcher's social identities and performance or portraying it as being irrelevant. However, as shown in the previous

section the manner in which this is done demands criticality and epistemological consistency. It is worth recognising that the personal tensions and dilemmas of doing fieldwork, whilst at times important variables in the analysis, are also "rooted in relations with other, quite different people back home" (Beatty, 2010:430). Certainly when looking back even at the above passage from my field notes there were lots of home commitments, mostly unrelated to the research, that contributed to these feelings of distance and anxiety. Bourdieu (2003) argues that the researcher should "refer continually to his own experience" but not in the manner in which he perceives as "an explosion of narcissism sometimes verging on exhibitionism". Here is the exciting tension between ensuring that the *positionality*, to use a term favoured by Fay (1996:45), of the researcher forms part of the critical analysis, whilst continuing to focus on the dialectic of interactions with participants, rather than purely diary accounts.[22] What is clear is that ethnographic research, for both researcher and participants involves the reconstitution of social identities during interactions. For the ethnographer this "crafting of ethnographic selfhood in the process of fieldwork can be thought of as the establishment of a field identity or field role" (Coffey, 1999:23).

The Field Role

How researchers" perceived or appropriated identities shape, and are shaped by, interactions in the field was to some extent dealt with in the previous sub-section entitled *Thinking about the self*. Throughout the thesis the issue of identity fluidity and movement within, and between, myself and the people with whom I engage is raised. For example in how gender, race, and age interact and intersect to disrupt and re-affirm social identities, as well as enable and constrain specific interactions. This section focuses instead on the more strategic uses of social identities in my fieldwork, sometimes premeditated and at others only apparent with analytical hindsight. I include this more strategic ethnographic performance because it points to the possibilities of other emerging identities, besides those often discussed such

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[22] Of course auto-ethnographies and indeed autobiographies intentionally used as methodological tools can in themselves produce valuable insights into the social processes and structures negotiated by individuals and groups. For example Dalton Conley"s book *Honky* gives a detailed autobiographical breakdown of the socialization of racial identity; in his words "learning race is like learning a language. First we try mouthing all the sounds. Then we learn which are not words and which have meaning to the people around us" (2000:37).

as race and gender, and the roles they play in the dynamic process of identity making during research.

Identities can be used to build affiliation and trust in ethnographies, for example in my experience motherhood often established a feeling of shared experience when speaking to women who were also mothers.[23] On both occasions I had been away from Albert Park for an extended period of two weeks or so, I brought my son with me to touch base with Maya and other participants (*Field Note 22nd June 2010* and *Field Note 4th July 2009*). His presence always broke the ice after these absences; there is a part of me that feels a little guilty at using my son as a prop in this way, but perhaps as Coffey (1999:26) points out "it is neither helpful nor accurate to treat these processes as cynical enactments of appropriate field roles to acquire rich ethnographic data". Attempting to be liked by your participants and building commonalities that enable access to participants, or induce more open conversations is a necessary part of any ethnography. Indeed that I was happy to bring my child into the environment may in itself been received as a gesture of trust by some participants.

Whilst in many ways I opened up to various participants, sometimes in personal accounts, I also downplayed aspects of myself so as not to accentuate differences between us. This was particularly so in terms of economic class and the social capital associated with the middle-class. In terms of professions participants included amongst others a small shop owner, a lifeguard, flat supervisors, a manager completing her masters, a security guard, community activists (largely unpaid), a retired laundrymat owner, a retired harbour worker, and people who survived on various temporary employment periods. In short, they would most likely be classified as working to middle class. Whilst some participants may have earned an equivalent to or more than myself, at this stage a PhD student working part-time, very few had the financial security afforded by my house in the suburbs, my family, my car and a doctorate on the way. The discord between these class identities was in many ways the most acute in my experience. Almost instinctually I omitted social

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[23] See Coffey (1999:72) for a look at how other female ethnographers have also found pregnancy and motherhood beneficial field roles.

cues that spoke to my class identity, and whilst never outright fabricating played up aspects such as being a struggling student with part time work, in what I now realize was an attempt at class solidarity (*Field Note 31st March 2010* and *Field Note 6th May 2010*). For Brewer "harmless „white lies" can sometimes be employed where they assist in data collection or in establishing a fieldwork role" (2000:97) although these omissions always carry a risk of discovery.

More telling was my own discomfort when this performance slipped and class differences became glaringly apparent. For example on a morning when one of Maya"s visitors asked me about my fold up chair:

> When Maya took out my chair he commented that it was so nice and it is expensive he saw it in *Mr Price* [*a well-known chain store that offers both budget and expensive household goods*]. He asked "how much" and I said I didn"t know that I had brought it a few years ago, he said "about R150" – which seems expensive to me now. I always feel slightly embarrassed by my financial status in Albert Park; I don"t want to appear frivolous with money.
> (*Field Note 15th July 2010*)

Similarly, when Zinhle a long-time resident and community activist in the area tells me that the high fee for the clinic down the road is the reason it is so empty:

> I mention that R100 is expensive as I pay R150 for a full check-up with my doctor at a private facility; Zinhle raises her eyebrows and chuckles. I immediately regret this statement as I suddenly feel very class conscious and hope they don"t think I am flaunting my financial position.
> (*Field Note 31st March 2010*)

Access to efficient health care is hugely unequal in South Africa, with a dual structure of a struggling and under resourced public sector and a well-stocked private sector only accessible through expensive health insurance. That economic income acts as gatekeeper to the fundamental human right to health care is often seen as "nested in the dualist structure of the South African health system, with disparities in the public-private sector and the nature of the interface, or lack thereof, serving as major impediments to an equitable and sustainable health system" (Botha, 2008:x). Symbolically then being able to access private facilities places an individual firmly in the upper middle class.

One of the explanations why class identities, for lack of a better term, became an identity under construction is that various participants often made mention of wealth and economic status as social differentiators. Referring back to the experience of Priscilla retrieving her money from the sheriff's office, she herself focused her anger through a class lens by telling me that what really angered her was how people with money would still rob poor people of their last cent (*Field Note 26th May 2010*). Maya too, whilst perhaps not in exact terminology, is well versed in Marxist philosophy and the plight of the exploited working class. Years ago when the factory she was working in closed down it was her union that helped her get her last salary (*Field Note 8th July 2010*), and she always supported civil servant strikes for wages and better working conditions, such as the large strike by municipal street cleaners just before the 2010 world cup (*Field Note 15th April 2010*). That class plays an increasingly important identifier as both social difference and commonality is not a new point of analysis in South Africa. As Seekings (2008:6) suggests of people living in the country "increasingly, they are likely to employ class identities (working class, middle class, poor)". Faced with the discord between state rhetoric that promises to bridge economic and social inequalities, and the lived realities of growing inequality in urban areas, viewed as less about race than income (Boraine et al, 2006:260), it is arguable that forms of solidarity may well be built in relation to class positions. Commenting on their 2005 longitudinal data set the South African Social Attitudes 2nd Report (2010:22) carried out by the Human Science Research Council state that amongst all participants "unemployment is either the most or the second most frequently mentioned priority issue". Class then and the economic, social and symbolic capital encapsulated within it, increasingly registers as an important social identity and ideology through which South Africans mediate their interactions with each other.

It is also important to acknowledge that my self-consciousness around my economic status in relation to that of the majority of participants may stem from growing up in a working class neighbourhood under apartheid, albeit reserved for „whites" only, and having a father in the trade unions. Since a young age I too have been familiar with the language of frustration and contempt for the middle and upper class in the face of glaring social inequality. Reconciling and problematising the disjuncture between these socialised norms and my current economic position is part of a more personal

Kira Erwin

narrative. However, negotiating class identities is not race free in South Africa. For example, under apartheid "[d]iscriminatory education and privileged family backgrounds provided white children with the advantages of class, such that explicit racial discrimination in the labour market became unnecessary" (Seekings, 2008:4). Regardless of my personal narrative, being seen as „white" by many of the participants assumes class privilege, an association rooted in the unequal structures of racialised capitalism. Bearing in mind the increasing social distinction related to class argued above, it is possible that downplaying my economic position was an instinctual attempt to build commonalities through disrupting a stereotypical reading of „whiteness", particularly since class solidarity is something I could draw on from my past. How race and class intersect is complex to say the least. In my conversation with Alfred the retired harbour worker he tries to get his head around what these identities mean in his interactions with others. He is a music lover and here he laments the lack of live music venues in the city:

> He nods and says there aren't any places like that for us in the city any more, except that place [*he battles to remember the name – he is talking about the Zulu Lounge*]... at the Playhouse where they play Jazz, but it is very "African Jazz". He says that you can feel the vibe when you walk in there; "because you are white you are not welcome". I ask him how he feels here in Albert Park, he emphatically states that here it is completely fine. By way of an explanation he says that the "Africans at the Playhouse are *nouveaux riches*" and so have an arrogant attitude, they are very materialist and interested in "their bling bling" and entertaining girls. He talks about how he was chatting to "a 25 year old African guy" he knows who goes there and also says the patrons are very materialistic, Alfred's friend goes there just to watch how they act even though the beer is expensive. But Alfred says "your everyday ordinary African, if I can say that [*appearing to battle to find the language he wants to use here*], is not like that". For example he says that at the bar he visits where everyone is working class there are "Africans, indians, coloureds and a few whites and everything is fine". I suggest that maybe class is a factor here, Alfred looks a little confused as if he is not sure what I mean – but then suggests that perhaps "once you reach a certain income bracket you get affected by a different psychology" one that brings different types of problems. (*Field Note 29th October 2009*)

That race can mean everything, and nothing, in this description appears to relate to the economic status of a specific environment – an expensive jazz club versus the neighbourhood bar. It also illustrates how race is used as an explanatory tool for feelings of exclusion, and yet later used by Alfred as an example of unity when working class people overlook these differences to have a beer together.

These conflicting yet related uses of race reflect the rather schizophrenic approaches within the state discourse; where non-racialism and multiracialism are used as a metaphor for reconciliation (these conflicts are analysed further in *Chapter 5*). Perhaps, this disjuncture lies in the historical conception of, as well as a current absence of, definition for non-racialism. For Maré, when analysing the use of the term in the move to democracy, this ambiguity meant that ",non-racialism" was the commitment, but races remained the building blocks, not only of apartheid society, but also of resistance organization and the theoretical and strategic thinking that informed analysis and practice within attempts to restructure society" (2003:21). Current political discourses continue to link race, identity and economic inequality, either as a defensive ploy against criticisms or as supporting evidence for the use of racial categories in state policy (Bentley and Habib, 2008:9).

Of course racial inequality should be acknowledged and addressed, but when taken on as a *single cause* on both a macro and micro level it can have dangerous repercussions. For example on a macro scale Sue Parnell argues that "the oversimplified perception that racial inequality is the exclusive or even key driver of social polarisation in cities has masked other critical lines of social and economic cleavage and will hinder implementation of any serious urban development programme" (2005:20). Similarly municipal policies in a bid for transformation that focus too extensively on race may well overlook how intertwined class identities influence social relations between urban residents. Academic analysis of class relations and structures have, in the past, paid little analytic attention to problematising race as a given category – often deploying a form of "race-bloc" thinking of exploiters and the exploited within a leftist framework (Maré, 2003:20). Indeed understanding how race and class intersect, support and importantly diverge in everyday lived experiences remains an under researched area (Seekings, 2008:22).

Ethnographical research, through its required engagement with the complex relations that mediate everyday experiences, as well as the material structures that inform and are informed by these mediations, provides a useful tool for studying the nexus of social identities. It is in these dialectical spaces of intersections and divergence that research may illuminate new ways of conceptualizing togetherness and separation; openness to these intricacies means that at its best findings may assist in creating more positive forms of interactions and equality, whilst preventing the valorisation and entrenchment of new and old forms of difference in society.

Some Reflections

Analysis in these spaces of intersection however, is not always an easy task. Consciously opening research to the methodology suggested in this chapter does present its own complexities. Everyday interactions and relationships are built on a myriad of social identities, in dialogue with multiple economic, political, cultural and social structures. Considering this in the practice of research can bring with it a sense of overwhelming chaos when contrasted against the demands of a bounded thesis requiring specific findings. More explicitly in the face of the rich, and sometimes wide reaching, ethnographic data it means making decisions about which findings fall directly under the present research focus, and which may need thematic development for future publication. Ultimately, as in all research, some of the data remains with the participants and researcher for now – snippets and suggestions, which given more time or follow up research may have revealed in depth findings on how people perceive themselves and others in this urban space. I would like to draw the reader‟s attention to one such „snippet‟; that of gender. Whilst gender does not in this thesis form a main area of analysis it is of course implicit in discussions about social identities (Morrell, 2001:7 and Essed, 2001:500). Besides gender playing into my own field role other moments reiterated for me how gender remains an under-politicised issue in South Africa. Whilst participants hinted at the pain of absentee fathers (*Interview with Jabulani 1ˢᵗ April 2008* and *Field Note 22ⁿᵈ June 2010*), or confided that their younger female siblings are kept inside after dark for fear of their safety (*Interview with Jade 19ᵗʰ August 2010*), one particular issue continues to stick with me. During my interview with Priscilla she told me how she was convinced that

the Metro Police were making a positive difference in the area, she used the following as an example of this:

> Because I remember one time I had a problem with my building, boys were fighting and the Metro Police was right outside the building and I called them and they went up to those guys and then they locked them up in Broad Street [*The South African Police Service station*]. So that I've proved that they work hand to hand. They didn't say no you called the police, they took actually took these boys to lock them up in the Police Station.
>
> (*Interview with Priscilla 11ᵗʰ May 2010*)

After thanking Priscilla for the interview I got up to leave but noticed that her front security gate was locked and mentioned this to her. Priscilla chuckled and said she does that because when the husband and wife on the floor above her fight the wife always runs down to her flat for protection. She said that since I was there she locked it so that she would know that she should rather run down to the security guard. Priscilla then told me that it is better if she does that as the security guard is a man so he can tell the husband that he should not hit his wife, or he will hit him. I asked if this happened often, yes she said and laughed. What I find disconcerting about this is that whilst Priscilla is willing to call the police to intervene in a physical confrontation between two men, she is not willing to do the same for a case of domestic violence. Priscilla was not alone in this response. I was told by two residents in the block of flats we stayed in that they suspected that the man who lived in my flat before we moved in hit his girlfriend, as there was often screaming and crying coming from the flat and in the corridors outside. Again no one intervened by calling the police instead it was framed as unacceptable because these „arguments" were displayed in public and created unwanted noise. Domestic violence then is no secret, indeed in both these incidents it occurs in plain sight of other residents, but whilst frowned upon it is still accepted as a personal matter which does not warrant serious intervention.

Reflecting on the choice of questions I used to initiate discussions, questions anchored in people"s experiences of living in the area of Albert Park, meant that many of the conversations were directed within a spatial context. As will become evident in the findings on place and identity in *Chapter 4*, complex social identities

linked to place are used as tools to explain change in the area. I would still argue that for the specific research questions outlined in this project this was a valuable and resourceful starting point for collecting data. Yet, in hindsight I think it may have also sidelined personal issues of gender for some of the participants. For example, in an interview with one woman, which provided rich data on explanations for neighbourhood change, she only felt comfortable at the end of the interview and, importantly, once she had made sure that the tape recorder had been switched off, to tell me that she moved into Albert Park because her husband was abusive and had pulled a gun on her (for this reason I will not cite the interview). These moments of gendered violence and tensions that laced the data call for more attention than is possible to give them in this thesis. In the same way that race thinking forms a banal acceptance of race and difference, some of the data suggested that gender and all the inequalities attached to these identities has also become a normalised proposition that attracts little criticality in everyday experiences. Indeed under the transition to democracy the move towards everyday social justice and equality in terms of gender has been unacceptably slow (Morrell, 2001:33). I find this deeply troubling, and research that investigates and raises awareness of this dangerous banality should most certainly be encouraged.

The following chapters however focus on the core findings of this doctoral study, using the epistemological lens argued for in this chapter; they grapple with the issues of housing and security and the themes of exclusion and belonging, place, race and national identities. Importantly these findings occur in dialogue with a specific locality, Albert Park – it is to this physical space that the thesis now turns, both to contextualise the findings for the reader and to continue some of the descriptions of what it means to live in this urban space.

Chapter 3: Albert Park – a Contested Space

The previous two chapters serve to situate this doctoral research within the broader theoretical and practical debates of researching social identities, more particularly around some of the research dilemmas and theoretical insights these debates hold for investigating the social construct of race. *Chapter 2*, drawing on the research data, has introduced some of the identities under construction within Albert Park; the thesis now extends the focus on the findings and reflections of the research. However, in moving into the specifics, although never losing sight of the broader social context, it is valuable to contextualise the space of Albert Park itself. This chapter for the most part is more descriptive explanation than analytical finding, but it serves two important functions. Firstly, it introduces the urban space of Albert Park to the reader, its locality, imagery and social relations. Secondly, it enables a critical discussion of people"s experiences of housing and security of tenure in Albert Park, a prominent social issue in the area. These more tangible experiences are constrained by the structural makeup of the capitalist property market, rather than exclusively social identities. Yet, as different actors navigate these decaying high-rise buildings and their encompassing capitalist framework, various social relations are reshaped and configured.

The inner city area known as Albert Park is situated south-east of the Durban CBD (Mohamed and Naidoo, 2001) – *Map 2* below indicates its location. It is primarily a residential area characterised by medium and high-rise buildings, with small formal and informal businesses operating at pavement levels. Albert Park, like many inner city residential areas in South Africa is generally perceived to suffer from urban decay, which "in turn leads to depressed rentals and degraded living environments" (Web 4). As in all South African cities apartheid structures intrinsically linked urban space and race. The city centre and the residential units within Albert Park were reserved under the Group Areas Act of 1950, for „white" residents, and the large park was seen as a leisure and entertainment destination. However, changing property markets in the late 1980s meant that even under the Group Areas Act landlords

started to accept people classified as „disqualified" in order to alleviate the oversupply of flats to rent in the area. Whilst this rapid transition saw an exodus by some „white" families, leaving behind a „white" pensioner population (Mohamed and Naidoo, 2001), Albert Park was also represented at times as the city equivalent of a new and integrated nation (Bouillon, 2002:23). Today Albert Park continues to inspire dual imagery as a place of tension and of hope for a post-apartheid city. This heterogeneous urban space has seen a new influx of immigrants from diverse African countries. Coupled with an increase in crime and degeneration of many of the high-rise blocks of flats, as well as a large number of bars and drinking holes in the area – none of which are necessarily a result of this new movement of people – it has earned a certain notoriety as a dangerous neighbourhood.
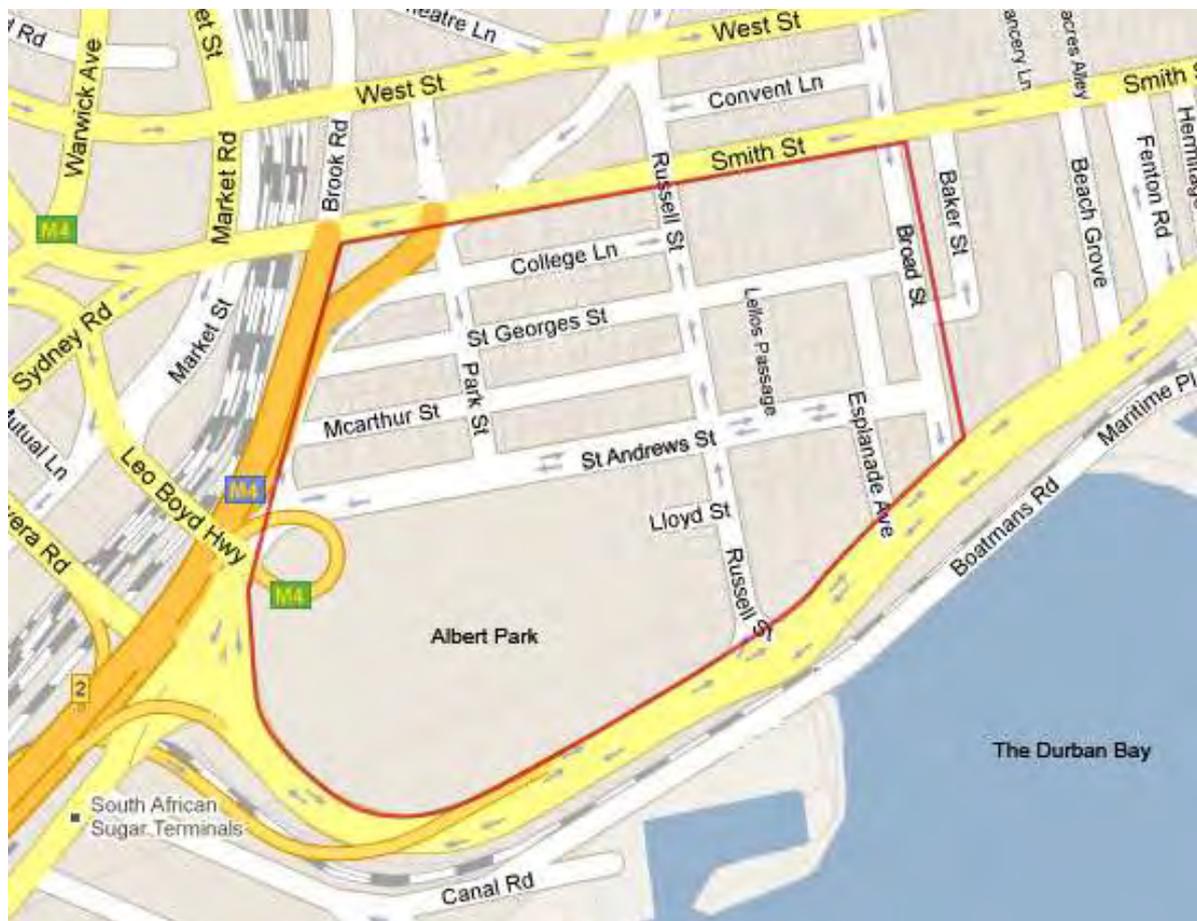
Map 2: red area indicates approximate borders of Albert Park
(Source: Google Maps 2011 – additional labels by author)

For those who have little first-hand knowledge of the area this picture of urban decay, crime and social tension creates a deceptively simplistic and narrow view of a heterogeneous space. It neglects to recognise that Albert Park has a wide spectrum

of buildings, some of which are under legal administration due to lack of maintenance and a backlog of levies, and others well maintained blocks where expensive cars fill the off road parking bays. Building decay, crime, and social tensions are part of this story; but focusing on this single narrative, as the media has chosen to do, fails to recognise the diversity of infrastructure as well as the strategies residents and other visitors use to negotiate differences and commonalties within the space.

Albert Park – A World of Difference in a Street Block

Pictures 1 and 2 – Cnr Broad and St. Andrews Street (by author 27th January 2008)

If you stand on a sunny day at the corner of Broad Street and St. Andrews Street and look up towards the park, you would be forgiven for thinking you were looking at a postcard of Miami (see *Pictures 1 and 2*). Outlined against the blue sky tall palm trees line the middle island of the wide street providing perfect symmetry for the 1950s high-rise flats, some of which have beautifully maintained art-deco designs and newly paved sidewalks. There are also a number of well renovated historic buildings such as the Diakonia Centre that houses numerous NGOs, the privately run but city supported Durban Music School, and a small museum that "provides a

glimpse into the lifestyle of the upper middle class settlers" of the late 1800s and early 1900s (see the Old Museum House link at http://www.durban-history.co.za). This cluster of buildings found on one end of St. Andrews Street has been identified by the Inner City Thekwini Regeneration and Urban Management Programme (*iTrump*) as a cultural precinct. It was the first area in Albert Park to receive a cosmetic facelift – in this case the palm trees, lighting and new paving. More recently iTrump contributed R850 000 towards an outdoor stage for the music school, which is used for a yearly street music festival sponsored by one of the corporate cell phone giants Cell C (*Interview with iTrump officials* 21th July 2010).

A few small shops can be found on the pavement level; a vegetable and fruit store, a grocery shop, a recently opened internet café, a large Kentucky Fried Chicken. As you cross over Russell Street and continue down towards the park itself, the residential blocks continue although some start to look a little neglected as paint work flakes and windows are missing. Here there is a small launderette and opposite the park itself an open lot has been turned into an outside mechanics workshop. Up until recently if you walked past the park you would have seen a large group of homeless men sleeping or sitting talking in circles, clothes drying on the trees and small fires to keep warm and cook. Most people in this study saw these men, who collectively were called foreigners, as dangerous and criminal. Since the 2010 World Cup however the park is often deserted, although the small children"s playground is much busier since these men have left. The Metro police, who have refurbished the dilapidated bowling club next to the park and turned it into their city headquarters, have systematically removed these men from the park. With no place else to go they now live beside the railway lines about 500 metres away from the park entrance, where Albert Park intersects with the large freeways (*Pictures 3 and 4*), and during the day congregate on a patch of grass on the side of Williams Road nearby. Directly opposite the park entrance is the last block on St. Andrews Street, *Ana Capri*. *Ana Capri* is an infamous name in Albert Park, often held up as an example of what happens when a block of flats goes „bad", the ten story block has had no lifts for 14 years (*The Daily News* 5th November 2010) and residents carry

water up to their units in buckets from the standpipe on the ground floor.[24] The block is now under legal administration due to health and safety risks and a large backlog of levies and municipal rates (*The Daily News* 5th November 2010, and *Interview with Legal Administrator 4th August 2010*).

Picture 3 – Rail lines by Alexander Street Taxi Rank
(by iTrump official 22nd July 2010 – permission to use kindly granted by iTrump)

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[24] For a small fee Mr. Zuma will carry your water from the standpipe to your door. Recently he was injured when "a 5 kg metal step broke off the rusty fire escape" in *Ana Capri* and hit him on the head (*The Daily News* 5th November 2010).
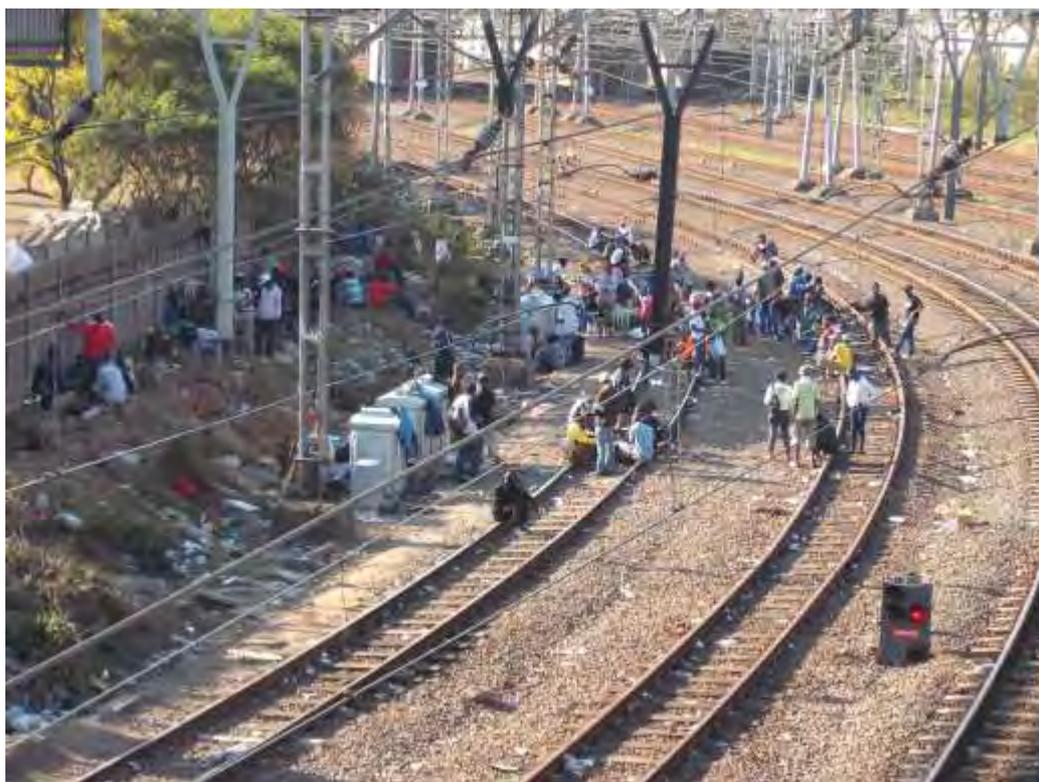
Picture 4 – Rail lines by Alexander Street Taxi Rank
(by iTrump official 22nd July 2010 – Permission to use kindly granted by iTrump)

Leaving *Ana Capri* to turn down Park Lane and cross over McArthur Street and then into St. Georges Street there has been little if any city regeneration or attempts to beautify the road (see *Pictures 5, 6 and 7*). On many days bags of garbage pile up on the sides of the road and the street cleaners seen often in St. Andrews Street seem to have given St. Georges Street a wide detour[25]. Almost all the blocks of flats have pavement shops of various types and on some of the doors and windows rooms for short term rent and daily rates are advertised. Closer to the corner of Russell Street at least three large drinking taverns are open till late in the night.

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[25] During the interview with iTrump officials I mentioned this and was told that the municipal street cleaners were scared to go in and clean St. Georges Street especially in the evening when the job was scheduled (*Interview with iTrump officials 21*th *July 2010*). In the interview with the Metro Police officer he confirmed that the metro police now provide an escort for these cleaners (*Interview with Metro Police Officer, 30*th *August 2010*).

Picture 5 – St. Georges Street (by author 27th January 2008)

Picture 6 – St. Georges Street (by author 27th January 2008)

Picture 7 – St. Georges Street (by author 27th January 2008)

For many residents living in the Albert Park area there is a spatial and social distinction between what is loosely known as the St. Andrews Street side and the St. Georges Street side of Albert Park. Earmarked for urban regeneration by the municipality Albert Park is many things to many people, a contested space that resists a singular reimagining.

Imagining Cities

Cities and the identities they shape, and are shaped by, have long formed part of the sociological imagination. Dynamic, heterogeneous meeting places where multiple lives and stories intertwine, cities invoke a dual metaphor. Present relations and social structures are interpreted to visualise cities as future utopias of development and sophistication, or as dystopian nightmare with uncontrollable overcrowding, urban slums, and oppressive states. In much of the urban literature South African cities walk a tightrope between these extremes. They are at times seen as salvation from the apartheid past, such as when Jeremy Grest (2002:38) suggests that "South Africa"s cities are, in many ways, the strategic arenas for development of a new citizenship based on a new social contract between citizens and the state"; and

typecast into what Achille Mbembe and Sarah Nuttall call "an emblem of irresolvable crisis" (2008:5). Indeed treading between and outside of these binaries means addressing the "challenges of writing about the politics of hope in Africa without losing sight of its severe sufferings" (Appadurai and Breckenridge, 2008:352).

Of course South African cities are also of interest because they were, and in certain ways remain, concrete manifestations of apartheid segregation policies (Beall, 1997:4). If we are to agree with Maharaj that "the city is an embodiment of the political, economic and social structure of society" (2002:171) then urban spaces are important locations of investigation to explore changing social relations and identities in South Africa. The structural and metaphoric frameworks cities provide enable and restrain interactions and lived experiences in unpredictable and unique ways (Simone, 2008:69) making it an opportune location for this study.

Narrowing the focus to the inner-city area of Durban, known as Albert Park, is partly driven by these broader theoretical imaginings of city spaces but also by more localised and personal motives. Albert Park holds childhood memories, particularly of the park itself, as my family lived in one of the buildings in St. Georges Street in the early 1980s. Growing up we frequented the *Tropicale* a popular restaurant in the park as a family treat, and my nostalgia of this area mirrors some of those of participants in my study. Of course nostalgia, as a static and romanticised representation of the past, when inevitably shattered by different ways of being in the present, can fuel discriminatory discourse and the construction of a faceless "other" at whose door the blame for change can be placed. Cities are an ebb and flow of people, languages, buildings, images and roads; always fluid, shifting and "reconfigured" (Yeoh, 2006:150). A personal desire to enquire and investigate how changes over time shape people in the area, as well as how people act to shape this city space motivates this study. That Albert Park has a history of contestations over race and residency (Maharaj, 2002:177), and has at various times been portrayed as a harmonious integrated space (Bouillon, 2002:23), resonates with the aims of this study to explore how and why racial identities are reinforced and/or challenged. Albert Park, as will be contextualised in this chapter, is also a contested space in terms of more recent types of identities, among them those constructed from national discourses of citizenship and, as will be discussed in the following chapter, identities

that police belonging and place. In short the multiplicity of social identities in this dynamic urban space makes it an opportune and fascinating research location in which to investigate how emergent identities are either transcending or reifying the narrow racial categories carried forward into post-apartheid South Africa.

Place/Space

> What gives a place its specificity is not some long internalized history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus (Massey, 1994:154).

Describing a particular place as a designated area that can be defined by boundaries drawn on a map or the types of buildings and infrastructure found within this perimeter, as was done in the beginning of this chapter, does little by way of offering a description or explanation of the social relations that give localities their specificity. For many urban theorists these social relations are better encapsulated by the concept of *space*. Michel de Certeau (1984:117) succinctly illustrates this point when he talks of "space as a practiced place": Albert Park is more than its infrastructure and locality; it is brought to life by, reshaped and re-imagined through the countless interactions of people. Infrastructure, buildings and other material aspects of an urban environment are *also* important considerations; indeed Ronald Sundstrom (2003:90) argues that it is not only people"s actions and interactions that should constitute a spatial analysis but that we should acknowledge how "place inhabits us". This project rather than attempting to separate various theoretical notions of difference between *place* and *space*, takes as a point of departure the notion that any understanding of the social needs to consider the matrix of relations between people and people, and people and their material surroundings. Indeed material infrastructure can set parameters on human interactions; this may be illustrated by way of an example within Albert Park.

Most of the high-rise buildings built in the 1950s still have their original lifts. They tend to be very small iron boxes with no obvious sign of ventilation, possibly some

outdated laminated wallpaper, inside which even three people feels like a crowd. The 1950s lift is more holding cell than the waiting room atmosphere of contemporary lifts. Here there are no design distractions, no mirrors, plush carpets or brightly lit digital numbers that fade and glow to soften the awkward silence of sharing a lift with strangers. Instead riding cheek to jowl with other people inside these iron boxes demands some form of engagement, else the groans and creaks of these 60 year old machines intensifies the silence between their living passengers to a deafening level. In some ways these forced lift conversations create possibilities for getting to know people in your block and impact on feelings of neighbourly solidarity and security. Certainly this, in my experience, meant that the brief wave given to neighbours in the suburbs was extended to more meaningful exchanges. At other times the confinement creates an unwanted proximity with strangers. Such as the experience of having to get into a confined space with a man who had made sexist comments about my body whilst we were both waiting for the lift (*Field Note 13*[th] *November 2007*). The gendered identities, amongst others, that framed and informed this interaction exist exogenous to the lift, but the lift‟s material structure and the closeness of bodies it demands creates heightened awareness of these identities. Indeed as was raised by Jamal, one of the participants, in the case of race thinking it can also create spaces for discriminatory behaviour. Jamal was born in the Congo but grew up and lived as an adult in both the Congo and France; in South Africa he runs a small business assisting foreign nationals and refugees with numerous bureaucratic processes for gaining access to aid and/or employment. Talking about how his receptionist, a woman whom he describes as „white‟ responded to travelling in the lifts to get to the offices – housed in a residential block converted into small business units – he explains:

> Our receptionist also had this problem. She connected well with me but she
> could not connect with people, if we are in the lift ok, but if she is in the lift and
> the other guys are black, she gets out. Why is that, I changed it for her I said
> no, because why are you insulting that man. If they get in then they get in. I
> don‟t see myself different from them, but I don‟t see myself different from you.
> (*Interview with Jamal 1*[st] *July 2010*)

Interestingly as I arrived to interview Jamal I decided to take the stairs to the 4th floor when faced with the very small and shabby looking lift he refers to above. Even

though I was not confronted with sharing this lift with another person the material presence of a building that looks like it needs serious maintenance hints at not just sharing but being stuck in this confined space with a stranger. This does not exempt nor justify the discriminatory actions of Jamal"s receptionist, but it does suggest that more than one identity may have been at play during these incidents, more than likely it is not just that she classifies the other person as „black" but that she sees him as a „black" *man* that makes her remove herself from the lift. Jamal describes her as having a "problem" – his analysis may be correct but her problem is one of intertwined identities of gender and race. Vron Ware"s states, "[t]he history of ideas and associations governing this particular couplet – black man and white women – mean that the encounter cannot easily be stripped of its racialized and mythologized meaning" (1992b:132). In addition it is likely that her response is also informed by gender since "violence is bound up with male identity in many different cultural contexts in contemporary South Africa" (Cock, 2001:47). In the confined spaces of small lifts, where the bodies of strangers touch, these mythologies intensify to shape present actions; illustrating that, to quote Sundstrom (2003:90), "in our habitation of places there is a looping effect between our identification of places and our identities". Many of the complexities of this looping effect are unpacked further in the analysis of the research findings, for now these examples point to the necessity of offering some overall context of the space in which the social interactions of Albert Park are enacted, the rest of this chapter aims to do just this.

Contested Space – Moving Out of Apartheid

As mentioned previously up until the late 1970s Albert Park, the largest residential area in the CBD, was considered a prestigious „white" city location. By the late 1980s a number of economic and social factors drove a fairly rapid transformation of Albert Park into one of the first integrated city spaces.[26] In a very similar pattern to that analysed in other inner city areas such as Hillbrow in Johannesburg, initially the „disqualified" people moving into Albert Park were spoken about as „indian" and „coloured" only. After the removal of influx control in April 1986 people classified as

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[26] Warwick Triangle on the border of the Durban CBD was also rapidly transforming during this time (Maharaj, 1999)

„black" are reported as moving into Hillbrow in significant numbers (Morris, 1999:53). Likewise in Albert Park newspapers only start referring to „black" residents towards the end of 1988, after which the term „black" appears almost exclusively to describe the new residents [see *The Daily News* 16th June 1988]. Most of these new residents classified as „black", „indian" and „coloured" belonged to an emerging professional class for whom the reasonable rentals in Albert Park and close proximity to the CBD brought numerous conveniences. This transformation was primarily driven by a lack of housing in designated „non-white" areas and an abundance of empty flats for rent in Albert Park.[27] For example in 1987 *The Natal Mercury* (19th June 1987) reported a housing waiting list of five and seven years respectively for „indians" and „coloureds". As apartheid"s racialised capitalism started to crumple flat owners faced a rapidly dwindling „white" rental demand for their properties and, often fronted by a „white" person signing the lease agreement, began securing rental through tenants classified under the Group Areas Act (GAA) as „disqualified" from living in „white" areas. Indeed the problem of insufficient housing developments by the apartheid government was used as an argument against the Group Areas Act even by supporters of apartheid since it was viewed as an obstacle to free property markets, albeit in a racialised framework.[28] Often supporters of segregation attempted to differentiate between people who legitimately could not find housing in their own areas due to government inefficiencies and those that simply "flaunted" the law (*Daily News* 18th June 1987). This transformation in large part appeared to happen without much initial conflict around racial integration from the residents.

However, in the late 1980s that began to change. The Department of Development and Planning put pressure on the flat owners that if any „disqualified" people were found leasing their flats they faced prosecution under the GAA and risked losing their properties (*The Daily News* 11th June 1987). What is interesting to note is the timeframe of the government"s attempts to enforce the GAA in different cities. For example in Hillbrow the tension around the GAA started in the late 1970s and

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[27] See Maharaj and Mpungose"s (1994) paper „The erosion of residential segregation in South Africa: the „greying" of Albert Park in Durban" for a more detailed analysis of this process.
[28] Alan Morris (1999) provides a detailed look at these discourses in his book *Bleakness and Light: Inner-City Transitions in Hillbrow, Johannesburg.*

continued till about 1987, after which whilst some antagonism from right wing groups continued, "by 1987 the government had more or less surrendered over implementing the Group Areas Act in Johannesburg" (Morris,1999:58). 1987, however, marks the beginning of government pressure on flat owners in Albert Park. Rather than conceding in all urban areas to integration the apartheid government, led by city officials in Durban, appears to have used some of the strategic lessons learnt from the Hillbrow case to resist integration in Albert Park. For example, in Hillbrow in 1983 due to a legal court case that decreed evicting a person from their dwelling was unjust the government shifted from "harassing individual tenants, the police started placing the onus for the enforcement of the Group Areas Act on the landlords" (Morris, 1999:41). Evictions by landlords were far harder to oppose legally and also deferred the negative publicity on to the flat owners rather than government officials. The Durban officials appear to have taken cognisance of this as in the first place they placed pressure on landlords to evict disqualified tenants or risk losing their property. For example in *The Daily News* on the 24th June 1987, Mr. Fourie the Director of the Department of Development and Planning who issued notices to landlords is reported as stating "we have not issued any notices to Indian and coloured families to leave their homes. We have issued notices only to the landlords". However, in 1988 the proposed amendment to the GAA which aimed to make evictions legal even without finding tenants other accommodation motivated members of the police Group Areas Act Unit to visit and serve notices on both landlords and tenants in Albert Park, stating that „illegal" tenants must be evicted (*The Post* 28th September – 1st October 1988).

These discriminatory evictions made Albert Park the centre of debate around the injustices of the Group Areas Act in the city of Durban. Responses ranged from racist statements urging segregation in order to preserve cleanliness and prestige of the area (*The Daily News* 25th March 1989), more muted suggestions for creating „free" or „open" areas (*The Natal Mercury* 5th June 1989) to calls for dismantling the Group Areas Act in Durban as a whole (*The Daily News* 29th June 1987). The response to this renewed enforcement of racist policy by the state had various effects on the social relations in the area. There are some reports that residents of all „races" took action against these evictions, and formed support networks for

families threatened with eviction, joined civil action groups[29] and protested against these unjust removals in community meetings (*The Post* 20th June 1987).   However, not all Albert Park residents welcomed this change, and many „black‟ tenants suffered racist eviction and discrimination by both property owners and the government.   Although these evictions continued sporadically up until 1990 Albert Park had by then unofficially become one of the first integrated city spaces, at times represented as a city equivalent of the „rainbow nation‟ (Bouillon, 2002:23). Few people however refer to Albert Park in this manner today.

By 1989 *The Natal Mercury* (30th March 1989) published a report warning that Albert Park would turn into Durban‟s first "ghetto"; it bemoaned the state of the streets, buildings and illegal activities that plagued the area.   Contrasted against its former glory as a „nice neighbourhood‟, this article in many respects sets the tone for the majority of newspaper reports on the area up until the present day. Although no longer obviously discussed in blatantly racial terms,[30] the degeneration of the area into a seedy inner city neighbourhood with open drunkenness and prostitution (*The Daily News* 19th April 1989) are attributed to changes in the population and at times to purposeful city neglect because of these changes.   By 1998 the press compares Albert Park to the inner-city of Hillbrow in Johannesburg, an area by this time notorious for crime, drugs and illegal activities (*The Sunday Tribune* 24th May 1998). Here the changes experienced in Albert Park are pictured as part of a wider rot of the inner-cities in South Africa.   Tensions around who belongs and who does not in Albert Park arose again in 1999 when the city proposed to move a homeless shelter called The Ark, originally located in Point Road, to one of the buildings in Albert Park. The Ark was served an eviction notice after the dockside area of Point Road, in which it was located, was earmarked for upmarket property development and a marine theme park (City Press 18th January 2004).   This new influx of what was seen as mostly „white‟ homeless people into Albert Park was vetoed by property owners, residents, and eventually the ward councillor – albeit with various degrees of

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[29] The Durban Central Residents Association (now called the Organisation of Civil Rights) was instrumental in providing legal assistance to fight against these discriminatory and many times illegal evictions.
[30] Although the use of the American word "ghetto" in the newspaper article suggests racialised undertones. As Roger Sundstrom argues "today, the notion of the ghetto and barrio are an everyday part of American racial politics" (2003:86).

veracity – as it was portrayed as contributing to further degeneration of an area that was already battling urban decay (Mohamed, 1999:2). During these tensions around what could be read as class identities in Albert Park race was mobilised in interesting ways. Bouillon (2002:23) notes how the metaphor of a rainbow nation was

> formulated in the course of interactions between community representatives and officials and taken up later by the social impact study, that the community of Albert Park is a successful but fragile rainbow mix whose success should not be compromised by inconsiderate interference upsetting its delicate balance.

Here race as reconciliatory priority is used as an exclusionary tool. In many ways this mobilisation against people perceived as *outsiders* hints at some of the discourses of exclusion that were to arise later in 2009. The Ark was eventually moved outside of the city limits and in 2003 Albert Park was earmarked by the city for regeneration (*The Sunday Tribune* 31st August 2003). However, four years later news reports still described Albert Park as a violent area in which there were a disproportionate number of liquor outlets (*The Mercury* 21st May 2007). More recently Albert Park continues to make news for buildings „turned bad" and conflict between foreign nationals and locals living in the area. However urban decay and the social tensions around foreigners are interlinked, not because foreign nationals are causal factors in the decay but rather that they have become a group on which the blame for crime and unacceptable living conditions falls.

There is a stark contrast between a well-run block, with new paint work, under cover off road parking, a legitimate supervisor and prime harbour views; and a block with loose concrete spalling, no running water or lights, a self-appointed supervisor illegally drawing rent through intimidation, and views of the mounting piles of uncollected garbage in the courtyard. These contrasts appear to mirror the social inequalities of the country as a whole, indeed "cities are more unequal today than they were 10 years ago and many social and human development challenges have consequently been compounded" (Boraine et al, 2006:272). As a result descriptions and explanations of these local contrasts often make use of the wider national imagery of social difference. Commenting on the differences between St. Andrews

Street and the rest of Albert Park Sanele, a 26 year old lifeguard for the municipality, informed me that:

> We call from St. Andrews Street to that side we call it suburbs. From Russell to this side we call squatter camps. Because of the people who are staying there and the flats are clean that side. From this side the people they taking their clothes in the windows and everything, so it"s very bad you see, so that"s why we call that side the suburbs and this side the squatter camp.
> (*Interview with Sanele 5th March 2010*)

Sanele"s assessment of this divide hints at some of the social tensions in the area, when he suggests that different types of people are responsible for this discord in living environment. Whilst he does not name these people outright often when I was in conversation with residents and people who have varying relationships in the area, the term *foreigners* was used loosely to explain this shift. These xenophobic sentiments saturate even the political offices of the then Ward Councillor[31], who is currently awaiting trial for being involved in a gruesome mob attack in which three foreign nationals lost their lives (*The Daily News* 6th January 2009). There is mounting frustration around the continuously delayed court case and the councillor is of course innocent until proven guilty, yet his association with this speaks volumes about the extent of social tensions in this area. As will become evident in the following chapter the contested nature of „good" and „bad" residents is often more complex than simply referring to it as xenophobia; indeed other identities are also seen as problematic, for example that of people who are seen as belonging to the townships. Here various discourses of race, nationality, urban regeneration and decay intertwine to construct explanations for livelihood changes and shifting physical environments. These discourses build on and reconstitute each other rather than sit on a linear trajectory. For example whilst the racist rhetoric and phobias around racial mixing seen in the late 1980s and early 1990s are no longer used as overt explanations for urban decay, the contemporary constructions of those who belong and those who don"t, often use similar discriminatory strategies and language as those found under apartheid. Suggesting that the legacy of lived

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[31] Ward councillors are for the most part councillors "elected on a constituency basis as representatives of wards" (Low et al, 2007:254), although see Low et al (2007) for some interesting investigation into the informal politics of Ward and PR councillor in Durban.

experiences under a racist state has created what Maré (2007), drawing on Brian Fay's (1996:73) terminology, calls a *prior vocabulary* of race thinking, one easily mobilised and referenced to justify spaces of exclusion.

But these spaces of exclusion and exploitation are not only a result of identity politics. They are also informed by the material realities of living in a city, which has a severe housing problem as well as the daily experiences of living with crime. The capitalist structures of the property market creates a network of inequality between desperate and exploited tenants, absentee landlords, profiteering entrepreneurs, manipulative and dangerous tenants and managing agents (both legitimately employed and self-appointed), and exhausted city officials. Whilst this study aimed to explore whether ideas around race were challenged or reaffirmed by emergent identities in the area, the use of a flexible and open methodology (described in detail in the previous chapter) exposed one of the most pressing issue on the minds of most of the participants to be that of housing and security of tenure, and as will be discussed in *Chapter 4* crime.

Housing and Security of Tenure

Livelihoods related to housing and shelter are more directly associated with structural constraints such as income and property ownership, but as will become evident also entail negotiating various capitalist frameworks that inform legal occupation and opportunities for recourse. Housing and security of tenure do not necessarily construct social identities in themselves; for example an identity as a tenant versus an owner does not necessarily manifest since often tenants and owners may find themselves in very similar positions within a dysfunctional block. Yet these structures enable the mobilisation of existing social identities as explanatory mechanisms. Social identities offer readymade packages and accepted stereotypes through which to transfer blame onto groups of people: such as when one resident implies that „black" people "don't know how to live in flats" (*Field Note 24th February 2010*); or when a security guard explains that the noise and crime in St. Georges Street is because it is full of foreigners (*Field Note 3rd February 2010*); or when a supervisor bemoans that "it is always the young people, the young people

are the trouble makers" (*Field Note 24th February 2010*). In some cases the dysfunctional infrastructure and the possiblities of social relations it invites contributes to more positive identity formation, such as young people who wish to create youth devlopment groups to offer their peers an alternative to crime and drugs in the area (*Interview with Jade 19th August 2010, Interview with Sanele 5th March 2010* and *Interview with Jabulani 1st April 2008*). In all these cases identity formation is affected by the experiences of living in inner city buildings where infrastructure and facilities cannot provide a quality of life, these experiences are in sharp contrast to the idealised view of status and sophistication of city living (Bouillon, 2002). In short the fear of „bad buildings" informs interactions in this urban space for those who have to negotiate slum-lords, legal administrators, private banks, dodgy supervisors and hostile owners and tenants as much as for those who live in the well run and secure blocks, where the rules and regulations are direct reactions to prevent „bad elements" creeping in [32]. Perhaps the most useful means of illustrating some of the interactions that occur within and around these blocks is by way of examining, in more detail than was done in the beginning of the chapter with *Ana Capri*, another infamous building namely *Arusha Court* on St. Georges Street. Doing so presents one example of the numerous actors and social relations imprisoned within this capitalist property market.

Arusha

In 1989 *The Natal Mercury* (5th July 1989) reported a call to make a small city block in Albert Park a „free" area – exempt from the Group Areas Act. The plea was made using *Arusha Court* as an example of how the area was already an integrated space in practice. In 2006 *Arusha* again made news, this time held up as a problem building where tenants didn"t know who the owners were, people slept in the staircases, and there were no working lifts or electricity in the corridors (*The Daily News* 9th May 2006). *Arusha's* own descent into a "bad building" is hard to accurately establish, but part of its story can be explained by the legal intricacies of private property ownership and its role in inner-city urban decay.

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[32] The municipality"s term for their regeneration program is the *Better Buildings Project*, but in their everyday talk these buildings are often referred to as "bad buildings" (*iTrump Better Buildings Minutes*, 2010).

As in many South African inner-city neighbourhoods the late 1990s presented estate agents with a boom of first time property owners who were attracted to the city. The prices of small flats were affordable and the Albert Park area convenient due to its location to the business district and transport hubs. The existing large supply of flats ensured that during this time, in the words of a manager at a leading Durban property company, "estate agents made a killing" (*Interview with Estate Agent Manager 18th August 2009*). But this enrichment came at a cost to the new owners, the unscrupulous practice of purposefully neglecting to inform first time buyers about additional costs to ownerships such as rates and levies meant that many owners found themselves in difficult financial situations (*Interview with Estate Agent Manager 18th August 2009*). Battling to pay the bond, let alone additional expenses some owners started subletting to make ends meet. The failure to pay levies and rates became an increasing trend from the late 1990"s, a pattern mirrored in other inner-city neighbourhoods such as Hlillbrow in Johannesburg (Morris, 1999:148). The increasing pressure placed on building infrastructure due to sub-letting coupled with dwindling maintenance reserves and ineffectual body corporates[33] meant some buildings started to go into structural disrepair.   As these high-rise blocks started to deteriorate financial institutions" practice of redlining further compounded the issue (Morris, 1999:150). An estate agent in 2009 commented that banks would still only give 60% bonds for most buildings in Albert Park (*Interview with Estate Agent 22nd June 2009*). Levy paying owners who wanted to sell could not find buyers as banks refused bonds on specific blocks. Some owners who could afford to live elsewhere abandoned their property, others became disinterested landlords only concerned with drawing whatever rent they could from their investments (Mohamed, 1999:3). The capitalist system of holding property ownership as sacrosanct creates a tense and difficult legal minefield for tenants and city officials, especially where the legally protected party are themselves responsible for the damaging practices that deteriorate buildings and living conditions. This is particularly the case in sectional

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[33] Body corporates are the association of owners meant to manage the maintenance and financial viability of the block, membership to a body corporate is involuntary and arises from ownership (http://www.property24.com/articles/body-corporate-facts/4180).

title blocks where maintaining the block as a whole relies on co-operation between many different owners[34]. As Morris concludes of his research in Hillbrow,

> [s]ectional title is potentially a fraught arrangement …when a block of flats has a large number of owners with limited capital and/or commitment it makes reaching of consensus as to how the block should be managed difficult (1999, 144).

As will become evident in the case of *Arusha*, various types of owners contribute to this problem: the owners who legitimately cannot afford their levies and rates over and above their bonds, the owners who purposefully hold back on additional expenses to draw maximum profit from their tenants, and absentee landlords who through lack of responsibility for their properties enable opportunistic criminal rent seeking activities by self-appointed "owners" or "supervisors".

For example, in *Arusha* a man known as Abdul runs the small street level shop in the bottom of the building and is widely known as the corrupt self-appointed supervisor who manipulates various housing situations in the block for his own profit. Abdul, who at times is called various other names, is not unknown to the police. In a meeting I attended at the iTrump offices a metro police officer spoke about how they are aware he is involved in criminal activities, such as stealing electricity and illegally selling water to tenants through drilling into the water mains underneath his shop floor (*Authors minutes of the Better Buildings Meeting 21st July 2010[35]*). Jade a 26 year old long term resident of *Arusha Court* confirms this when she describes Abdul"s activities to me during an interview:

> **Jade:** Ja, man. Like we really have a corrupt guy who claims to be a supervisor, we don"t even know who put him in charge, so now for the longest time we believed that he"s been the supervisor.

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[34] The *Sectional Titles Act* (Act no.95) passed in 1986 fundamentally changed the South African property market (2005:50) by legislating that single apartments or flats within a building could be individually owned.
[35] In the official *Better Buildings Minutes* (iTrump, 2010) these details were simplified to the following sentence "[v]arious units, including estate matters, are being illegally occupied, with probable unlawful rental collections by parties involved".

Kira: So this is not Abdul this is someone else?

Jade: No, this is Abdul!

Kira: Oh! He claims to be the supervisor of the whole block.

Jade: Ja, that"s the "bullshit" because now how do you get to become the supervisor, who put you in charge? For a long time he would say it was the owners and then people would pay him rent and it wouldn"t go to the owners. Now you can see how the owners have gone AWOL because they wouldn"t even check-up because apparently he would say no, he has to pay the rent and for water. Now you must also understand like prior Arusha didn"t have water running full on, we would have water at certain times and it was stolen water because he would open it from a certain system downstairs on the streets, you know what I mean. That"s because the bill was so high, he started stealing the water because he wasn"t paying when he was meant to be going and paying he was using the money for his own …well…whatever. And then, well now ABSA has taken over and he was stripped of that whole power of being supervisor and he"s still trying to find ways of being sneaky about it, like there"s certain rooms where he goes and claims money from because he still says he is in charge of those rooms because they can"t track down the owners.

Kira: He obviously knows which flats have got owners now.

Jade: Exactly! Which is what he tried to pull with our flat because he thought Mr Saadee [*the original owner of Jade's mother's flat*] is out of the country so basically you guys don"t even own the flat, I"m in charge. But we were like no we"re not going to pay you because he expects like R1500.00 from people for that crappy condition. I mean like there"s no lift, there"s no …you know what I mean, and there"s no security downstairs and you supposed to pay for that, it"s just in a crappy condition. And I think if we hadn"t bought the flat we probably would have moved out a long time ago type of thing.
(*Interview with Jade 19th August 2010*)

Since *Arusha* has gone under administration from ABSA bank there is a looming timeframe set on the exploitation of tenants and the scrabble for controlling any unclaimed units has intensified. Jade describes the politics of claiming the space left void by absentee landlords between Abdul, who remains free of police custody, Vusi Khoza (the then ward councillor), and a neighbouring tenant.

> **Kira**: So I"ve heard that some American dude bought a flat in *Arusha* and then he was getting no rent so he was actually in the country, so he went to see the tenants and it turns out they were paying the rent to old Abdul and now he has put a stop to that.[36]

> **Jade**: They"ve actually sold one block of flats, there was an older guy living there number 32. He was like an old guy and his wife passed away and he wasn"t looking after himself well and then he was put into a home by his kids I think his kids were overseas but when they came back they put him into a home. Now Abdul and his connection at number 11 have been trying to get their hands on that flat and they"ve actually taken money for that flat from three different people saying it"s available, it"s in their name type of thing and it"s not even in their name but the problem is the councillor Vusi himself, I don"t how he managed to get himself involved in that ok, because he actually managed to put someone in the flat. Ok it"s so bizarre because apparently now I"ve heard there are actually two flats that the council is involved in and I don"t know how. Like what does he have to do with… so anyway. So now it"s like these two parties going on, it"s the councillor, number 11 and Abdul. So Abdul is trying to sell to get money out of this flat, they"ve taken money from people saying this flat is available and there"s a person living in there, put in by the councillor, mind you. And therefore what"s happened is now…

> **Kira:** How do they even get keys and access, it"s not their flat.

> **Jade**: Ja, break in, so now what"s happened No11 is pissed off by this because she wants to take over this flat and make money out of it and clearly they want to split profit with Abdul. Now she has created a lie saying that she was actually married to this old guy. Mind you this guy"s White hey! [*laughs*]

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[36] This case was brought up at the iTrump Better Building Meeting (*iTrump Better Buildings Minutes*, 2010).

So she went and bought like marriage papers to prove… the extreme you don't even understand.

Kira: But the flat is still in this old guy's name, and his children they're not involved.

Jade: They not there, they're not getting involved because for them it's a dump, it's like a dump for them.

Kira: So they'll just leave it.

Jade: Ja.

Kira: But by leaving it they let all these other bastards get involved.

Jade: Exactly.
(*Interview with Jade 19th August 2010*)

Owners, such as described above, often desert their property when the official property market appears to have collapsed in the block – in other words their investment is no longer worth the effort. However, what the above extract clearly illustrates is that an informal property market continues to operate in the absence of interested ownership. Since the owner is the legally recognised authority on the property, their absence or disinterest creates opportunities for rent seeking activities from illegal „owners". Such lack of responsible ownership is rarely penalised except when the matter is taken to the High Court to have the building placed under legal administration by the municipality, a process that can take years (*Interview with iTrump officials 21th July 2010*). In the late 1990s, in a bid to press owners into better maintenance of buildings the ANC proposed a country wide initiative that tried to give agency to rent paying tenants through tenant committees. However, this agency existed only on paper as legally sectional titles are an ownership scheme; therefore tenants had little legal recourse in practice. This was compounded by the fact that the Rental Housing Tribunal has no jurisdiction on sectional titles blocks (*Interview with Civic Leader on Tenants Rights 7th July 2009*). Seeking profit from rentals some landlords, especially since 1998, have manipulated the high demand

for accommodation in the city and legal loopholes to exploit tenants, indicating that part of urban decay is an issue of irresponsible ownership rather than an issue created by tenant; in a Marxist framework, the makings of the property owning class, rather than the often blamed tenants who inhabit the buildings. The broader question of citizenship also plays an important role in this. Under the Group Areas Act in Albert Park unscrupulous landlords exploited tenants classified as „disqualified" through high rents and neglecting maintenance, since these tenants could not take any legal recourse for fear of being evicted and/or arrested. Tenants were often subjected to, in Sayed Iqbal Mohamed"s words, "subhuman conditions" (1999:3). Today many people classified as non-citizens, through either temporary permits with no employment rights or „illegally" living in the country are also easy prey for people such as Abdul. Denying full citizenship to groups of people opens opportunities for human exploitation. Here the national question of citizenship intersects with a capitalist framework of property ownership forming a cage of legal bureaucracy around those without sufficient income, as well as those classified as non-citizens. de Souza"s analysis of the complex negotiations of urban "emancipative social movements" in Brazil may well be used to describe the everyday negotiations of many residents in Albert Park, where residents,

> have to learn to be a countervailing power not only regarding the state apparatus and the legal side of capitalist economy, *but also in relation to the ordinary criminal forces*, which are usually totally adapted to capitalist values (for instance, consumerism) capitalist „logic" (orientation towards maximization of profit), and capitalist patterns of behavior (2009:44, emphasis in original).

Indeed these structures also serve to fuel discriminatory ideologies since these vulnerable groups are then associated *en masse* with urban decay, a process that is unpacked in more detail in the following chapter.

This is not to suggest that all tenants are victims in this situation. There are also many stories of tenants refusing to pay rent increases (sometimes due to legitimate protest at the conditions of the building), hijacking neighbouring empty flats and extracting rent from these, as well as being responsible for overcrowding against the wishes of the owners or flat supervisors. Indeed the supervisors who work in functioning blocks run very tight ships in terms of rules and regulations, largely in

response to the view that if the tenants start to bend the rules the block itself will shortly follow. In my conversations with supervisors the possibility of violence from tenants is very real, often making supervisors find strategic ways to maintain the rules whilst avoiding personal conflict.   One such strategy is to place the responsibility on maintaining rules and regulations on the person legally responsible for the flat – the owner. Here Priscilla, introduced in the previous chapter, in her role as a supervisor in a block of flats that was considered a problem but is now "up and running", explains how she gave advice on how to handle conflict to another supervisor, whose husband had been punched in the stomach in a previous incident with a tenant;

> **Priscilla:** She'd invite me to her flat and have some tea and we can talk. She will say "but these people Priscilla they make such a noise", I say no, charge them, pay with the pocket, don't fight with them because it won't take you anywhere. They'll hate you when you fight with them because you trying to let them do the right thing. Don't fight with them charge them for the noise, if you're the tenant, charge the owner for the noise.

> **Kira:** How do you do that?

> **Priscilla**: It's simple; you charge to the levy account.

> **Kira:** Really!

> **Priscilla**: You write it down, so and so is making noise in the flat people cannot sleep in the flat. Wakefields [*a large property firm that manages blocks for a fee*] will charge them on the levy account.

> **Kira:** And then also you make it the owner's responsibility which is right too.

> **Priscilla**: Exactly that is his own responsibility; you can't just fold your arms.

> **Kira:** You're clever Priscilla.

> **Priscilla**: You can't just fold your arms and expect everyone to sort it - that is your flat you should be responsible for it. I don't make noise I just charge them, charge the owner, simple as that and they fight. But I say "No whose

flat is that", so you must charge them. You [*talking about the owner*] go ask your money from them [*the tenants*], tell them not to make noise, next time if they want to make noise they must get out of your flat. I'll get you somebody who won't make noise. Exactly! And then [*she*] said "oh My God I never think of doing that" and then she started doing that and the noise was gone.
(*Interview with Priscilla 11ᵗʰ May 2010*)

In flats where supervisors, the body corporates and unit owners both co-operate and have a managing agent such as Wakefields or Trafalgar behind them, the block is well run – although with very strict rules – and well maintained. Leaving alone for now the role that these managing agents, also some of the largest estate agents in the country, played in creating the need for managing agents through the dodgy selling practices of the late 1990s, they do offer financial and legal weight to the body corporates and supervisors when they need to deal with absconding levy payers or evictions. Blocks in which body corporates have fallen apart, and corrupt or self-appointed supervisors extract rentals slowly trap both tenants and owners into a maze of dangerous and conflict filled negotiations, as is the case in *Arusha*. At the end of this maze, after a long and tiring legal process driven by the city or banks who step in to protect their investments, is often the possibility of losing one"s home. Jason, the person appointed to manage the judicial administration of *Arusha Court* explains the situation facing owners:

> **Jason:** Now Arusha, I was appointed, it was actually an ABSA application, they have a unit there which they redress due to bond default and because the Body Corporate was totally dysfunctional they weren't able to claim a levy from us. So their only solution was then we need to take steps to get somebody in place who can get the Body Corporate into a position where we can issue a levy. So the starting point is in a building with only twenty nine units. We started a year ago with about R600 000 in Municipal debt, R20 000 a unit. Then we need to implement monthly levies to pay for the general running costs, general requirements, managing agents" fees, maintenance and insurance, all other aspects that come with it. Now owners who used to disregard these obligations all of a suddenly face between R800 – R1000 monthly levy obligations.

That"s before we start looking at the building. So we start looking at the building and we say Ok well the water runs in from the roof and out the front door through all seven floors. Half the fire escape is gone, there"s no fire protection equipment, the plumbing is shot, there"s concrete spalling which is a risk to the public. So our main costing on it, we actually looking at spending at least R1,8m to rehabilitate the structures, bearing in mind twenty nine units. So by the time that happens and we"re twelve months down the track with unpaid levies, the owners are sitting with anything between R60 000 – R100 000 of levy debt. If we don"t go down that road we may as well all turn our backs on Arusha.

There you have a mix of owners. They have investor owners who can afford to pay. There are those who can afford to pay but they"re not going to because they refuse to acknowledge any obligations. And you get those who really can"t – unemployment, social grantees etc. And that"s where the law now needs to be enforced with a levy collection process. Now most buildings I try to balance with time, so I give owners a 24month opportunity to pay. But how can we give an owner 24 months opportunity to pay when tomorrow a two year old could fall to their death down a fire escape. Or a family walking past in the street gets killed by a chunk of falling concrete. There is no opportunity they must jump in the deep end, go out and do the best they can.
(*Interview with Legal Administrator 4th August 2010*)

The deep end for many owners is very deep. Jason estimates that once all the legal agreements have been drawn up and owners are confronted with either paying the levy backlog or forfeiting their property only half the current owners in *Arusha* will remain (*Interview with Legal Administrator 4th August 2010*).   Jade"s family are anticipating this eventuality. Her mother and sister bought the flat years ago from an owner who lived outside the country when the block was in a slightly better state, now rather than paying back an impossible sum on their levies they are making plans to build a house for their mother in Umzinyathi[37] so she has a roof over her head.

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[37] A small municipality area in north central KwaZulu-Natal, in which 93% of the population live in a rural setting (http://www.umzinyathi.gov.za).

Kira: It"s better for your Mom to move, but she needs to sell her flat to make some money.

Jade: But the thing is I think we also owe a big steep amount on levies so it"s actually better, I don"t know what the settlement will be between ABSA and us once ABSA has sorted everything out on the admin side. So we"re doing whatever we can right now with whatever little cash we get so that the home we"re building is actually done in time.

Kira: So if you have to leave?

Jade: So the thing is we bought the site like two years ago anyway.

Kira: Ja

Jade: And I put down a deposit on the building material, so it"s just a matter of now paying it in instalments so whatever I have…

Kira: So more than likely you will have to forfeit the flat as well.

Jade: Mmmm, but I don"t mind actually because it"s like not the best way of living conditions anyway.

Kira: Sure!

Jade: But you know what it"s the home that you know because you grew up around there and we couldn"t really move back to KwaMashu because there"s like family issues anyway, so we"ll bear it in the end, you know if you still alive then it"s cool. It"s a roof over your head.
(*Interview with Jade 19th August 2010*)

Jade"s story is a familiar one according to Jason. Here the capitalist dream of property ownership transforms into a nightmarish reality of lifelong debt and lost tenure. As alluded to previously estate agent practices of selling whilst omitting the actual costs of ownership is one reason owners get into this bind, but according to Jason banks too are to blame.

Kira: So how much responsibility should the Estates Agents take?

Jason: They should take a lot but also the Banks. Does the bank sell a home to a first time home owner and explain to them when they give them their nice big fat twenty year bond with their home as security, what they actually need to do to protect that investment, not just to protect it but to enhance it.
(*Interview with Legal Administrator 4th August 2010*)

For those who can afford to protect their investments new strategies to safe guard buildings from „going bad" are experimented with. In an interview with an investor owner, Frank, who owns a few blocks as well as individual units around Albert Park he talks about how biometric technology is used to electronically monitor and control access:

They scan your finger then you've access, now say you haven't paid your rent they just cancel it so you can't get into the building, it's brilliant with some of the students, especially with the students. And they can't bring their friends in and that now, because some of them have their friends stay over…..Over in Park Bay we've also put one of those in, and uh..everybody, it's good because we have a lot of control now, because we had all sorts, a lot of drug dealers living in that building and we couldn't get them out, so they are also dead scared to have their fingerprints taken so they suddenly vanished.
(*Interview with Investor Owner 7th July 2010*)

The use of a finger print data base instead of a sleepy and/or intimidated supervisor controlling access may well make people with criminal records hesitant considering that in "2002 the South African Police Services purchased an Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS)" (Breckenridge, 2002), which promised remote access to all recorded fingerprints in the South African database. Whilst I doubt that this investor"s programme is linked to the SAPS database it does suggest rather ominous forms of future control over housing in the area. This is not unique to Albert Park in the South African inner-city landscape; the Ponte City tower in Berea in Johannesburg, when revamped by private investors in 2000 installed a biometric finger print scanner system (Murray, 2008:207), and later in the interview with Frank

(immediately above) he stated he was inspired by its use in Hillbrow. As Murray warns what is of concern is that these types of tightly controlled private buildings, often actively courted by the municipality since they are seen as a panacea to urban decay, "substitute strict enforcement of entry and exit and careful supervision of circulation and movement for conventional considerations of convenient locations, affordable price, and aesthetics" (2008:204) – in short re-conceptualising what it means to live in a „good" building in the inner-city.

The systems cost an estimated R100 000 just for the initial installation of the computer system (*Interview with Investor Owner 7th July 2010*), affordable really only to middle to upper class owners who have the funds and the agency to capitalise on property investments. For the working class – such as Jade"s mother – property ownership can result in shrinkage of life choices and, ultimately, displacement. The finger print system could also be seen as an extension of the strategies used by the flat supervisors in dealing with problematic tenants, offering one step better since there is no human intervention in removing unwanted tenants from the building.

But what happens to those people who are deemed unwanted or forced to leave buildings like *Arusha*? For some this displacement may mean attempting to find shelter in buildings in a worse state of decay, in which the risk of being forcibly removed again is high. The rent per day rooms, available in many buildings in Albert Park, offer limited – if any – ablution facilities, illegal and unsafe electrical connections and always carries the threat of being forcibly removed by police raids due to not carrying the correct identity documents or the building being deemed a health hazard (see *Pictures 8, 9 and 10* for examples of daily rooms for rent in Alexander Street, and *Pictures 11, 12 and 13* for examples of what iTrump and police call "disruptive raids" in the central business district). The most frequent contact many residents, both South African"s and foreign nationals, living in these squalid and precarious conditions have with city officials is not with social service departments, but with the police and officials from the municipality"s iTrump unit. For those who carry the additional burden of navigating, or avoiding, South African immigration systems this means that "[i]n everyday life, refugees have more contact with police, often being subjected to harassment and the demand to prove documentation, than most other government authorities" (Greenburg, 2010:75).

Picture 8 – Daily lodging rates advertised at 55 Alexander Street
(by iTrump official 8th November 2009, permission to use kindly granted by iTrump)

Picture 9 – Shower facilities (with running water) at 55 Alexander Street
(by iTrump official 8th November 2009, permission to use kindly granted by iTrump)

Picture 10 – Rented room units at 55 Alexander Street
(by iTrump official 8th November 2009, permission to use kindly granted by iTrump)

Picture 11 – Disruptive raids in the city
(by iTrump official 30th April 2010, permission to use kindly granted by iTrump)

Picture 12 – Disruptive raids in the city
(by iTrump official 30th April 2010, permission to use kindly granted by iTrump)

Picture 13 – Disruptive raids in the city
(by iTrump official 30th April 2010, permission to use kindly granted by iTrump)

Re-imagining the City

iTrump was "established as a response to the urgent need to prioritise the regeneration of the inner city" (iTrump website). iTrump ambitiously has "six key outcomes, namely: increasing economic activity; reducing poverty and social isolation; making the inner city more viable; effective and sustainable urban management; improving safety and security; and developing institutional capacity". Achieving these broad ideals is rather unrealistic for a small unit such as iTrump, coupled with the fact that some of its employees also double as the city"s only official Health and Safety officers. It is not surprising then that a lot of iTrump"s time and resources are put into their Better Building Programmes, which aims to address problem blocks in the city and restore them to more liveable and aesthetic contributions to the city vision. The city managers have had various initiatives over the years to work towards urban renewal and regeneration, such as the Area Based Management initiative and iTrump, with the aim of uplifting areas like Albert Park but also to attract big business back into the CBD. National government initiatives like the *Urban Development Zones* (UDZ) also offer tax breaks in demarcated areas in the city to investors who refurbish buildings that have been declared derelict or build new buildings (*Interview with Investor Owner 6th October 2010* and McMurray, 2008:204). There is speculation that some of these landlords in Durban, who own whole blocks, are simply investors in waiting for tax break benefits. Actively enabling a building to deteriorate through absentee ownership and not paying rates speeds up the process of getting it declared derelict and offers the potential investor profit through rent in the meantime. Regardless of these speculations municipal and national interventions for South African cities have primarily seen private investment as the panacea for addressing urban decay. Providing housing through private investment in the inner-city places this human right in the precious net of profit making, ensuring "some groups profiting at the expense of others" (Murray, 2008:42). This specific mix of urban regeneration also requires the removal and displacement of people who do not fit into a gentrified city vision. For David Harvey these types of displacement underpin capitalist urbanisation world-wide, in what he calls a process of "accumulation by dispossession" (2008:34). As Jason explains for people displaced through legal administration of „bad buildings" options are minimal:

Jason: So we can't have the standards that we want from a city perspective, from a National perspective, and probably at the same time without the money coming from somewhere, is it not another way of forcing people out of the area to where we can't see them again, those who can't afford. Because what's going to happen… […] But now you've just taken all the poor and said to them "guys go and find yourself another area" because it doesn't work for the City here – in terms of progressive deterioration and degradation of the City and its structure.

Kira: The thing is, are there support networks for those people?

Jason: Not adequate, because that's where the hard part comes in you see. I've got social pensioners and some of them are saying to me "where to now" right now where do I go?
(*Interview with Legal Administrator 4th August 2010*)

Some city officials and other actors trapped in this crazy dance are not unaware of these contradictions. For one iTrump official the perceived inefficiency from the social services department dampens the rewards of his work, "I'm telling you, it's straight forward there are homeless people they need shelter that shelter should lead to jobs, skills and training, that is simple, I mean what is so difficult about that" (*Interview with iTrump officials 21th July 2010*). Similarly a Metro Police officer acknowledges that cleaning up the area means "you know in all honesty we've just displaced that problem somewhere else. Even though this has been cleaned up because there's just this constant police presence going in and out, you know unfortunately it is just a displacement to another area" (*Interview with Metro Police officer 30th August 2010*). Being caught between attempting to stop the micro level exploitations and unacceptable living conditions within these buildings and bowing to the city supported macro level exploitations of private investment is conceivably a thankless and despairing task, in which even these officials recognise that the casualties are the poor and undocumented people living in the inner-city.

Moving into the Everyday

For Mbembe and Nuttall what is important is recognising how people are "generating quite new institutions and forms of social organization, practices of everyday life that encompass systems of employment, housing and urban transport, income earning opportunities, and meaning making" (2008:6). Certainly as researchers we should always be open to these possibilities. Yet in my experience and certainly in the experience of the participants in this study the practices of everyday life around housing intimately wrestled with existing capitalist institutions and forms of city rhetoric that narrowed rather than empowered possibilities. Inherent in these practices of everyday life were people"s need to explain these changes to their neighbourhood. These narratives of change offered residents a form of sense making, but as shall become evident also masked the role of development capital and capitalist ownership schemes in problematic and harmful ways. Whilst this chapter describes some of the material context of Albert Park the following chapter argues that certain social identities are appropriated and imposed so as to make sense of these material conditions. Here residents draw from a much wider discourse of place and belonging linked to the city; mirroring the constant flow of people into and out of the city – to and from the suburbs, townships, rural areas and indeed geographic areas outside of national borders.

Chapter 4: Constructing Exclusion and Belonging – the Role of Place Identities

As argued in *Chapter 2* researching critically race and emerging identities through necessity requires open and flexible methodologies. Engaging in open dialogue and discussions, in this study enabled through ethnographic methods, requires researchers to accept that they may frequently not be able to frame questions in the way they would find useful. Yet it is in the wide scope and diversity of everyday language that ways of seeing and sense making becomes evident. In the conversations with, and stories told by, participants a diverse use of language and ideas describes and makes sense of lived experiences. Within this diversity patterns and themes that clustered loosely around specific notions of place and identity emerged as a dominant theme. This chapter offers a focused analysis of how these social identities frequently occurred in the field notes and interview transcripts, understandings of self and others that fall under, what I shall call, *place identities*. The concept of place identities is by no means new. Urban geographers, sociologists and social psychologists amongst others are interested in how places are vested with meaning and in turn how living in a specific place constructs different types of identities within people. That people make sense of their lives in dialogue with broader political and social discourses states the obvious, but a more nuanced unraveling of how these identities interact with broader social discourses reveals how and why they are appropriated, challenged and reaffirmed in exciting and problematic ways in this urban context.

This chapter examines how place identities are inherently conflicted by the discord between places imagined as fixed modes of living and the lived messiness and complexities of heterogeneous environments. Although rooted in apartheid spatial structures of segregation these place identities are also emerging out of the past in interesting ways. Some place identities such as those ascribed to people categorised as belonging to faraway places are more recent manifestations of a different form of nation building, although importantly utilise familiar mechanisms of social exclusion and belonging. Place identities, here being seen as urban, township

or foreign, rather than say „white", „black", „indian" or „coloured", became a key concept in explaining change in Albert Park. This does not exclude race from the analysis, but rather points to the ways in which it both intersects with and is untangled from place, suggesting emergent ways in which urban residents police belonging in the city.

Place Identities – The Allure of the City

In Albert Park participants referred to and appropriated identities associated with specific geographic places, most often linked to having an urban or city identity as opposed to a township identity, and less frequently a rural identity. This is hardly surprising given apartheid"s history of spatial segregation where groups of people found themselves not only classified as belonging to a „race group", but as increasingly associated with contained and controlled geographic places. Dixon and Durrheim state "„who belongs where" was a question that lay at the very heart of the doctrines of the old regime" (2000:38). Place identities in South Africa – such as belonging to the city, suburbs, township or rural areas – are intricately associated with social power and access to resources through two distinct but intertwined discourses. Firstly, state enforced geographic segregation based on race meant that place identities were only given social and economic value if they were classified as belonging to „white" areas, places identified with „black", „coloured" and „indian" people were actively underdeveloped, albeit in different ways. It is important not to underestimate how the broad spectrum of segregationist polices linked race and place; from the brutal implementation of the Group Areas Act (Act no. 41 of 1950), to the miniature of everyday reminders of difference such as the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act (Act No. 49 of 1953) – where for example people classified as „black" were not allowed to use public toilets set aside for people classified as „white". Segregation in this way was not only linked to race but also to the distribution and allocation of political rights, as John Rex explains the establishing of Bantustans under apartheid enabled "African populations in the White areas as migrants only, with no claim to political rights there because of their citizenship in their „homelands"" (Rex:1981:13). This engineered inequality gave a material existence to racist ideologies, making race a primary indicator of access to social,

political and economic goods. Secondly, through the rhetorical tool of simplifying this segregation into "a city versus countryside or core/periphery spatial structure", a doctrine that resonated with many Western development policies, racist spatial planning was masked (to a degree) as global industrialisation and urbanisation processes (Smith, 2002:74). Couching segregation in Western development terms of relationships between "first" and "third world" populations meant racist policies were represented as, what was in the late 1980s, a more acceptable capitalist "current international discourse about problems of development" (Sharp, 1988:114).

Whilst official state segregation based on race has been dismantled the spatial segregation inherent in forms of development capital has not, and as Alan Mabin (2005) warns the role of private development in shaping past, present and future social segregation should not be underestimated. Key to this is depicting the city as the hub of development and progress, imagery which continues to inspire much of contemporary South African urban planning (Boraine et al, 2006: 260). For the most part urban planners in South African cities follow "global trends in vogue in other aspirant world-class cities" by actively courting private property development and real estate to realise the visions of order, efficiency and financial wealth attributed to cities that hold global value (Murray, 2008:7). This imagery holds sway for city officials in Durban, such as in the comments below from an interview with an iTrump official:

> Because what we are looking at the end of the day is to turn the city around back to its former glory, of what it should be, law and order, respectable buildings, facilities and buildings working like they should do. And that"s what it should be, turning it to a world class city again, instead of having it as a slum.
>
> *(Interview with iTrump officials 21st July 2010)*

Here nostalgia for a golden age gone past and a yearning for a glory filled future means that the city at present is always a work in progress; never able to actualise past or future vision. Of course imagining the city in this way is a phenomenon common in much urban planning worldwide; this obsession with an ordered, formal and „progressive" urban landscape often means a rejection of the lifestyles and experiences of not just the people who live outside the city limits, but of some of

those who live in and frequent the inner-city. Perhaps more importantly it fails to recognise what many theorists point out, that this discourse in itself creates the necessary conditions for its own undoing. As Michel de Certeau states "we have to acknowledge that if in discourse the city serves as a totalizing and almost mythical landmark for socioeconomic and political strategies, urban life increasingly permits the re-emergence of the element that the urbanistic project excludes" (1984:95). In other words the social and material infrastructure promised and striven for in the vision of a world-class city demands in-migration to the city centre in the form of labour, consumers, and residents who, in turn, hope to benefit in various ways from being associated to the city"s economic, social and symbolic capital. For de Certeau (1984:95) this results in a discord between the rhetoric of order and formality, and a heterogeneous population that makes the city impossible to administer and manage in any prearranged or totalising systematic manner. Martin Murray (2008) makes a similar case for this argument in his research on Johannesburg"s spatial planning, where he convincingly exposes how the city building package of real estate capital and property development, courted and supported by the Johannesburg municipality, simultaneously generates gentrification and urban decay. This dual process leaves those who are deemed unwanted elements in the city vision – for Murray the urban poor – both neglected and criminalised. Here then is the fundamental contradiction in capitalist development; whilst both requiring and constructing a vision of the city as the holy grail of global initiatives and sophisticated urban living, it simultaneously and actively participates in the erosion of this vision through the redistribution of wealth and development from the inner-cities into the already middle-class suburbs (Mabin, 2005:54-59). David Harvey (2008:33) aptly labels this "urban restructuring through „creative destruction"", and as will be discussed later, this contradictory process creates moments of tension in appropriating an urban identity in Albert Park.

Critically analysing the problematic practice of contrasting an urban environment as progressive and developed against a traditionalist and underdeveloped rural environment has an academic history in South Africa. For example John Sharp argues that it is this very ideology of difference that creates, rather than provides explanation for, profoundly unequal infrastructure and notions of differences. He astutely draws attention to how:

[t]he power of the „first world - third world‟ terminology, and its attractiveness to official opinion-makers, lie precisely in its ability to accommodate a range of political viewpoints, from the avowedly racist to the ostensibly reformist.   It can, therefore be presented and assimilated as *common sense* (1988:114, emphasis in original).

Contemporary studies such as those by Gillian Hart and Ari Sitas (2004:31-32) illustrate how urban-rural models of incommensurable difference inform state polices that "narrowly focused on industry and on the main metropolitan centres", as well as underpins research agendas, which neglect the countless "social and spatial interconnections" between these supposedly disparate places.   Boraine et al (2006:264) commenting on the *2004 State of the Cities Report* point to the continual movement of people between "rural areas to the cities and back", making estimates of in-migration near impossible. Whilst the focus of this study is located firmly in the urban, it reiterates the urgency in Hart and Sitas‟ call to pay attention to these interconnections since they illustrate the often problematic nature of the relationship between how we classify geographic space and how we classify people.

The data from this study however point to a slight shift in focus within these ideological polarities of rural and urban. Whilst the distinction between rural and urban remains, it is a belief in the separate social and cultural spheres between city living and township life that takes precedent. Here the geographic distance of these polarities shrink from far away rural areas to nearby townships, but the moral attributes and social capital associated with them intensifies. Here any romantic, albeit devaluing in comparison to the urban, notions of traditional simplistic rural life is swopped for the crime ridden and overpopulated imagery of the township. Of course in contemporary South Africa many townships form part of the urban metropolis.   But under apartheid their quasi-urban status meant that living in a township was a sign of exclusion from the urban centres and by proxy all the benefits of urban life – such as access to state institutions, solid infrastructure, good quality state education and health care – kept exclusively for South Africans classified as „white‟. This social injustice meant that place identities operate as a form of symbolic resource (Dixon and Durrheim, 2000:32-33), where being urban symbolises economic and social capital. This symbolic capital is rooted in some of the material

benefits of living in a city, for example opportunity for higher quality employment is far more frequent in the city than outside it (Boraine et al, 2006:263). Urban identities therefore continue to hold status and privilege in that they are associated with order and formality, education, sophistication and access to employment; characteristics that township and rural identities are seen as lacking (Bouillon, 2002:15).

Authors such as Dixon and Durrheim (2000:34) suggest that after 1994 the "[m]aterial and political transformation…is unsettling the old place identities". Indeed it is important to acknowledge and research these changes. Areas in Soweto today arguably hold more wealth and symbolic capital than living in inner-city Johannesburg, not to mention that "[w]hile poverty remains severe in the countryside, it is in the metropolitan areas that unmet needs are most concentrated" (Smith, 2002:77). Research such as Sarah Nuttall's examination of contemporary youth culture in Rosebank Johannesburg, also illustrates how the symbolic and geographic boundaries between city and townships are being eroded and redrawn through fashion, music and youth cultural imagery that is at once "of the township and the city and the township *in* the city" (2008:97).

Yet it is a little misleading to think of these types of cross overs and porous boundaries as only present after the demise of apartheid. It is well worth remembering in any analysis that "before, during and certainly after apartheid, South African urban change is more complex than some simple linear process" moving away from apartheid (Mabin, 2005:45). It is arguable that closer examination of township and urban life, both past and present, would illustrate how these rigid place archetypes were always unsettled and traversed rather than completely separate social spheres. Apartheid segregation whilst on one level a successful exercise in regulating mobility was on another level an impossibility which brought about its own demise. As David Smith states "it was the inevitability of large-scale black "urbanization" which eventually challenged the power of the state to maintain social control and minority rule" (2002:68). Certainly the central business districts and inner-cities of South Africa were seen as undergoing desegregation long before the end of apartheid (Christopher, 2001:457). In addition representing townships as disorderly is a gross misreading of the past – townships, like urban areas, were

tightly controlled places under apartheid influx laws even if they were simultaneously sites of resistance. It is also important to recognise that nostalgia for an ordered and „quiet‟ past is not only a lamentation found in the urban sphere but also within the townships. Jacob Dlamini‟s *Native Nostalgia* beautifully illustrates this yearning for the past, in one of his discussions with an elderly women living in Thandukukhanya township, on changes after the end of apartheid, he explains "[i]n her view the problems of today started „with the influx of people and shacks. Izihambi seziziningikakhulu. There are too many outsiders. I don‟t even know where they come from‟" (2009:4).

If then these polarities are more rough fuzzy ideals of places than reflections of the way people live in different localities, why then would place identities still feature so prominently in people‟s beliefs and actions? One answer lies in a universal analysis that recognises, as Zygmunt Bauman (1993:234) does, that social identities are always intricately tied up in defining place. Without the ability to prescribe imagined boundaries to social identities they may become, to draw from his terminology, insecure or viewed as problematic. But another answer lies within the South African context of the powerful ideology of race thinking, brought to life under colonialism, and nurtured and normalised during apartheid. Spun within the ideological weave of apartheid‟s discourse of separate „race groups‟ were a multitude of myths and legends about, not just belonging, but what township and urban life *should be*. The vast structural inequalities engineered between these places gave a material reality to these myths. Intertwined within this was a capitalist framework of development that required a model of industrialised cities versus undeveloped elsewhere.

Whilst race is no longer an official doctrine of spatial planning the spatial landscape of inequalities in South Africa, between cities and townships and indeed within cities themselves, continues. As do the discourses of urban development. Perhaps then it is not surprising that these symbolic divisions - of city living as opposed to township living - continues to inform the everyday use of place as social identity. As Bouillon notes in his study of the Durban city centre in 2000 there is "a spatial and teleological axis according to which the town is something else than the „location‟, something of a different nature with a superior status… for the masses, the meaningful link remains

the one between the two worlds of the townships and the centre-city" (2002:15-16). Like all social identities that employ a taxonomy premise to differentiate between people, an attribution premise closely follows (both these premises are outlined in *Chapter 1*), and here a hierarchical distinction is attached to the more desirable urban identity in contrast to the frowned upon township or rural identity. This means that those who are identified as having township or rural behaviour are seen as being „out of place", people who disrupt the natural flow of city living. Whilst critics of current urban planning practices (such as Murray, 2008 and Mabin, 2005 amongst others) provide an excellent macro analysis of how state and municipal discourses and private development act to regulate who belongs in the city and who does not, this study provides a better understanding of how the everyday practices of talk and sense making in the inner-city are in themselves important mechanisms of exclusion and belonging.

Displacement and Learning Place

Place identities are rooted in metaphoric rather than physical geography, in other words you do not have to live in a township to be thought of as someone who belongs in a township. Instead place identities are recognisable through careful assessment of people"s behaviours, dress, food they eat and ways of thinking – here the township, rural areas or the city and all they are presumed to represent resides in the actions and adornment of the body. As discussed in *Chapter 1* and *Chapter 2* social identities such as race, cemented into the body through a complex history of socially constituted discourses are difficult, although not impossible, to opt out of. Place identities however prove more flexible, and can be shifted, displaced and subverted through discarding (even partially) an existing mode of behaviour and learning how to "be urban". For new residents to the city creating a narrative of belonging is an important personal task: as Dixon and Durrheim explain "human actors" are "imaginative users of their environments, agents who are able to appropriate physical contexts in order to create, here, a space of attachment and rootedness, a space of being" (2000:29). Certainly belonging to the urban environment can bring with it a sense of empowerment and meaningful social relations, such as in Jade"s, a 26 year old resident, experience of moving into Albert Park:

Ok cool, well when we first moved to Albert Park I think I was about 11 and we moved into a building called Bryan Moor which is right in the middle of St. Georges Street and when we got there actually it was a bit confusing for me because coming from a Township and now all of a sudden you‟re living in a building in a small boxed place all of a sudden so it‟s like how do you even make friends here, but umm, and then I got used to it because then we had kids that went to the same school as us St. Anthony‟s and then it was like, ok, cool. So then I can actually make friends as we walk to school in the morning. So it started being "oh the shops are even closer than what we used to", so you know that type of psychology just worked out eventually then I started to relax and enjoy it.

So like getting involved in stuff like as well like the Police Committee [*Community Policing Forum*] and all that type of stuff so it was like I was proactive. I think what made me enjoy being in the city was being a pro-active urban youngster as well because then we started interacting between, with the Albert Park, Berea Youth and South Beach because we were all sort of an urban little clan that got together and we discussed our little issues like in terms of how safe it is to be around the places or how unsafe it is and things that we can do proactively as like urban kids.
(*Interview with Jade 19th August 2010*)

Becoming an "active urban youngster" for Jade points to a sense of personal achievement and belonging through gaining a social network centred on being young and urban. For her this "appropriation of physical contexts" is a response to interactions with other people who are seen as, or see themselves as, urban residents – in other words people who have already incorporated a narrative of the urban into their identity. For new residents to the city relearning ways of being and constructing new identities is not always an easy process. These identities under construction are best captured by Priscilla‟s conversation on why people want to move into the city away from the townships, as well as her own experience of moving from Clermont (a township outside of New Germany in Durban) into Albert Park:

Kira: Because there‟s a high demand for flats in this area hey?

Priscilla: Because I was talking to one lady she stays in Umlazi, she was saying that she was prepared to pay R2 600 [*a month*] for the rent than going to Umlazi. I said why because at Umlazi you could pay maybe R300 [*a month*] for a room because it"s cheaper it"s in the location, [38] but the crime, I can hardly walk from work to where I"m staying, now for the sake of my life I"ve got to do something about it.

Kira: Rather be here.

Priscilla: Exactly, and then when you think of that you say "Oh, God! But the flats are so expensive you know", if the flats were not so expensive some of the people would not do crime because even with a little money I can pay my rent, plus I can eat. But now it doesn"t work that way. If you work you pay the rent after the rent you got no money to eat.

Kira: Exactly!

Priscilla: You have no money to spend, you have to have another way of making money so that you can afford to eat decent food like everybody else. I mean in here you have to eat something decent because you can"t just eat phutu every day, no you can"t because next door you smell nice curry and what what, and you say I also feel like eating something like that. And now the youngsters they don"t think like us, they think if things don"t go right they do it their own way, the wrong way. And then at the end of the day they want to blame "it"s the apartheid thing", that is long gone, that is long gone, everybody can live the way they want to live, they can"t blame now because it won"t take me anywhere, it won"t take me anywhere. The fact remains now we are here, and we have to live like we here and behave like we here. I was grown up in the location but I have to change my mind and say to my mind that I am no longer staying in Claremont, I am staying in town, I have to live like I"m staying in town. Some of the things that I was doing I can"t do.

Kira: Like what Priscilla, what is the biggest difference you think?

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[38] Frequently participants make use of the word *location* as a synonym for township. Interestingly, the term *location* has an older historical origin than township, and in the *Dictionary of South African English: on Historical Principle* (1996) is said to be obsolete in the face of the more contemporary use of the word township. This most certainly is not the case for participants in this study, and arguably elsewhere. For example the TV series *eKasi*: *Our Stories*, which depicts stories from different townships, takes its name from the slang for *lokasie* – the Afrikaans terms for *location* (http://www.etv.co.za/extended/about/ekasi_our_stories).

Priscilla: I mean in the location you can even walk barefoot go to shop and sometimes don"t even put a bra on you just go to the shop you know because…you know like you are at like….I don"t know…at home. But now you can"t I can"t go to the shop here without washing my face or brushing my teeth and wear something you know because I know that I"m no longer where I"ve grown up in that environment, I have to change, that is the main thing too you have to adjust to where you are now. I cannot like live the past, walk in my nightie and wear morning slippers to the shop, no I can"t do that. To me it doesn"t make sense. Now most of the people they don"t realise that, they think they still staying in the location and it"s not, there should be a difference between the location and this place. That"s why to me this place when I moved in it was clean not much people walking around you won"t see people with nighties and all that but now everybody"s like doing whatever they want to do, they don"t know the difference now. But to me we should keep it like that where you should know the difference between that place and this place so that we can keep our standard high. If we do not know the difference our standard will never change because we going to make this place like Claremont which is two different places. I have to know that I"m no longer there I"m here now so I have to live like here.
(*Interview with Priscilla 11th May 2010*)

In the last part of the interview Priscilla is strongly opposed to her newly found sense of place – an urban identity – being displaced by people who want to bring the township to town. Here urban identities are seen as belonging not just to the physical environment but being associated with a higher standard of behaviour; since "in „putting ourselves in place", people are often claiming territorial entitlements or affirming sociospatial ideals" (Dixon and Durrheim, 2000:32-33). The appropriation of an urban identity draws on the more abstract discourse of cities as places of sophistication and order, places where certain types of behavior, in this case "township behaviour", should not belong. Evident in Priscilla"s comments are the close association of urban life with middle class affinities, not just in the necessity of paying higher rent for urban space but in eating more lavish foods and dressing up for public appearances. That place identities are intertwined with class identities is nothing new for social geographers and urban scholars. Indeed the language of contemporary planners who wish to bring back the golden days of the inner-city is

very often nothing short of "promoting a return of the middle classes back to the city" (Davidson, 2007:491). That the middle class are seen as bringing more desired behaviour and, importantly, higher levels of consumption forms part of a larger strategy to lure investment capital back into the inner-cities. Davidson writing about this process in inner-city London outlines how for much urban research it is "through a set of place-based practices that gentrifiers are seen to constitute and reproduce their class position" (2007:493). Certainly there are some crossovers here in urban identities constructing "place-based practices" or performances that are linked to notions of class.

However, the South African cities have as yet only just seen the beginnings of the types of intensive private-public gentrification developments experienced in the inner-cities of Europe and the USA.[39] In Durban the vision of the ordered and middle-class city strived for by the municipality and by Priscilla herself is interrupted by the lived realities of multiple class identities and divergent ways of living that the inner-city attracts. Priscilla"s desire to hold on to these aspirations of the „way things should be" suggests that she feels something is being eroded in this urban environment. In short the city cannot fulfill its promise. Alan Mabin perhaps best sums up this frustration when he comments that as people previously excluded from the city were able to "strike out towards the old centres of wealth and power in the CBDs [*central business districts*], just as that success was symbolised by the location of new public institutions (such as the new provincial capitals) in the CBDs of some cities, so much of the economic opportunity which those centres had represented flees to the suburbs" (2005:54). Whilst the move to the suburbs and out of the flatlands of the city, following European trends in the 1980s, started long before the demise of influx control (Maharaj, 2002:177), as Mabin points out, race-based fears of change in the late 1990s by both business and some individuals intensified this move. These shifts started a process of re-conceptualising the inner-city as crime ridden and downtrodden (a process outlined in more detail in *Chapter 3*), and simultaneously remapped the symbol of middle-class security and wealth as belonging to the suburbs (Bouillon, 2004, and Mabin, 2005). This transfer of

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[39] A close comparison would be the private development of *Arts on Main* as part of the regenerate of the Johannesburg CBD, this in itself forms part of an even larger private regeneration project of the area called the *Maboneng Precinct* (http://www.artsonmain.co.za/).

symbolic capital, away from the city is by no means complete but it leaves city or urban identities in a more ambiguous position than is presented by many of the participants in this study – can urban identities maintain the status they claim in light of these infrastructural and capital shifts? This ambiguity fuels a desperate attempt to defend the urban dream, as it is not just the city infrastructure and buildings, but people‟s sense of self that is perceived as being under threat. Resonating with local and global rhetoric of the sophisticated and ordered city the everyday interactions and talk that favours urban over other place identities, serves to regulate the behaviour of residents, in the form of self-regulation as described by Priscilla as well as through monitoring one‟s neighbours. As Foucault notes the practice of observation, regulation and defining morally acceptable behaviour, not just by the state but more pervasively through civic groups, has since the 18th century been intimately wrapped up in processes of urbanisation ([1973] 1994:62).   Indeed there are both pressures and benefits to conforming to these urban ideals; individuals with the financial ability and willingness to learn these place-based performances discard the label of township or location; the newly arrived and the urban poor, who cannot afford the luxury of engaging in this performance, face disdain and exclusion.

Decay and Refurbishing People

For many residents bringing practices that are deemed acceptable in the townships into the city is seen as destroying not just the vision of what the city should be but its physical infrastructure:

> Now what can they do, like Palm Bay at least now they‟ve got water, but still in the common property they‟ve got no lights, they got no lift because of the very same thing, people doesn‟t think that if I let you to come and stay free and your friend that the building will go down. Who‟s going to pay for all those damages what you have done and at the end of the day now some of us blame the Government. Now there the Government‟s got nothing to do with that it is our own doing. We need to think, like at the location, some of the people don‟t even pay for the water. Now you can let the person stay because it is only the electricity you paying, you can let them stay if you want to, that is your own house. It‟s not like a block of flats because, you cannot waste water for everybody because everybody is going to go down with you, it is where these people stay without water but they still have to pay rent.
> (*Interview with Priscilla 11th May 2010*)

Notions about township behaviour as causal factors in „bringing down" the area confirm findings in Bouillon"s study, where "the ongoing agitation and noise characterising parts of Albert Park is described by a good number of [his] interlocutors as transforming the area into a 'township' or 'location'" (2002:15). When place archetypes are displaced and disrupted by ways of being that are seen as belonging elsewhere some residents respond in anger and frustration. For example Marge, a longtime resident in her 60s, and visibly angry during the interview, tells me about the water facilities in some of the flats, one of which she was forced to move out of:

Marge: There are flats now that have stand pipes they have no water from the pipes. They take water from the stand pipe here in the town.

Kira: Are they illegally connected?

Marge: No, some are legally connected.

Kira: So it"s just like one tap.

Marge: Yes, you go to the Municipality and you apply for it, they come and they put it…the pipe. But you go down whether you on the 10th or the 11th floor.

Kira: Bring your water up in a bucket?

Marge: You go down – you go down what flat is it now there"s lots of them…1,2

Kira: Which street is this?

Marge: St. Georges.

Kira: Sho, it"s crazy man.

Marge: In town you must be carrying a bucket of water like you in the farm, Hmm! but no lift, even if there was a lift it would be broken because the water was going to drop in.

(Interview with Marge 18th November 2009)

For Marge this situation is not just a problem because people should have access to running water but more especially problematic because this is the case *in the city*. The imagery of carrying water in buckets on one‟s head belongs to the rural areas. This language of displacement is also present in the everyday explanations of people‟s behaviour, such as when Maya tells a young security guard who she feels disrespected her by shouting loudly at her in front of her shop, that "you have a degree but your head is still in the bush" (*Field Note 6th May 2010*).

The re-education of people who displace place is part of some official‟s jobs, albeit for the specific outcome of conforming to the rules of property ownership. Jason, a legal administrator of buildings, used to run education courses set up by a financial institution for new property owners (*Interview with Legal Administrator 4th August 2010*). Similarly a manager for a social housing project[40] in the inner-city explains one of his roles:

> As a social housing company we have been asked to regenerate the inner city. We buy even if the building is almost falling, refurbish the building, train people how to behave and so on because for most of them it‟s new to live in cities, and err.. quite a number of things are new to them so whenever I allocate a unit to a person I must make sure I spend almost an hour or more in fact we discuss the contents of the lease agreement because these are a legally binding document, they must know what is happening.
> *(Interview with Manager from a Social Housing Company 12th February 2010)*

On one level this addresses a practical concern. As outlined in the previous chapter tenants and owners who skimp on levies and rent are part of the process of making buildings into unsafe and degrading living spaces. Yet on the other hand it also

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[40] This social housing project is a section 21 company which operates in the eThekwini municipality; six out of their existing nine housing projects are situated in Albert Park. They run two blocks on St. Georges Street, two blocks on Park Street, one in Russell Street and the last in McArthur Street; "the company‟s primary purpose is the development of quality, affordable residential property for low to middle income households" (First Metro Housing website).

represents a socialisation of people targeted as uneducated in the workings of capitalist property ownership, a form of class initiation rite. Regenerating the inner-city then is more than just a process of refurbishing buildings, it requires refurbishing people too. But if people who are seen as having rural and township identities are viewed as problematic and requiring re-education, then those that carry faraway places within them are often outright rejected and criminalised.

Faraway Places

The transformation of Albert Park is not only explained by an influx of people from townships and rural areas but increasingly through immigrants from other African countries. South Africa has a long and rich history of migration and immigration, a flow of labour and skills without which South Africa"s current wealth and infrastructure would not exist (Sharp, 2008:1). Yet it "is only since 1994 that this influx has taken on crisis proportions in the official and public mind" (Maharaj and Moodley, 2000:152, also see Peberdy, 2001:19). South Africa is hardly unique in this. Immigration and the politics and policies that attempt to regulate and stem the flow of people (usually specific types of people) is at the heart of both national and global agendas. However, whilst the barriers and regulations to the flow of people – more specifically those of the "marginal class" – are tightened and refined, barriers and regulations to the flow of capital and goods across nations are rapidly being dismantled (Maharaj and Moodley, 2000:149). For Peberdy, now more than ever the "material and symbolic processes of inclusion and exclusion are embedded in the nation-building projects and national identity of states" (2001:16). Undoubtedly the influx of people into cities, from within and outside of South Africa, has rapidly increased, as indeed have the number of repatriations (Peberdy, 2001:19).

Durban is no exception to this pattern (see Maharaj and Moodley, 2000). For Frank the property investor who owns single units and entire blocks in Albert Park, and resides in the wealthy north coast suburb of Umhlanga, these changes conjure up an exotic imagery, as he comments:

> I've never really been there in the night time, like walking the streets, it must be unbelievable, like on a Friday night or something with all the cooking. It"s like being in another country. *(Interview with Investor Owner 7th July 2010)*

This touristic fantasy of "being in another country" 20 minutes" drive from your front door indicates the problematic extent of disparate lived realities in Durban, but it is also implicit in constructing a discourse of foreignness used to classify both people and the inner-city as belonging to elsewhere. In this study many participants, although importantly not all, expressed anti-foreigner sentiments. The word foreigner in Albert Park was often used to designate anyone perceived as belonging to another African country, regardless of legal status. That these people come from vastly different backgrounds and geographic locations, or speak a multitude of languages does little to disrupt the stereotype that forcibly unites them in their commonalty of being considered non-South African. The unwanted and frowned upon behaviour of residents who still did not know how to curb their township behaviour was tame in comparison to the vitriol against people who come from these faraway places.

Sitting outside Maya"s one morning I mention that the large group of homeless men normally in the park were no longer there.

> "Oh yes" Maya says "they have moved all those men to Williams" [*referring to the Metro police's removal of the men to the intersection above the rail lines*]. According to Maya they are now causing havoc in the new area stealing people"s coats and cell phones. Some of the residents want to get them moved from there too. It"s those "kwerekweres" Maya whispers to me "it"s only them". She says she doesn"t know why the police don"t just put them on ships, buses and taxis and "post them back" to where they came from.
> *(Field Note 9ᵗʰ June 2010)*

Maya"s fixing of foreigners as criminals is not only directed at this large group of men, who provide an easy target for community anxiety around crime, for many participants it extends more broadly to viewing all people deemed foreigners as bringing neighbourhood change and crime to Albert Park. For Jabulani, the young 20 year old whose mother had died, foreigners are the root cause of all unwanted neighbourhood changes (*Interview with Jabulani, 1ˢᵗ April 2008*). When I asked him later on in the interview what he would suggest would make a change for the better in Albert Park he responded,

well this would sound bad… if they took some of the foreigners away from here, because you know, you can't even walk in the street nowadays, it stinks walking in the streets nowadays, you just don't want to go there, I choose some of the streets I walk in now.

(*Interview with Jabulani 1ˢᵗ April 08*)

Nostalgia for a romanticised past, in conjunction with changing material infrastructure and ways of being in the city, means that these latest immigrants are seen as causal agents of current social issues and crime in the area. This is a very similar pattern to the allocation of blame for urban decay on people seen as coming from the townships, with an important exception. The anti-foreigner discourse both feeds from and resonates with rather draconian state legislation and conflicting public comments on immigrants in political speeches and the press, some of which are openly xenophobic (see Sally Peberdy"s (2001) article for numerous examples of this). From as early as 1998 newspaper articles on Albert Park linked foreign nationals with drugs, crime and urban decay: one *Sunday Tribune* article comments that these activities "have seen the area change from one of Durban"s first multiracial neighbourhoods to a lodge" (*The Sunday Tribune* 24ᵗʰ May 1998). The dialogue between state and popular perception gives discriminatory talk and behaviour against people viewed as foreigners official legitimacy; certainly the everyday talk of the participants "reveal the way in which „official" and „popular" exclusions cannot be separated from one another but occur together" (Greenburg, 2010:68). Policies regulating the admission of permits are strictly controlled, effectively criminalising those without permits simply by their very presence within the nation"s borders (Peberdy, 2001:25). Often xenophobia discourses are couched in similar state development rhetoric around protecting jobs and providing sufficient social services to citizens (both deliverables the current government has battled to engage on a satisfactory level). This use of development rhetoric echoes those used by apartheid supporters to maintain segregation and exclusion. Zinhle, a longtime resident in her late 30s, and closely connected to the then Ward Councillor, tells me when we met in

the Diakonia Centre[41] on St. Andrews Street, that the Centre offers no social support for the community but only focuses on foreigners:

> Zinhle looks up at the refugee social services centre in the building and says "they are treated like kings and queens", again she repeats her anger that there are no social services for people in the community.
> (*Field Note 31ˢᵗ March 2010*)

In Albert Park municipal government structures fuel these resentments. Dealing with the „problem of foreigners" is used as a political tool through which one is seen as addressing the needs of the community. For example when the, until recently, Ward Councillor Vusi Khoza first got elected in 2006 his profile in the free municipal magazine *The Metro Beat* stated his challenges were "to curb crime in Albert Park and deal with the influx of foreigners" (*eZasegagasini Metro*, 2006:8).

Popular Policing and Belonging

Surprisingly during the violence that exploded across the country against people identified as foreigners between May and June in 2008, leaving 62 people dead and tens of thousands displaced from their homes (Worby et al, 2008:2), Albert Park was very quiet. Although there were no reported attacks Albert Park got media attention during this time because many refugees and immigrants demonstrated outside the Diakonia Centre for assistance after the first spate of violence (*The Daily News* 30ᵗʰ May 2008). Shortly afterwards on the 10ᵗʰ July 2008 the city forcibly removed immigrants camped outside the city hall in protest at "local government"s inability to ensure a secure solution to their destitution" (*Mail & Guardian online* July 22ⁿᵈ 2008), to Albert Park. Tents donated by an anonymous donor provided basic shelter for the group for two months, but as the numbers of people living there dwindled, either through repatriation or reintegration, the pressure on the group to leave the park escalated, and in November that year the police forcibly removed the last makeshift shelters in Albert Park (Schwarer and Mwelase, 2010:5). The media reports on the refugees slowly started to associate the park with criminality, ignoring the city"s role in creating this situation. *The Daily News*, reporting the decision to move Metro

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[41] The Diakonia Centre, run by the Diakonia Council of Churches, is home to a number of small "social agencies committed to justice, peace and development" (http://www.diakonia.org.za) – only one of which is a refugee centre.

Police headquarters to the old bowling club adjacent to the park, stated "the dozens of illegal immigrants and petty criminals who have made Albert Park their home will soon be sharing their turf with 500 Metro police officers" (17th October 2008). Reporting that the park was not safe and was frequented by criminals was in some ways an accurate reflection of the attacks that had taken place within the park, both prior and during this period. Yet bunching together "illegal immigrants and petty criminals" was frequently done not just by the media but by the residents themselves. Whilst there were undoubtedly anti-foreigner sentiments in Albert Park before this makeshift refugee camp, the decision by the city to move people there (possibly since it was already perceived as an area that had lots of foreigners) and the truck loads of aid and supplies that came from civil society did little to dispel the myth that "the foreigners get treated like kings and queens", especially for people living in inadequate conditions inside the high rise buildings surrounding the park.

A few months after this, in early January 2009 the tensions within Albert Park erupted in the form of mob violence. A group of people, captured on CCTV camera, armed with sticks and knives walked down St. Georges Street and stormed a high rise building, known for accommodating refugees and foreign nationals, and attacked the people inside (*The Mercury* 6th January 2009). It was reported that the mob was demanding to know who was a "kwerekwere" (*The Daily News* 6th January 2009). Whilst there are conflicting stories of what happened that night what is clear is that three men were forced to jump out of their windows to escape the mob, two died that night and another was taken in a critical state to hospital (*Mail and Guardian* 7th January 2009). The court case of the five accused, including the then ward councillor Vusi Khoza and members of the community policing forum, is two years later still ongoing. Two of the accused, Marge and Zinhle, were both women I had interviewed and with whom I had friendly relations. When I found out that Marge, in my experience a warm and grandmotherly figure, had allegedly been one of the main instigators forcing the men to jump whilst Zinhle had blocked people at the bottom of the stairs from assisting the victims of the attack (*Interview 19th August 2010*) my bones chilled at the speed at which what I had assumed was rather ignorant hate speech turned into bloody murder. Even an analysis of the frustrations of Albert Park residents at the lack of policing services to address crime up until then does not

fully explain or excuse in any way this violent patrolling of who belongs and who does not in the inner-city.

This obsession with maintaining strict geographic and social notions of separate places for categories of people is also apparent in how space is viewed within Albert Park; here city blocks a few hundred meters from each other are seen as worlds apart. Foreigners are strongly associated with specific streets perceived as dangerous and downtrodden. During my interview with Marge she tells me that St. Georges Street and Park Street are worse than the other streets because of crime, overpopulation and 24 hour taverns, and "well there're lots of foreign people more than the local people" (*Interview with Marge 18th November 2009*). When I was interviewed by the body corporate of my block before I moved into Albert Park my partner and I were warned that if we wanted to be safe we would stay away from St. Georges Street:

> The man [*the chairperson of the body corporate*] said that you can get any drug you want on that street and that it is where the Nigerians and Tanzanians live, his wife chips in to say "anything and everything lives there".
> (*Field Note 31st October 2007*)

Just over two years later when talking to Jacob, a security guard in his late 20s, about working on St. Andrews Street these sentiments remained unchanged:

> I ask him what it is like doing the night shift and he says it is fine, very quiet – not like on the other street he says he will never go back to living there. I clarify that he is talking about St. Georges Street, which he is. "This street is quiet" – he says indicating St. Andrews Street – on the other street it is noisy, with muggings and crime. When I ask him why he thinks this is he shakes his head and says it is full of foreigners, they are "like ants" over there. I ask him which country the people come from. He says "I can't really tell which country" but from all African countries.
> (*Field Note 3rd February 2010*)

What is of concern here, besides the obvious discrimination against people classified as foreigners, is that in both the extracts this imagined group is both homogenised and dehumanised. Homogenisation is implicit in the construction of difference, since "upholding differences among groups,…, typically entails the erasure of differences

within groups" (Appiah, 2005:239). Once homogenised, a group can be spoken about as an indistinguishable mass, a thing, rather than as people, as is done above when the chairperson"s wife says "anything and everything lives there". Again in the second extract they are likened to ants, a swarm that is more insect than human. In both these cases the fear of the swarm moving from that place – St. Georges Street – to this place – St. Andrews Street – speaks to the anxiety around mobility of people who are out of place. Of course this abstract notion of a homogeneous group is ironically constructed through the ability to distinguish this difference in individuals within the everyday interactions.   Race-thinking in South Africa has created well trained recruits at reading difference off the body. Here familiar markers of difference are re-utilised in what Greenburg (2010:69) calls a new kind of pencil test, where skin tone, accent, language and dress amongst others (Peberdy, 2001:21) make up a set of auditory and visual cues with which to differentiate „foreignness".

In a passing conversation with the supervisor of my block, a women in her late 50s called Janet, she told me after doing a few interviews with potential tenants that,

> the first girl was fine, but I was a bit wary because she came alone and she
> sounded like she had a bit of foreigner so…
> (*Field Note 11th July 2008*)

The "so…" is left hanging, the rationale behind her hesitation does not require explanation or justification. As with race-thinking the differences carried in the bodies of people classified by the viewer as foreign are assumed to be common parlance. For Landau this discriminatory discourse and practice is symptomatic of South Africans as it "provides a means of transcending their allochthony by staking claims to previously forbidden sites" (2006:127) of the urban centres. Whilst not disputing this possibility the supervisor above has lived in Albert Park for over 20 years, during and after apartheid Group Areas Act, and since she is classified as "white" she never was a forbidden stranger in the city in the sense Landau implies. Perhaps then it is a more complex issue of belonging that is wrapped up in this nexus of foreignness, belonging to a nation, belonging to the city and, on a more micro scale, who belongs in St. Andrews Street.

But how do these faraway place identities intersect the axis of township and urban identities discussed earlier. Here lies a contradiction since many residents classified with the broad term foreigners are savvy urban negotiators of city spaces, and

indeed have often lived in more than one large city on the continent (Maharaj and Moodley, 2000:153, and Greenburg, 2010:71). Priscilla in her supervisor role of policing correct urban behavior in her block of flats recognises the value of this when she tells me that:

> Foreigners they not all the same you got good ones. Like now I got good ones in my building, they know how to keep their flat clean, they know how to open the door [here she refers to the responsible use of the security disks at the front door], they know how to close the door, they know that they mustn"t make noise as you came here it is quiet. Not that there"s no people here, there is, but they know the rules, you do not make noise in the corridor, you cannot open your radio high, no because I also have a radio but I don"t want to hear your music because I got my own.
> (*Interview with Priscilla 11th May 2010*)

For Priscilla her tenant"s urban identity holds more value than their foreign identities. Yet this urban identity is often superseded by belonging to a foreign place – in short these are urbanites that are considered outsiders. Their exclusion from belonging to the city is premised on their belonging to another nation, a faraway elsewhere. Through discourses of citizenship and legality, as well as the multiple physical boundaries and bureaucratic processes that manage mobility into the country, national identities directly regulate place and belonging in the everyday context. One way of managing those who appear, to use Bauman"s term, "socially distant yet physically close" (1993:153) is to create an abstract enclave within one"s sense of place in which you can confine the foreigner – in this case the St. Georges Street area. Of course this imagined confinement is refuted daily by the heterogeneous livelihoods within all the streets in Albert Park, but when influx into an area is seen as beyond control it offers a psychological safety net that maintains the illusion of the other continuing to belong to elsewhere, and importantly, not here. This fencing off strategy is not new to Albert Park: in 1989 a city representative suggested, in light of the existing integration in *Arusha Court*, that the block be a designated mixed block or "free area" whilst strictly maintaining the Group Areas Act in the rest of the city (*The Natal Mercury* 5th July 1989).

Place Identities – Benefits, Costs and Consequences

The benefits of appropriating an urban identity are for the most part fairly clear; it brings with it a sense of personal empowerment, the security of belonging and finding commonality with other urban residents. If as Maryniak suggests, in conversation with Tripathi, "in a more general way, the contact of personalities in cities is transitory, and superficial, though also less restricted, less bound by convention and less predictable than elsewhere" (Maryniak and Tripathi, 2006:152), urban identities may offer a reprieve from other social identities that restrict individuals. On this note further research into how gendered identities are reshaped through moving into the city would be an important and fascinating line of enquiry. Appropriating an urban identity may also translate into more material benefits since access to city resources and infrastructure provides various economic and social opportunities. Yet place identities are undoubtedly a form of social differentiation which, as was argued above, mediates interactions in ways that police belonging and acceptance, and as a result carries costs to those excluded, and consequences more broadly for all residents. Place identities in Albert Park did not just provide a discourse of who should be living in the city; it provided a mechanism through which to explain the lived realties of being in a neighbourhood that has poor quality and insecure housing as well as high levels of crime. Constructing groups of people on which neighbourhood fears and anxiety can be offloaded may well be a coping strategy commonly found worldwide, but in the local context of Albert Park it creates a "red herring" that disempowers agents from tackling the root causes of these social issues.

The focus by both city officials and the participants of this study on an imagined collective who do not know how to behave in the city, such as people who bring with them township behaviour, serves to decontextualise social relations from their structural underpinnings. The historic and contemporary role of local and state government in creating and shaping these identities through geographic inequalities is lost in this discourse of allocating blame. Failing to recognise how the hierarchy of place identities normalises unequal living conditions in the city means that those at

the bottom of the hierarchy are most vulnerable. For example a Metro Police officer explains some of the conditions in buildings that have been closed down in the area:

> There are a number of sweat shops here as well where some businessmen would buy a block and then it is a factory, but then they will put cardboard and old wood and they"ll section it off and you would find women from the rural areas that would live there. They reconnect the power to the main power box and then from there there"s just extension leads right through and they"ll sit there with sewing machines doing work for the owner of the building, where he has a business manufacturing long pants or shirts and they"ll sit there and work and then still from the money they earn they must pay him rent and that. No toilet facilities, unbelievable conditions with children living there, electric wires, bare wires.
> *(Interview with Metro Police Officer 30th August 2010)*

Equally troubling is how these place identities provide a surface explanation for change that is blind to the more structural conditions of capitalist property development and neglectful owners. As outlined in *Chapter 3* these are both powerful agents that create and maintain the inhuman conditions in which some people live in Albert Park. These macro structures are recognized by some participants but on the whole muted through the manipulation and appropriation of place identities. Allocating people as belonging to these symbolic place archetypes constructs divisions amongst residents who, to use Sanele the young lifeguard"s imagery from the previous chapter, see themselves as belong to either the "suburban" or the "squatter camp" side of Albert Park. These symbolic divisions are made regardless of shared economic hardships and need for social services and support, in effect weakening unified civil action and lobbying to improving inner-city conditions around the actual needs of all residents, rather than the elusive Band-Aid of global gentrification.

On a level of personal interactions these divisions around place and identity can reshape the very place people are trying to protect. For Jade this distinction between „us" and „them" has created a disillusion with her own sense of belonging to a place that used to have strong neighbourhood connections:

> It"s like a different experience altogether, because now there"s like different politics going on. Before it was like ok, we worried about the crime situation,

then we also worried about umm… people were just worried about simple basics like the simplicity of ok we might not have electricity because we can‟t afford it or the rent was too high, it was way simpler but not as simple as I make it out to be but it was the norm. If I didn‟t have electricity then we‟d cook next door, or that type of thing but there was still that humanitarian thing going on. Now there this thing of ok "You not from this country so I‟ll treat you like crap" there‟s that xenophobic thing that‟s going on, and it‟s an uncomfortable situation because you‟re walking down the street and there‟s fights going on and there‟s like I don‟t actually know what‟s going to happen like I may get caught in the cross fire. Do you know what I mean, and you find you trying to make a conversation with someone maybe from Zimbabwe and there‟s that stigma of "oh ja but you‟re South African" but like that„s not how it should be like to begin with, you know what I mean, and then you find that kids are playing with each other but there‟s also that xenophobic stigma that‟s running around in their heads and it‟s like "shew" this is not cool at all.

Kira: So you think that rather than being worried, in general, about the kind of crime that now it‟s more like tension between neighbours?

Jade: Yes, it‟s that tension that‟s built up, it‟s quite sad as well. It is, so it‟s like wow, Ok so now we can‟t even be like neighbourly that type of thing.
(*Interview with Jade 19th August 2010*)

Here place identities rupture social relations that provided strategic safety nets and means of surviving in the city. On a more macro scale these discourses of difference, as with the distinctions between township and urban identities, erode the shared experiences of both immigrants and South Africans of "overcrowded living conditions and unstable subletting agreements [which] mean that housing arrangements are often volatile" for all city residents (Greenburg, 2010:71). In short these constructed divisions provide convenient alibis for inefficient officials at all levels and create opportunities for criminal entrepreneurs such as Abdul, ensuring that unified civil action and protest against exploitation and service non-delivery is severely crippled. This is true not just of Albert Park. Bourdieu for example, writing on the rising anti-foreigner sentiments in France, observes that xenophobic discourse works to "generate hatred out of the misfortunes of society – unemployment, delinquency, drug abuse, etc" (1998:16).

The findings in this study indicate that for many people living in South Africa past segregation, the omnipotence of race thinking and current inequalities make policing the borders of belonging through place identities a familiar territory through which to explain difference. Social change then is often described as the result of the movement of individuals and groups who do not stay where they belong, this is extended all the more viciously to those seen as crossing over not just the borders of the city but the borders of the nation. The very borders that are meant to deliver and protect our reconciliation through unifying South Africans as one people (Peberdy, 2001:27). For South Africans staying in your place is vital to maintaining social order; an ideology of place that emphasises not just different geographies, but different social, cultural and even moral spheres. What is worrying is that the question of exactly what type of social order is maintained by the desire „for people to stay in their place" is not part of the everyday discussions. Unpacking how place identities support an insider vs. outsiders model for explaining crime in the area illustrates some of the problematic consequences that arise from these discourses.

Insiders, Outsiders and Crime

Aspects of the crime and security issues within Albert Park were discussed in the previous chapter, and certainly almost all the participants I met had personal experiences of violent crime in the area. Yet, despite this the city was still thought of as being safer than the townships. Besides the countless stories of muggings and robbery there were also more visceral stories, Maya had had bullets fly past her store when a civilian opened fire on some thieves (*Field Note 11th March 2010*), and she also witnessed an elderly man she knew being stabbed for his wallet in the alley next to her store (*Field Note 24th February 2010).* Janet told me how she was hit with the handle of a gun, in her words "gun butted", when the pharmacy down the road was robbed (*Interview with Janet and Roger 25th March 2008*). Jacob, the young security guard, told me how he had seen a crowd of people beat a man to near death one night with fists and broken bottles – the crowd had responded out of anger he said because the man had stabbed and killed a woman at the garage around the corner. The man apparently died later in hospital (*Interview with Jacob 10th February 2010*).

These violent moments in Albert Park necessitate making sense of crime in a way in which one is still able to live a reasonable life in the area. Of course this concern with crime needs to be contextualised within the broader South African context. Crime, or at the very least the fear of crime, plagues most South Africans and is a persistent theme associated with transitioning to democracy (Louw, 1997:138 and Wardrop, 2009:115), and perhaps an inescapable sensitivity to the precarious nature of living in a country with extraordinarily high levels of violent crime. On the morning I took Priscilla to pick up her cheque at the sheriff"s office we shared small talk, she told me how she had seen a mugging at a set of traffic lights we drove past, and I shared my own story of a smash and grab.[42] For a minute I had a nightmarish vision of South Africans becoming renowned for small talk on experiences of being victims of crime, as opposed to the stereotypical small talk of the English and the weather. Crime then is something on everyone"s mind.

How do residents incorporate this into their personal narratives? After all if you live in a place which many people see as dangerous then you need a mechanism through which to explain your safety. Residents who do not develop this coping strategy often feel trapped inside their flat and do not engage in the everyday goings on in the area. For example Charlini, my neighbour a professional woman in her late 30s or early 40s who is completing her Masters part-time, explains:

> It was quite daunting because I use to live in Shallcross [*a fairly middle class suburb in Chatsworth, one of the designated Indian areas under apartheid*] and um, in a close-knit community and I could check around every day outside and be outside with the puppies and enjoy the neighbours" company and that. But, here I find that I need to be home before five, you know, and I am home and I stay home. I really can"t walk on the street. If you do, then you have to be on your guard about what you are wearing, take care you are not wearing jewelry or attract anybody in terms of cell phones, etc.
> (*Interview with Charlini 25th June 2008*)

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[42] Smash and grab is a colloquial term used when you are waiting at a traffic light and your window is smashed by a person attempting to steal your belongings from your car.

For other residents being seen as, and indeed feeling like, an insider afforded a perception of personal protection and was central to reclaiming a sense of security in the area. During our initial interview with the body corporate one of the woman, who has lived in the area for 11 years, told us "after a while people around here get to know you and then it is safe to walk around as they leave you alone" (*Field Note 31ˢᵗ October 2007*). Likewise for Maya who often stated that if anything were to happen to her it would be "by an outsider" not someone from Albert Park (*Field Note 8ᵗʰ October 2009*). Transferring criminal intensions onto outsiders, those who are not part of us, meant that insiders could still feel safe in the areas where they lived – to a degree. The construction of outsiders, unsurprisingly, drew extensively from place identities. Outsiders, the perpetrators of crime, were seen as people from the townships and foreigners. The association between foreigners and crime was dealt with earlier in this chapter, but notably many participants during interviews also stated that it was people from the townships who were the criminals in the area.

> Now the Albert Park it"s not that bad hey like people they saying because of the crime that"s happened before. Because people from Umlazi, Kwa Mashu, they came in Albert Park and do wrong things and then going back there. Now the people they think it"s the people staying in Albert Park.
> (*Interview with Sanele 5ᵗʰ March 2010*)

Jacob too confirms Sanele"s view when he explains why it is the outsiders who do crime in the area:

> **Jacob**: But there"s a lot of people coming there who"s not staying there, they are the people creating the crime there. If you are staying here, in St. Andrews Street, you can"t commit a crime here.
>
> **Kira:** Ja, sure, sure
>
> **Jacob**: Because all the people if they stay here they know you. So if you not staying here it is easy for you to commit crime […].
>
> **Kira**: So you think its people who come and they are drinking here in the tavern, they don"t live in Albert Park.

> **Jacob:** Some of them they not living here, they come from the locations, different places […] so they coming here to rob the people and go back.
>
> (*Interview with Jacob 10ᵗʰ February 2010*)

I was told more than a few times that it was outsiders, particularly people from the "locations" who come and drink and cause trouble in the 24 hour taverns (*Interview with Marge 18ᵗʰ November 2009*), or who bring in the stolen cars to be worked on in the road side mechanic shops off St. Georges Street (*Interview with Manager from a Social Housing Company 12ᵗʰ February 2010*). For many of the participants attributing crime to outsiders from the townships did little to disrupt their notions that foreigners were also criminals, except for Sanele who told me:

> Foreigners they staying here they do their business there, they not the ones doing the crime. It‟s our African people from the townships doing the crime here, and the only problem the people in Albert Park what they do we‟ve got too much taverns, so especially the youth each and every corner in Albert Park people they drinking you see, it‟s crowded now in Albert Park, it‟s crowded.
>
> (*Interview with Sanele 5ᵗʰ March 2010*)

Here Sanele touches on a rather difficult conundrum. He acknowledges that some insiders do have a „problem" or at least have a role to play in some of the „problems" of Albert Park. It is here that the insider/outsider model becomes unstable, how then do you explain insiders who do crime? Acknowledging this requires some careful navigation by those who consider themselves insiders, since accepting that insiders can also be criminals means that the protection afforded to insider status may not be as strong as what one would like to believe. If insiders too cannot be trusted then your area is at once less secure and a little more dangerous.

For the most part participants did not label insiders who engaged in illegal activities criminals. Contrasting two extracts around criminal behaviour from the interview with Jabulani illustrates how explanations of crime take on different forms depending on who is spoken about.

> The foreigner, they changed everything around here. Within the blink of an eye everything just changed. There was a whole lot of crime happening. It

wasn"t like before, cause cause uhm when there was no foreigners, the crime was there… there was house-breaking but now you get house-breaking every second day of the week, you get house breaking… ja they had an impact, a very bad one and there was a whole lot of drugs happening when they came around.

In the above extract foreigners are seen as being the cause of the increase in crime, later in that interview he tells me that a solution to this problem would be to remove these people from the area. In the extract below Jabulani tells me about some of his peers who hang out on the street corner.

The only thing they are able to do is sit on street corners day in day out, smoke and drink like there is no tomorrow for them, well there"s a life wasted there. At some stage I even thought about having a programme, about the kids, the kids who have lost hope around here or anywhere else for that matter. Just to find out what it is that they do when they get up in the morning and what is it that they do at night, when the sun goes down. Because I always see them, say I am going to school in the morning, I see them sitting there. As early as 7 o"clock in the morning and they are sitting there and smoking and then as late as 10 o"clock at night they are still at the same spot, but what do these guys do during the day…The only way they could have thought about making money was robbing somebody, mugging somebody in the street and then that is how they make money. That"s not a good thing.
(*Interview with Jabulani 1st April 2008*)

Note that there is acknowledgement and condemnation of criminal behaviour, but his peers are seen as requiring interventions to give them hope again, rather than needing to be removed. Often participants described the behaviours of insiders who did crime as being the result of wider social problems of unemployment and drugs[43] in the area. Certainly unemployment and drugs offer some analytic attention as the conditions in which crime becomes a viable option, especially to young people in the area, particularly considering that the unemployment rate for eThekwini (the greater Durban municipality) was 28,09% in 2006 (State of the Cities Report, 2006). The ward level statistics to which Albert Park belongs saw a 75% increase in

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[43] Increasing numbers of young people in Albert Park are taking a drug nicknamed *wonga*, a lethal mix of various chemicals including heroin and anti-retroviral medication (*Interview with Jabulani 1st April 2008, Interview with Jade 19th August 2010* and *Field Note 31st March 2010*).

unemployment between the 1996 and 2001 census collection (Statistics South Africa, 2001). But what is of interest here is how this deviance is seen as lying in wider societal issues rather than within the individuals themselves – the exact opposite approach to that of placing the blame for crime on individual foreigners and township people.

Besides their contributions to the perceived ills of the neighbourhood the problem of insiders who do crime holds another personal dilemma. On the one hand these insiders are problematic as they destabilise strategic devices for explaining one"s own security in the area; on the other hand they are neighbours or at the very least children of one"s neighbours – and therefore demand neighbourly allegiances. They can also paradoxically provide protection against criminal outsiders. Jade explains how she battles with these dilemmas on returning to live in Albert Park after a few years living elsewhere:

> It"s very difficult, so that"s what you get blown away with coming back. Sometimes you walk at night and you think am I even safe, but the sad thing is that you've grown up around the area so people know you and it"s so twisted because like there"s comfort in that in some way. Like when I walk into *Arusha* downstairs there"s always a flock of boys smoking, when you walk in and then they greet you obviously because they know you and when you see them in a dodgy area and you are walking past and because they know you they will say hi! And you take comfort in that because you know ok I"m safe they not going to do anything you know, but the next person they don"t know is it safe for them that type of thing?[44] So it"s like a very hectic environment you know, like my eight year old niece doesn"t go out after 5 o"clock. Because you don"t know what"s going to happen it"s just like, ja.
> (*Interview with Jade 19th August 2010*)

She tells me during this interview that members of the community policing forum (CPF), who would be prior informed of police raids in the area, would try and protect the young people they knew from being arrested by giving them a heads up on the raid times. Here insiders protect other insiders who do crime, but importantly are not

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[44] Jade"s experience is not unique, see Marcelo Lopes de Souza on the complex relations in Brazil between favela residents and the organised drug dealers in the area who carry out forms of protection and violent exploitation (2009:32).

seen as criminals, whilst simultaneously being involved in police efforts to sort out crime in the area.[45] Jade has experienced how tricky this grey area between neigbourhood solidarity and wanting to „dean-up‟ Albert Park can be. A few years ago when she was part of the CPF and went along to a police raid the young men she knew from the area who were arrested begged her to phone their mothers for them. She says she was worried that people may retaliate because she was involved in this bust, and for a while people commented that she was hanging out with the police, but in the end she tells me they did nothing because in a way they too understood she was just trying to help (*Interview with Jade 19th August 2010*).

The category of insider then is somewhat ambiguous in relation to crime even if in everyday conversations it is used to associate crime with outsiders, and give affirmation to insiders that the problems in their area are brought in from elsewhere. A more recent development however has also started to erode the category of outsider in the area for some participants. In 2009 the Metro Police renovated an old building in Albert Park for their new offices (*Independent on Saturday* 16th May 2009). This particular improvement of policing services through increased foot patrols and visible arrests has started to change the way some of the residents think about their neighbourhood. For Maya since the Metro have arrived the streets are "a 100% better" (*Field Note 8th October 2009*). It is important not to under estimate the increased sense of security this particular policing presence in the area achieved for each and every one of the participants I met. I use the word *particular* here on purpose as Albert Park has had a South African Police (SAP) office in nearby Broad Street for many years; unfortunately a large portion of the participants saw the SAP as corrupt, disengaged from the community and highly inefficient. But this increase in Metro Police presence has another possibly unintended spin off on how people view outsiders in Albert Park. Priscilla on telling me that the Metro Police have improved security in the area also tells me the following:

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[45] Marks and Wood (2007:134) note that particular mixes of social factors creates "the possibility and the imperative for wide ranging localised responses to experiences of insecurity", and indeed as they correctly point out we know too little on how this "everyday policing" supports, intersects and subverts policing strategies in the city.

Priscilla: Because we used to point fingers and say it"s the foreigners doing that and it"s not us – you know – before we got the Metro, but now since we got the Metro I don"t hear nobody pointing fingers because at least the truth has come out. Because they take the people and lock them whether you are a Zulu, a Xhosa or a Sotho, they just lock you up, they don"t ask you who you are. Like before we used to say no it"s the foreigners take the bags because now we think they were the only people to do wrong things and we were wrong, we were definitely wrong because everybody does stupid things sometimes.

Kira: Absolutely, it doesn"t matter who you are.

Priscilla: You don"t have to point fingers because that one is like that, now people also realise that now that was wrong. Because it wasn"t only the foreigners who"s were doing wrong, everybody was doing it, whoever needs money and was not working. They don"t want to go and work, they want to work from us. We work and buy phones and they"re taking it from us.
(*Interview with Priscilla 11ᵗʰ May 2010*)

This suggests that state or municipal led delivery that meets people"s needs in an area, through offering a desired municipal service, may also start to shape more positive social relations through eroding notions of difference and blame (these possibilities are discussed further in *Chapter 5*). It also suggests that Alan Mabin may be accurate when he states that "the processes and patterns of change will be shaped, as elsewhere in the world, to an increasing extent by responses to crime, violence and policing, or the absence thereof" (2005:45).

In the lived experiences of crime and social relations in Albert Park then insiders and outsiders are not the obvious and clear distinctions they are made out to be. Rather, like so many other social constructs, they are flexible and bendable devices through which different agents explain and justify specific social relations. In the case of Albert Park anxiety around the lived realities of experiencing urban changes in housing and crime manifest themselves through drawing on the familiar notions of place and belonging. At this point the reader may be wondering whether these prevalent identities, which police belonging and exclusion, cut across and intertwine

with notions of race; a fair question in terms of the stated aims of this research project. The following chapter takes this analysis further by addressing how these contemporary place identities raise interesting questions on the intersection of race, place and identity.

Chapter 5: Race, Place and Reflections on Multiplicity

In the first chapter of this thesis I outlined the research aim as examining how racial identities are being reconstructed and/or deconstructed within the multifaceted urban area of Albert Park, paying specific attention to how new emergent identities are either transcending or reifying the narrow racial categories carried forward into post-apartheid South Africa. Earlier in the *Methodology chapter* I argued that ethnography offered possibilities through which to explore the fluidity of social identities as well as the ways in which various identities intertwine and intersect each other. Rather than focus solely and directly on race I believe we are better positioned to illustrate how and why race thinking is perpetuated through analysing the multiplicities of lived experiences. I will not repeat the arguments for this outlined in the first two chapters, instead in this chapter I will now focuses more directly on what the findings, previously presented, as well as some additional data, tell us about race, in short answering the core research question above.

What I hope is already evident in the data and the analysis up until this point, is that the answer to this is multifaceted; ideas around race in Albert Park are both entrenched and transcended, at times almost simultaneously such as in the formation of place identities. Critically then we should not assume a fixed reading of race. Although most participants make use of apartheid race categories – „white", „black" or „african", „coloured" and ‚indian" – it is difficult to attach a singular meaning to the various ways these categories are used. Neither did race per se dominate any one participant"s personal stories or sense of self; instead at different moments many other identities provided more relevant narrative strategies. Race and race thinking materialised and dissipated depending on the context and physical environment of interactions, such as during Priscilla and my experience at the Sheriff"s office. I have already unpacked some of the ways in which race intersects with class (such as my own reactions to class in *Chapter 2* and how middle class aspirations feed into urban identities in *Chapter 4*), as well as how identities around motherhood or being part of

a group of supervisors cut across race, at moments rendering it irrelevant. Keeping in mind that participants in this study were not asked direct questions on race, this chapter analyses some of the ways in which race entered into the language of everyday conversations. It then unpacks what the multiplicity of ways of using and viewing race tell us about how and why people"s notions of race may be changing, or not, within this urban setting. For participants race is used as a differentiator (albeit in various ways), as a mechanism for discrimination, and importantly also a mechanism for inclusion and conciliation. Before moving into the everyday talk of the participants, it is useful to illustrate the often contradictory nature of intersecting identities through examining how the place identities discussed in the previous chapter both challenge common sense race thinking, and reify racial stereotypes.

Place – What Does This Tell Us About Race?

To suggest that place identities in South Africa are not racialised at all would be a deliberate exercise in amnesia of their historic conception, and disregard of their contemporary manifestations. The symbolic imagery and status afforded to different types of places is a direct outcome of apartheid racial segregation and, as was indicated in the previous chapter, forms of race thinking have created a familiar practice of identifying people who are seen to carry with them faraway places. Indeed some have argued that xenophobia in South Africa is intensely racial. Greenburg argues that the discrimination towards some foreigners in South Africa continue to "reveal the *social production* of race through everyday practices such as reading marks of non-belonging off the body" (2010:70, emphasis original). Attributing change in a neighbourhood to people seen as new is a phenomenon found in many cities worldwide. As Richard Ballard notes this "common reactionary theme emerges in which the established group attempts to maintain the status quo against what are seen as the disruptive effects of newcomers" (2005:65). Indeed attributing crime and neighbourhood decay to an influx of people seen as belonging to another group, often distinguished by ethnicity or race, has been well documented not just in South African cities (Morris, 1999; Donaldson and van der Merwe, 1999;

and Maharaj and Mpungose, 1994) but in cities worldwide.[46] Distinguishing between more legitimate and trust worthy neighbours through creating notions of insiders and outsiders, is enabled by hegemonic discourses of race, class and culture that prescribe blueprints of otherness through which to identify and justify difference.

As a result of segregation in South Africa people thought of as „new" to the city would generally be classified as „black" since encompassed in this movement into the city is a strong sense of moving out of the townships (designated „black" areas under apartheid) and rural areas (in a racist ideology seen as the traditional origin of „black" identity (Dixon and Durrheim, 2000: 39)).   „White" mobility on the other hand is depicted as a move away from the inner-city and into the quieter and wealthier suburbs (Schensul, 2008:297).   Countless studies point to the way in which the South African city demographics have followed this pattern (in regards to Durban see Schensul, 2008; and Maharaj, 2002).   Indeed at a ward level the South African statistics data from the census, specifically collated to give ward councillors a feel for their constituency, offers the following table for ward 32,[47] in which Albert Park falls:

Population group			
Persons	1996	2001	% change
African	8983	13952	55.32
Coloured	1543	1261	-18.28
Indian	4125	3787	-8.19
White	4866	2502	-48.58
Total population	19684	21502	9.24

(Table 1: Statistics for eThekwini Metropolitan – Ward 32, available at
http://www.statssa.gov.za/census2001/atlas_ward/stats/stats_59200032.html)

Even after the end of apartheid segregation, it would appear, places are still racialised in the official eye. Racialising the movement of people and the imagined groups they are categorised into ties crime and urban decay into common sense notions of „blackness". The manager at the social housing company who has his

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[46] For example see Jon May"s study „Globalization and the politics of place: place and identity in an inner London neighbourhood" for an analysis on how "race and class intersect in the construction of place identities" (1996:194). Likewise Philippe Bourgois" chapter on the history of El Barrio in his ethnographic account *In Search of Respect – Selling Crack in El Barrio* also offers a fascinating look at how various notions of ethnicity were mobilised to claim this Manhattan neighbourhood (1995:48).

[47] Ward 32 includes Bulwer, Congella, Durban Bay (Albert Park), Durban CBD West, Maydon Wharf, Musgrave, Umbilo and Warwick, a diverse set of neighbourhoods that spans various levels of property prices, as well as residential and industrial land (Web 5).

offices on the corner of McArthur and Park Street (considered part of the dangerous zone in Albert Park) recognises this when he tells me:

> Nothing happens! Scared, I mean if everyone is going to be scared which means that all of us should be focusing on crime so that we can easily walk in the area. Even where I am working, I am the most senior guy, in fact when the company was started I was the first one to be employed. All of them are scared because they are not of the same pigmentation as these guys. You see, I was deployed here and each time an Indian person or someone different from me has to come here, "hey, how safe is it?".
> *(Interview with Manager from a Social Housing Company 12th Feb 2010)*

The influx of people perceived as „black", or at least not „white", is seen as providing an accepted and totalising explanation for change. One of the movers who helped me move into Albert Park holds similar views:

> The day my partner and I moved into Albert Park we hired a small moving company to help us with the furniture. As our furniture was brought up to the 14th floor one of the owners of this company and I stood outside in the corridor, looking over the numerous high rise buildings that cluster around Albert Park. He looked at me and said "you are moving into a rough area hey" whilst making small punching movements with his fists. "It used to be all white here" he comments as he sweeps his hand to indicate the buildings we are looking at, "but now it is just mixed everywhere". I replied that that did not concern me it was crime that I was worried about, "ya, that is what I mean" he replied.
> (*Field Note 8th November 2007*)

The mover‟s perception of Albert Park fits a popular view where explanations for criminal activities and urban decay are viewed through a racial lens. A few of the residents I spoke to also attributed unwanted behaviour to race rather than other forms of difference. After Maya had, once again, given me a positive outline of how crime had improved in the area, another longtime resident John, originally from England, who visits Maya each morning, gave me his version of change:

> John shakes his head and says "this place will never get better". I ask him what he thinks the main problem is in Albert Park? "Is it just the crime?", he nudges his head in the direction of one of Maya‟s customers, a woman who most likely would be classified „black", and replies "no, they just don‟t know

how to live in flats". I know that he is implying „black people" but press him further, with a slightly confused "oh, why have you had problems in your block?", "No" he says but seems a little exacerbated that I don't appear to have immediately got his racist insinuation. Maya joins us again and this conversation ends.

(Field Note 24th February 2010)

Charlini my neighbor who moved to Albert Park from Shallcross was slightly more overt in her views on race:

> It used to be really rowdy there [*referring to the building above Maya's store*]. They used to have fist-fights and you know, swearing and parties and it used to be really bad and the owner of the building got them all out. So it got a bit peaceful but I still feel I don't really have a lot of peace and quiet here. Because you know on the weekend its very rowdy and you know I just feel, if I may say so, the Blacks in this area, they"re just not considerate people and they tend to have loud music and you know their partying just goes on and on until late hours of the morning, and there are always disturbances, you know, there"s a soccer match and you feel like you in the middle of ABSA stadium, you know, there is just such a din in this place, so, ja, that is one side of it.
> *(Interview with Charlini 25th June 2008)*

Of course that Charlini asks superficially for my permission to talk about „black people" in a certain way is because she perceives me as being „white" and therefore assumes I accept her racialised framework of difference and would be open to her essentialist views of people she thinks we both hold as different. Charlini"s, as well as John"s comments, are symptomatic of how reading race off the body of an individual enables misconceptions and assumptions within personal encounters. Both these participants assume that through reading my „race" they know something about me and the way I think about the world. Moreover the myopia of race thinking, for example in Charlini"s case, means she is also blind to alternate and more probable explanations for her experiences. Noise levels and „partying" are directly related to the high number of taverns in Albert Park mostly, according to other residents, frequented by people from outside of Albert Park. For example in Russell Street alone there are four large drinking taverns within five meters of each other – a proximity that contravenes city by-laws. Some taverns operate illegally; whilst others have obtained liquor licenses thorough corrupt officials at the police licensing

department (*Interview with iTrump Officials 21ˢᵗ July 2010*). Similarly Albert Park has a large student population, and whilst in itself a gross generalisation, students are more likely to enjoy an evening out than most. Here race thinking, and racism, severely disables Charlini‟s analytic abilities making it hard to disagree with Appiah (1990:6) when he talks about racism as forms of "cognitive incapacities". Later on in the interview she tells me:

> I just think that there is a different culture now, with er, after 1994, and the new er government, the culture is that the blacks own this country and they can do as they please and this is just my opinion, they just don‟t care about anybody else, anybody else‟s space and they will just do as they please. So ja we‟ve actually got reverse apartheid nowadays. They are doing exactly what they want and everybody else just has to put up with it. And that‟s it.
> (*Interview with Charlini 25ᵗʰ June 2008*)

For Charlini this feeling of exclusion from the present is intricately wrapped up in a racial ontology, which makes invisible the multiplicity of identities and experiences of not just living in Albert Park but in her own history of growing up in a designated „indian‟ area. Here the belief in racial difference suppresses any sense of shared experience or commonalities. This myopia also translates to a loss of agency as essentialist race thinking resigns her, in her mind, to being unable to make changes in her living environment, since the possibilities of action against the illegal taverns in her area, as opposed to the impossibilities of taken action against „black‟ people seen as holding the majority of power, are lost to her. Questioning what is lost by Charlini‟s race thinking should spark a similar line of enquiry around seeing race as key explanation and causal agent of urban change in research – what then is made invisible by this?

On one level racial analysis of change in urban areas, at times loosely labeled as studies on desegregation or integration, adds value in tracking changing social structures that drive the increasing mobility of citizens within the country. Yet we need to be careful that we do not map race onto social structures as a *fait accompli*, without recognising how these structures themselves construct and normalise race as an explanatory device. As seen in the field note and interview extracts above the primacy of race in South Africa make it a widely recognised and easily accessible

device for explaining movement into and out of the city. Seeing race as an equaliser of people within population groups, in other words the core identity that erases all other differences, is also evident in the South African census. For example, in the 1991 census a different data collection method was used in areas classified as „African". Due to the intense political violence in some of these areas only sample surveys and aerial photography were used to estimate data rather than the questionnaire surveys used in other areas (Christopher, 2001:460). For A.J. Christopher in his study of desegregation in South African cities and towns "in view of the remarkably high degree of racial homogeneity in the African areas, the lack of small area data made little difference to the calculation of segregation indices" (2001:460). The focus on racial demographics as a proxy for segregation, whilst serving to address Christopher"s specific research questions, overlooks the very reason the census methodology was altered. Political violence at the levels experienced in the early 1990s suggests deep divisions not just between groups but within them, making these areas with a "high degree of racial homogeneity" profoundly un-homogeneous outside of a racial lens. This point does not devalue studies such as Christopher"s; race-thinking and racism are indeed part of this story of change, but is this all that is going on? Presenting data or imagining that mobility between places is being undertaken by distinguishable „race groups" not only reifies race as a given and legitimate classification framework, it also elevates race as the primary measure of transformation in society, downplaying the multiplicities of class, gender, religion, family affiliations and personal needs that inform life choices within and across these classified groups. As Sarah Nuttall reminds us when analysing change in the city "[t]o confine these configurations to a lens of „difference" embedded squarely in the apartheid past may miss the complexity and contemporaneity of their formations" (2004:732).

Interestingly, bar a few exceptions such as those above, explaining change through a racial lens was far less prominent in participants who reside in Albert Park. Change instead is predominantly explained through the place identities discussed in the previous chapter. Of course these place identities draw on race, but importantly also on ideas around class and forms of symbolic capital. Whilst read off the body, sometimes in a similar way to how race is, they are acknowledged as being more flexible, where place based performances are able to reformulate (and in some

cases be taught) in relation to the social and material environment of city. Even under apartheid cities, and the social relations they nurture, resisted homogeneity. Cities then offer the capacity of "sparking performative improvisations which are unforeseen and unforeseeable" (Nuttall, 2004:740), as researchers we need to be open to the possibilities that race may be disappearing and reappearing in new forms in the vortex of everyday life.

For example some data in this study suggests that race is being disentangled from urban and rural identities, although less so for township identities. Being urban really is a more telling marker of belonging, regardless of perceived race. For Anet, a middle aged supervisor with a strong Afrikaans accent the primacy of her rural identity as opposed to a city identity transcends traditional bonds of associating rural areas only with „blackness". Here she explains that her identity as „farm girl" makes her stand out in the city:

> **Kira:** So how long have you lived here?
>
> **Anet:** Ahh for quite a long time now, from 1998. I feel as the supervisor, they know you"re from the Transvaal, they know you"re a stranger. I tell you I lost so many cell phones in this Town you cannot believe it.
>
> **Kira:** If you don"t mind me asking, when you say you are nervous to leave the area, what are you nervous about mostly?
>
> **Anet:** People attacking me, taking whatever I"ve got away from me or hurting me. I"m sorry I was a farm girl and I"m not used to that kind of things. Maybe I must just make peace with it. My daughter always says, "ma, you must make peace they don"t know you are from wherever, just walk". That"s why I always say I"m sure they can see I"m scared.
> (*Interview with Anet 31st May 2010*)

During this interview Anet repeatedly mentioned how she will never fit into city life and dreams of returning to the farm. For her the fast pace and multiple interactions of the city are too far removed from the farm life which she envisions as safe; "they say everywhere is dangerous now but I don"t feel where I come from it is dangerous" (*Interview with Anet 31st May 2010*). For Anet her daughter, who lives in West Street not too far away in the city centre, is a city woman who knows how to negotiate what

is in Anet‟s view a ruthless impersonal environment. Anet herself appears to have separated at least a conventional reading of „whiteness‟ from her own sense of place. For her places commonly viewed as „white‟ suburbs in Durban, such as the middle-class suburb of Musgrave on the Berea, are unfamiliar and unnerving places:

> **Kira:** But are you starting to at least know the taxi routes if you do need to go somewhere?
>
> **Anet**: Arhh, not really, I don‟t really use taxis. I go the South Beach or North Beach and I‟m back. If I must go to Wakefields [*an estate and management agency*] I tell you it‟s a mission and a half.
>
> **Kira:** I know at Musgrave.
>
> **Anet**: I‟m scared, sorry but I‟m scared to do it. I‟m just not familiar with those areas or something, because you don‟t have a car to travel around you don‟t know where is what. I go to Victoria or Queens Street [*busy streets in the CBD*], things are cheap there, no I‟d rather stay here.
> (*Interview with Anet 31ˢᵗ May 2010*)

Likewise the flat supervisors, often the vanguard of policing correct urban behaviour, appear to give little credence to race in their jobs. In my experience Albert Park supervisors formed strong support networks for each other, regardless of perceived racial identities. For the supervisors I interviewed, and in the stories about supervisors from other residents, good supervisors treated and took responsibility for their tenant as they would members of their families.

> It‟s a big responsibility, not because you are white or black or yellow you mustn‟t think it is different colours, this is a family. That‟s how I am, a lot of people don‟t think like that now, really they don‟t think. I help whoever I can help, pink, yellow, green, black it doesn‟t matter. I‟m just that kind of person.
> (*Interview with Anet, 31ˢᵗ May 2010*)

Priscilla too performs a kind of parental role to students in her block; she monitors their behaviour and encourages studying by prohibiting too many friends and visitors to students‟ flats (*Interview with Priscilla, 11ᵗʰ May 2010*). Supervisors though whilst providing tenant‟s with various support measures, wanted or unwanted, also police residents for behaviour deemed unacceptably non-urban no matter the perceived

race of the offender. For example, when my partner and I first moved in we did not have a curtain for our bedroom window so used a piece of fabric instead (see *Picture 14*). It served the purpose and we were living on the top floor which made it hard for people to see in. After a month of being in the flat the supervisor approached us to say that there had been a complaint. Apparently the fabric looked scruffy and brought down the aesthetics of the block, we were asked politely but very firmly to get a proper curtain to maintain the block‟s standards.

Picture 14 – Spot the offending fabric (by author 27ᵗʰ January 2008)

Whilst, supervisors in Albert Park provide evidence of giving less credence to race in some cases, they can also discriminate against foreigners using familiar frameworks of exclusion to determine who has access to housing in the area. But even in doing this gate-keeping a conventional reading of race is undermined. Looking back at the example from *Chapter 4* of Janet, the supervisor in my block who is classified as „white‟, excluding foreign tenants problematises the popular reading of xenophobia as a moral crisis that belongs to only „black‟ South Africans, a sentiment sometimes echoed in social science research (see Landau 2006, and Mngxitama, 2008:197). As was suggested in the previous chapter, whilst race may well form part of the explanation of why this particular discrimination manifests itself within South Africa, there are other discourses and identities at play here that both intersect and move outside of racial explanations.

Place identities then unsettle race to an extent. Authors such as Mabin (2005:55) argue that suburban identities are also no longer tied firmly to race, but rather seen as part of middle class affiliations. Richard Ballard gives a nuanced analysis of how suburban identities and notions of belonging for some residents in a formerly „white‟ neighbourhood are being reconceptualised in ways that "make possible for culture to be separate from race and therefore different races can mix as long as they are prepared to adopt a common culture" (2005:80). Suburban identities then are still very much wrapped up in privileged and middle class hegemony, yet like urban and rural identities they also appear to be disentangling themselves from race in various ways. Suburban, urban and rural identities are increasingly reconstituting themselves within the class and place frameworks found in many cities worldwide. This perhaps is to be expected due to the capitalist development rhetoric used by apartheid, and which to a large extent has remained unchallenged by the African National Congress. Here the local context responds to the global discourses of polarised development nodes between cities, suburbs and the rural areas. As Doreen Massey reminds us when thinking about places, "[t]heir 'local uniqueness' is always already a product of wider contacts; the local is always already a product in part of 'global' forces, where global in this context refers not necessarily to the planetary scale, but to the geographical beyond, the world beyond the place itself" (1995:183). This also presents a stark reminder that transformation requires not only a dismantling of racial ontologies but also of a capitalist ontology that presents inequalities as normalised class positions in society.

Township identities however may be more resistant to disentangling themselves from race, in part because they do not have an easy fit into this global matrix; whilst racially segregated areas may well occur in many global cities they are not recognised as belonging to the official discourse. Township identities then remain quasi-urban, both of the city and not. Within the South African context we really know little about the heterogeneity of contemporary township life. In the popular imagination townships remain homogeneous places conjuring up notions of violence, crime and disorder. There is research that shows that this sentiment is shared by many foreign nationals who see townships as dangerous, specifically because they are "perceived as ethnically and linguistically homogenous spaces" (Greenburg,

2010:69). Jamal, the Congolese business man who assists foreign nations with various bureaucratic applications similarly tells me that he strongly advises people not to live in the townships if they want to avoid conflict (*Interview with Jamal 1ˢᵗ July 2010*).

Of course townships are themselves contested spaces composed of many different class positions, and as with all spaces occupied by humans are shaped by and in turn shape a multitude of social identities. The current investment in aspects of township life, such as the music, fashion and social scenes are starting to rewrite what it means to live in and visit the townships, in many ways subverting this place archetype. Notably this cultural revaluation too is not devoid of race, as in many ways this revival reconstitutes townships as being not just belonging to „black" people but as the originator of authentic contemporary forms of „black" culture; tightening rather than undermining the links between race, place and separate social spheres (see for example Ellapen[48] on how contemporary cinema and television fails to recognise the heterogeneity of townships through creating a fixed representation of township life as violent and poverty stricken, yet simultaneously "the central location to represent black identity and culture" (2007:114)). Whilst there is "substantial academic writing on legislation which framed racial residential segregation" (Mabin, 2005:47) and its implementation, there is surprisingly little on how the lived experiences of township life disrupted and continue to disrupt the legacy of apartheid"s homogenising mechanisms. Jacob Dlamini"s *Native Nostalgia* (2009) offers an important alternate description of township life; in his words his writing attempts to pose a "challenge to the master narrative of black homogeneity" through providing ethnography of a township. What makes his writing all the more powerful is the focus on the multiple and varied performances of everyday life and, in doing so, pulling the township "out of the web of exceptionalism and marginalization in which townships in general are caught" (2009:113). A call for more literary and analytical analysis that emphasises the complexity and diversity of townships may effectively

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[48] Ellapen"s article „The cinematic township: cinematic representations of the "township space" and who can claim the rights to representation in post-apartheid South Africa cinema" raises strong critical questions on the narrow representations of township life and imagery in cinema, but disappointing does not move far beyond the predictable racialisation of questions of claiming the rights to make cinematic representations (2007:135).

subvert the popular representations of township identities in more productive ways than exist at present.

Fourteen years after the end of apartheid segregation then it is not necessarily that people classified as „black" are associated only with the townships, but more that townships remain associated with „blackness", here there is a continuum of discriminatory and demeaning discourses positioning township life as less worthy than that of the city"s. This spatial differentiation, constructed in the above discourses and in the existing unequal material infrastructure of township life, provides a continuing resource for racial marginalisation.

When thinking about the above it is worth remembering that "it is only necessary to the process of marginalization that some (large) fraction of the racially constituted group be so marginalized, not that all members be dislocated" (Goldberg, 1993:189). Therefore whilst urban identities increasingly blur the boundaries of race and open up exciting spaces for finding new commonalities it does this through constructing township identities as the necessary undesired elsewhere that distinguishes the urban as more sophisticated. Place identities form a complex relationship with race where they at once subvert and reaffirm its usefulness as a means through which to see oneself and others. Appiah tells us that "we make up selves from a tool kit of options made available by our culture and society" (2005:107) and certainly notions of place and belonging have a long intellectual and structural history in South Africa. What is uncertain is whether these identities offer a way of being that focuses on commonalities and acceptance rather than difference and discrimination. Indeed from this study the data would suggest they may do both, in some cases offering a mechanism through which race loses its saliency, but in others providing the means through which to police boundaries of belonging with devastating consequences. This complex contradictory current is also found in the flow of everyday talk in Albert Park, where race swirls and transforms depending on the topic and context of discussions. It is to these narratives that the analysis now turns.

Reading Race?

In the first chapter of this thesis I stated that *investigating how race is constructed and used in society can significantly challenge the ontology of recognisable and differentiated 'races'*. I would still argue this point, but research that is open to the multiplicity of identities also raises the difficulties of reading race *within* the data. Participants often use racial categories, but the meaning which they give these categories is not always clear. Since racial ontologies are so intertwined with notions of class, gender and place identities amongst other sense making devices, race itself takes on a multiplicity of meanings. To add to this complexity participants make contradictory statements, often within the same sentence, challenging a single reading of the meaning attached to race. Take for example this extract from my field notes just after I moved into Albert Park.

> Two days later when moving the last of our stuff up the elevator with my sister and a friend another resident got into the lift and started ranting about the "darkies" and that "you need to know how to treat those baboons outside" along with other racist diatribe. He then asked who was moving in, "me" I answered. He smiled and whilst exiting the lift at his floor said it made him happy because in the morning he is talking to "darkies" and then in the afternoon he is speaking to whites, "the other half of his blood".
> (*Field Note 10th November 2007*).

The man, who I never saw again, is, I presumed from this conversation, classified „coloured". Within this brief exchange he draws on various discourses of race thinking, some old and some more recent. At first he makes blatant racist insinuations about „black" people"s character through the dehumanising process of equating people to baboons. Next he draws on biological notions that fix race into the body – in this case something that resides in the blood. Yet he simultaneously subverts this model of incommensurable bodily difference through positioning himself as being able to be both part „black" and part „white", using blood kinship as a form of bonding between himself and other „races". He does something else here and that is to suggest that happiness is linked to all the „races" living together. In short within a two minute conversation he presents both racist and multiracial sentiments without seeing these as contradictory. Perhaps this should not come as

a surprise since both racism and multiracialism are premised on the foundation of racialism. For Appiah racialism is the belief that

> there are heritable characteristics, possessed by members of our species, that allow us to divide them into a small set of races, in such a way that all the members of these races share certain traits and tendencies with each other that they do not share with members of any other race (1990:4).

On reading through the data the number of times that participants appear to live easily with the contradictions in their own ideologies of race is striking.   The supervisor of my block, Janet, has lived in Albert Park for over 20 years; her parents stayed in a small flat in St. Andrews Street and when she returned from the USA to South Africa after she got divorced in the 1980s she went back to Albert Park, where she met Roger her second husband. Janet and Roger offer interesting perspectives of change in the area having lived there for many years both during and post-apartheid. Some of the reasons for the area going „downhill‟ are racialised by Janet: although she does not use a specific race term she speaks about people she sees as „black‟ as „them‟, a collective who bring bad behaviour to Albert Park. Yet she also seems to have genuine joy at experiencing commonalities and making connections with people who fit into her derogatory category of „them‟.

> You know, you know...I don‟t know. But, I can‟t see it getting better [*said in a whisper*]. Maybe buildings and things will get up but they‟re not improving. Oooh there are a lot of them that are very well educated. And it makes you feel very well to know people like that exist and that are there, and they treat you normally. You know what I mean, like a worker or something like that you know and that makes me feel very, very, good, and I have the same feeling towards them in that way, it doesn‟t matter what colour or creed or anything like that , it‟s, it‟s, really nice.
>
> You know somebody has just moved in at number 21 at the end over here, his name is John Ngcobo, something like that, I can‟t say it. Anyway, every morning he goes down when I go down to work and he says "good morning Mrs. Beatty, how are you this morning?", and I say "please John, start to call me by my name, my name is Janet, call me Janet". You know it‟s delightful, and his children are so well mannered, it makes you feel great.
> (*Interview with Janet and Roger 25th March 2008*)

In this account of her interactions with some people she sees as „black", race – or in her words "colour or creed" – is dethroned as important in light of the common values of politeness and treating each other with respect. On the one hand „blackness" is associated with bringing down the neighbourhood and yet this very stereotype of „black" behaviour is powerfully disrupted as generalisable by shared middle class values of polite conversation and good education. Interestingly, it is not just that she finds she shares values with her neighbours that makes her "feel great" but that she shares them with neighbours she classifies as „black" that makes this all the more meaningful – race then is implicit at the very moment it is superseded. As with the earlier extract of the man in the lift, here again the notion of togetherness of „races" is given some kind of magical social value. I suspect that this has something to do with the feelings of potential and possibilities of redefining what it means to be living in contemporary South Africa, such as those raised by Roger, Janet"s husband. He tells me;

> **Roger**: You know we see things on TV, hearing people"s stories; this could be the most magnificent country in the world. Really, because we have got good people here, it doesn"t matter what colour they are and the thing is we need somebody to bring it together like Mr. Mandela. I tell you I take my hat off to that man, if somebody locked me up for 27 years and they asked me to forgive them afterwards…
>
> **Kira**: Ja, it takes a special kind of person to do that.
>
> **Roger**: And it"s a pity he wasn"t younger because then he could have really brought this country to a fantastic peace, because there are good in all colours.
> (*Interview with Janet and Roger 25th March 2008*)

Multiracial sentiments such as the above, where all „races" are seen as being good, feature fairly regularly in participants" conversations. These sentiments extend to idealising multiracial neighbourhoods as being a preferable type of living experience. For example both Sanele and Marge (*Interview with Marge 18th November 2009*) talked of nostalgic memories of when all the „races" lived together in peace in Albert

Park. Sanele who moved into Albert Park as a young boy in the late 1990s explains these changes from his experience;

> **Sanele**: Ja it‟s quite a while, so I was staying at *Palm Bay* where my father bought a flat there. So it was quite a lot of families, mix up of White families, Indian families and African families.
>
> **Kira**: Ok.
>
> **Sanele**: Yes, yes, then started the crime thing in Albert Park, so some of especially the White people started to move from Albert Park to stay maybe South Beach and North Beach.
>
> **Kira:** You say that when you were ten years old and you first came here you said there were a lot of people living in the same block and then it started to change.
>
> **Sanele:** Yes, yes, yes
>
> **Kira**: What was that like, having that change?
>
> **Sanele:** Actually to stay in a block, in the flat, nobody is bothering what you do in your flat, you know. But my father became involved in a Body Corporate, he was involved in the Body Corporate so we started to know each other in the flat so we know that the man next door was an Indian guy, so there was a twin guys there, so they take us to go and play cricket in the Park. So we started along together knowing each other, it was quite nice hey. The only problem what happened in Albert Park was the crime, the people from townships who come to Albert Park do wrong things stealing bags and everything especially to the Indians guys and White people they didn‟t like cope on that so they decided to move away, you see. It was great to stay with those people but the only problem was the crime.
> (*Interview with Sanele 5ᵗʰ March 2010*)

For both Sanele and Marge this „rainbow dream‟ is shattered by crime. It is interesting to note – whilst not discrediting the participants‟ specific experiences of Albert Park – that the tensions around race and belonging in the area during transition from apartheid appear to have been re-scripted into a nostalgia for a more recent past where all „races‟ lived happily together. This conceptualisation of

Durban as a potential multiracial haven is seen as one of Durban"s strengths by the city officials from iTrump:

> Durban is a beautiful City. I think the diversities are quite great in Durban that you wouldn"t find in other cities where you have a very good mix if you walk into the street. You know you see indian, white, black, the mix is very vibrant in terms of the colour, the space and diversities that exist. I don"t think there"s much tension between the race groups that live within the inner city. You will get the problem area, you get people who are not tolerant to other peoples" beliefs, people"s religions, people"s cultures, that you going to have that, it doesn"t only happen in this country, it happens all over the world.
> (*Interview with iTrump Officials 21ˢᵗ July 2010*)

In this extract the official also downplays the city"s past prejudices by reframing intolerance as a worldwide phenomenon rather than a unique local situation. This emotional investment in "rainbow nation" imagery is also found in some of the participants" personal narratives. If I had to extract the number of times Maya positioned herself as a friendly person who brought people together because it didn"t matter whether people were "indian, white, black and coloured [she was] friends with everyone", there would be little room left for any other analysis in this thesis (*Field Note 8ᵗʰ July 2010*).

These narratives of multiracialism, suggest an interesting case study for how individuals incorporate macro cultural scripts of the „good" life into personal narrative. Adler and McAdams offer insightful research on how large portions of American adults draw on a kind of national narrative of the "gifted protagonist" whose pioneering spirit enables them to overcome adversity for the greater good of the self and the world at large (2007:98). Here a socially constructed historical and cultural narrative of what it means to be American "provides an instrumental guideline as people learn how to tell their personal life story". Importantly though, as Adler and McAdams continue, "it also provides a dominant storyline that may suppress possible alternative plots for the life" (Adler and McAdams, 2007:98). When applied to the extracts above a national narrative of multiracialism, such as that found into the metaphor of the "rainbow nation", appears to have been assimilated into the personal narratives of some of the participants. At first this may seem at odds with

national texts, such as the constitution amongst others, which specifically utilise the term non-racialism instead of multiracialism. Yet, as Maré persuasively demonstrates, a lack of engagement in the content of this term means "„non-racialism‟ is most often seen as *non-antagonistic relations between races* … more accurately multi-racialism, or even just the absence of racism" (2003:20, emphasis in original).

That multiracialism, which theoretically is meant to value diversity, as opposed to racism, which constructs difference as justification for unequal distribution of status, power and resources, is being taken up as part of national and personal narratives is surely a more promising step towards democracy. Yet a word of caution, I would argue, needs to be stated here. Whilst multiracialism in itself does not automatically translate into discrimination (Appiah, 1990:5), in popular and common sense thinking it is still fundamentally premised on the ontology of recognisable and separate „race groups‟, leaving unchallenged the ontological premise of racial taxonomy. Considering how quickly "valorized differences can harden into Difference" (Fay, 1996:239, caps in original) I wonder how wise it is to see multiracialism as the end goal for South African identities. Particularly when race is so prevalent within the political discourses of various social agents; such as

> with the current glamorization of racial identities by politicians, activists and intellectuals, some of whom have impeccable anti-apartheid credentials […] socially configured racial identities constitute the cultural blocs on which society is configured (Habib and Bentley, 2008:9).

Upholding race as an important tool through which to configure society also happens in rather unexpected local settings. In the extract below Sanele tells me about the informal ANC political study sessions, held by the then ward councillor, for the youth of Albert Park:

> **Sanele**: We are going to meet there by the councillor‟s office at 17h30. So actually we‟re meeting every Wednesday there by the councillor‟s office. But now there is only politic study you see, politic study in ANC you see. Because they telling us the history what happened exactly because we don‟t know what happened and after that thing we‟re having our meeting as the youth so we know what‟s going to happen now.

Kira: So that"s interesting, so like the ANC gives you history lessons. Who"s giving them, the councillor?

Sanele: The councillor, ja. He"s telling us what happened long time ago and he"s giving us the history of how the coloured become coloured and all the nation of coloured. From 17h30 to 19h00 he"s taking this study. Ja it"s great because I really don"t know about politics. I"m not interested you see but to know what exactly happened.

Kira: The history of the country is important.

Sanele: Yes, yes

Kira: And it"s such a unique history in the whole world. So how did he say the coloured people became coloured? I would like to know.

Sanele: He said our grand grannies they"ve been working in the farm so the people from overseas they came to South Africa to take over the farms you see. When they take over the farms our grand grannies they used to have huge cows, like farming things, so those people when they came to South Africa they wanted to take over and then they take over and then our like mothers and our grandmothers and these people from overseas they started sleeping with our mothers and then the child then became coloured. That"s how the coloured nation came. And Indian people they come to South Africa too, Indian people they good in selling and buying you see, so they wanted something to buy especially on the Sugar Mill thing, they took their side on the Sugar Mill thing. And then ummm I"m not sure exactly what else because I wasn"t concentrating because it was a long in telling us that but I heard a little bit of what exactly what happened.
(*Interview with Sanele 5th March 2010*)

Not only are these informal sessions teaching highly questionable readings of South African history they are also re-enforcing conflated notions of race and nationhood, solidifying race thinking through constructing separate national histories for different races. Although equating races to different national blocs is not something entirely

new within the history African National Congress itself (Maré, 2003:21).[49] Keeping in mind the more idealised notions of togetherness voiced in the extracts from participants above, the speed at which racialism transforms from multiracialism into fixed notions of difference and racism is blood curdling.

Towards the end of my research Roger unfortunately died. Janet, as well as Maya and Priscilla, attributed his untimely decline to being violently punched in the stomach by a tenant in the block he was supervising (*Field Note 8th October 2009*). As a result for the first time in 20 years Janet was considering moving out of Albert Park and going to live with her cousin in the suburbs, who as it turned out was also now alone in his house. She told me that she would be able to help him out because his domestic worker was acting like it was her house, inviting her friends around for breakfast and not really cleaning. She proceeded to tell me in a matter of fact tone that "he can"t accept that because she is black". According to Janet he needed a woman in the house to manage this domestic worker and tell her what chores to do. Janet"s blatant racist and sexist justification for her move is a far cry from some of the joys she shared of experiencing commonalities with tenants she classified as „black" in the block (*Field Note 24th February 2010*). What is important here is how race fluctuates depending on which social identities take precedence at specific moments. So, for example, as a supervisor, and importantly in belonging to a wider network of supervisors who support each other, race for Janet is often irrelevant and does not form part of her explanatory framework. Instead in this role exclusionary practices are more marked in terms of foreignness and belonging (underpinned by the place identities discussed in the previous chapter). However, as a long time resident who lived under apartheid and is classified „white" change in the area is explained partly by race, and interestingly anticipating her move to the suburbs, where she will apparently manage a domestic worker, she is profoundly racist.

Maya too drew on a strong sense of racial difference at times. During a conversation about the municipality"s highly controversial decision to allow a shopping mall to be

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[49] Whilst making important points on the disparity of agency within South Africa, the then deputy president Thabo Mbeki"s description of South Africa, during his 1998 opening address for the debate on *Reconciliation and Nation Building*, being composed of two nations, one „white" and one „black" again equates race to notions of nationhood (Web 6).

built on the site of the Early Morning Market in Warwick Triangle, the hub of informal trading in fresh produce (*Mail & Guardian online* 4th *July 2009*), she voiced her anger at the mayor and the city manager. She then told me that Logie Naidoo, the deputy mayor of eThekwini municipality, was not a "real indian" because the things he does to "indian and white people" were not good (*Field Note 8th July 2010*). Maya paints Logie Naidoo not just as an incompetent and insensitive politician but as a form of race traitor since he does not give differential treatment to the needs of people who share his „race", or interestingly to people who somehow hold affiliation to his „race" such as „white" people. Yet Maya prides herself on treating everyone equally, indeed giving everyone regardless of their racial classification the time of day is a defining feature in Maya"s personal narrative.   Yet even for Maya the politics of representation and its intersection with the economic and social tensions around who has a right to define the city are intensely racialised.

Other issues around service delivery were also at times racialised, for example when Zinhle, Marge and I took a walk around the ward councillor"s office:

> There is a group of about five or six metro police hanging around a car (all
> men besides one woman). Zinhle and Marge use this as an example of how
> the police do nothing for the area, as if "they have no jobs to do". "All Indians"
> Zinhle says with disdain and shakes her head, as if that somehow explains
> their ineffectiveness.
> (*Field Notes 31st March 2010*)

In this instance if I had to use the crude visual tools of apartheid I would not myself have classified these police men and woman as all being "indian", yet for Zinhle seeing another race group as the reason for her disappointment at police ineffectiveness provides a kind of habitual explanation for why things are not the way they should be.

Contradictions and What We Should Do With Them

The vague and at times contradictory national discourses of race are evident in the language of the participants. Multiracialism in this context is not necessarily benign since it continues to fix race as a noteworthy and essential difference between people in a country where race has been *intensely* socialised. Race then continues

as a given despite its contradictory appropriation; it is used both as a springboard for a new type of multiracial togetherness, and yet in the next sentence as explanation for defining essentialised differences. Contradictory themes are often found in interviews with participants on race and ethnicity; for Billig et al this is because supposedly enlightened liberal thinking and racism are both part of the modern discourse of race (1988:114). As stated previously multiracialism and racism both originate from racialism, which underpins all forms of race thinking. Clearly at first glance a multiracial interpretation of race is preferable to a racist interpretation, but the mobilisation of these interpretations is more complex. Rather than being oppositional they are relational, enabling the individual to oscillate between various manifestations of this paradigm, masking contradictions through the shared common sense of race as distinguishable difference. As Philomena Essed astutely points out:

> [i]t is a myth that society can be divided into racists and anti-racists,
> into those with superior minds versus the others with corrupted minds,
> into „goodies" and „baddies", where „we" are the „goodies" (antiracists)
> and „they" are the „baddies" (2001:496).

Rather the illustrative value in these everyday conversations should be the recognition that the underlying paradigm of race, the foundations for all the above extracts, remains unchallenged as a normalised and unproblematic mechanism through which to view and engage with the world. Indeed the multiracialism that holds hands with the types of racialised and racist comments seen above reveals that race continues to provide "a dominant storyline" (Adler and McAdams, 2007:98); a storyline that disables and blinds us to "the freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves" (Harvey, 2008:23).

Let me be clear that the racialised and racist moments in the talk of participants do not, I believe, negate the importance of the multiple ways in which new commonalities and shared livelihoods are being reshaped in the city. Indeed, as I hope is clear throughout this thesis, there is evidence of change; whilst race is present in some interactions it also recedes, and even disappears. People can and do create supportive and inclusive relations in which to engage commonalities within this heterogeneous space. Of course it is as vital to recognise and call attention to the everyday banal racism that exists alongside this (Essed, 2001:495). Perhaps

this is an obvious point to scholars who call for the recognition of the multiplicities and intertwined nature of social identities. But what these findings offer is a more nuanced explanation of when and how these identities reconstitute each other within a specific material context. More ambitiously it suggests that an examination of lived experiences has something to offer advocates who wish to restructure more open and inclusive dialogues and spaces. Spaces are required in which the lived reality of multiple and fluid identities starts more convincingly to erode the continuation of fixed and essential differences, which continue to litter the language and landscape of South Africa. What then can we learn from these everyday conversations that could offer such policy and research suggestions and reflections?   It is with this challenging question, amongst other reflections, that the final chapter grapples.

Chapter 6: From Palm Trees and Paving to People and Possibilities – Reflections, Suggestions and Conclusions

At this point I would like to draw the reader"s attention back to the two core research questions of this project:

- To examine how racial identities were being reconstructed and/or deconstructed in Albert Park;

- Explore how new emergent identities were either transcending or reifying the narrow racial categories carried forward into post-apartheid South Africa.

The findings throughout this thesis certainly indicate shifts in the construction and deconstruction of race. In one sense there is evidence that people living in Albert Park are finding new ways to identify themselves and others outside of racial identities. At times this is done in relation to the structural landscape of South Africa, such as the geographic inequalities that feed into place identities, or the increasing salience of class as creating commonalities and differences. At other times identities move outside of narrow racial categories through more intimate local interactions between neighbours, or finding new forms of solidarity through creating informal support networks such as is done by some supervisors in Albert Park. In all these instances the fluidity of race is highlighted. Indeed these findings affirm and support much of the analytic framework used in *Chapter 1* and *Chapter 2* which, drawing on various theorists, argues for a politics of recognising multiplicity that demolishes the notion that social identities are homogeneous units from which essentialist characteristics can be extracted.

Multiplicity however, is also evident in the contradictory uses of race within the everyday strategies and narratives of the participants, both subverting and reifying this social construct, in moments doing both simultaneously. Furthermore some of the emerging identities, such as those associated with place, appear to police belonging and exclusion in problematic ways closing off rather than opening Albert Park to heterogeneous dialogues. In the messiness of everyday life then race can never be abstracted as a thing in itself. It is always entwined, undermined and

reconstituted through a multitude of other ideologies and social identities. This awareness I would extend to other forms of dominant storylines found within national and personal narratives, such as notions of nationality, class, place and gender. Göran Therborn reminds us that this "irreducible multidimensionality of ideologies means that a crucial aspect of ideological struggles and of ideological relations of force is the articulation of a given type of ideology with others" (1980:27). Certainly as is evident in my thesis race thinking constructs, and is constructed by, various other notions of difference. Yet perhaps more troubling, is how remaining in this racial ontology traps us into its own axis of difference; oscillating between „celebrating" multiracialism and racism. These two versions of race thinking continue tacitly to normalise the harsh reality of disparate social and economic livelihoods in South Africa. Of course within this continuum of inequality, as I have argued previously it is vital to recognise change within South Africa. Albert Park, for example has undergone rapid transformation, in terms of street level infrastructure as well as in the diversity of residents who bring to life this city space.

It is in these *contradictory spaces*, where race is both transcended and solidified, where both continuities and change are revealed, that I believe the findings of this thesis offer hope for future imaginings. The existing tensions in which race is being challenged in everyday practices, coupled with critical investigation into which structures and discourses lie behind the moments of continuation of race thinking, highlights the necessity of a more organised project that can harness the possibilities of change. Such a project may well begin the process of moving towards a future in which the classificatory and essentialising performances of race lose their strangling grip on all peoples within South Africa. In Erasmus"s words a project that envisions shattering "the lens of race so what lives behind race can be revealed with a view to disrupting underlying structures of privilege rather than simply tinkering with or compensating for their outcomes" (2010:50). A project such as this, I would argue, needs to move far beyond the current *multiracial* climate.

Multi What? Challenges for Policy

As argued in the previous chapter the contradictory use of race is enabled rather than solved by notions of multiracialism that continues to present race as fixed bounded identities. Here people can not only be tacitly allocated into „race groups",

but race is viewed as the primary mechanism for political and social engagement. Paul Gilroy suggests that emerging "democratic and cosmopolitan formations" of culture will eventually erase race (2000:282). Whilst not dismissing this claim outright as it offers some possibilities, I am not so convinced of this in the South African context. As illustrated in *Chapter 1* race and culture have a long history of being used as proxies for each other, one that appears to be solidifying rather than dissipating. For Bauman increasingly "[i]t is culture itself, rather than a hereditary collection of genes, that is represented by these ideologies as immutable: as a unique entity which *should be* preserved intact" (Bauman, 1995:188, emphasis in original).

In South Africa the popular idea of viewing separate race groups as having their own cultures, "rainbowisation" in Alexander"s terminology, is simply a "new brand of multiculturalism, as opposed to the old brand of „pluralist" multiculturalism which late apartheid tried to disguise itself as" (2002:101). In this version of multiculturalism multiplicity is acceptable only if it takes the form of recognising multiple, but separate, units of cultures. In the same way that multiracialism is premised on separate „race groupings". It is the constructed *distances in between* these „groupings" that makes this a conditional proposition of togetherness. The conditional nature of this version of multiplicity is in South Africa, arguably as it is elsewhere, dangerous. For South Africa, a country where the blueprint of segregation and economic inequality continues to offer a material underpinning to these identities, we can be assured that what appears on the surface as a liberal celebration of difference deeply threatens to morph into justification for segregationist politics, not just in the foreseeable future but already in the everyday interactions of the present. At a local level the example given in *Chapter 3*, where the representation of Albert Park as "a successful but fragile rainbow mix" (Bouillon, 2002:23) was mobilised to fight against moving a homeless shelter into the area illustrates this. On a national level the superficial and conditional nature of this particular manifestation of „rainbow nation" togetherness can be seen in the failure to extend this „celebration of diversity" beyond the borders of citizenships; devaluing the heterogeneity of experiences of many people seen as „foreign". This conditionality promotes a model of cultural representation as a viable and acceptable means through which to accumulate power and resources. In South Africa this may manifest in growing forms of ethnic representation, such as the

examples of conservative and traditionalist uses of specific versions of Zulu and Afrikaner identity, from which cultural claims are made in an attempt to influence specific policies that operate outside of the national framework (Alexander, 2002:161).

A multiculturalism that forces members of a cultural group "into a regime of authenticity, denying them the chance to cross cultural borders, borrow cultural influences, define and redefine themselves" becomes more "cultural straitjacket" than "cultural liberator" (Phillips, 2007:14). It can also support and deepen existing inequalities within these „groups", for example the politics of cultural representation often serves to reinforce gender inequality through empowering men as the makers and keepers of cultural heritage and tradition (Phillips, 2007:133). How then do we start a state led project that actively constructs a more inclusive society, where social identities are recognised as fluid, porous and open constructs that may or may not shape the life course of individuals in a multitude of ways? Where the use of the prefix *multi* demands the recognition of variation *within* each individual and not between perceived homogeneous groups in society. Importantly this shift requires a move away from constructing static categories of people, such as race, culture and ethnicity to name a few, and work towards challenging the "underlying pathologies that link all these and the connections between different fantasies of segregation" (Phillips, 2007:58). How then do we start these more critical conversations that attempt to build open spaces that recognise multiple and interconnected identities without cementing them into national discourses of difference? More specifically how do the findings in this project contribute to this challenge?

Possibilities

> The politcial and academic leadership of South Africa have a special obligation to help the generality of the population to escape from the mindset or habitus in which concepts such as „culture", „race", „language", etc., are reified and transformed into „things"
> (Alexander, 2002:108).

Like Neville Alexander quoted above, under the sub title *The Role of The State* in the first chapter of this thesis, I argued for a state led project that could move us into new territory *that debunks essentialist thinking about individuals and collectives*, where critically multiplicity becomes common sense. At present the contradictions within the national rhetoric on race are many, not least of which is glorifying non-racialism whilst continuing to demand racial demographics and classificatory practices. As Sarah Nuttall observes, "race appears to be hardening in the public realm precisely as legalized racism has been abolished" (2004:738), giving a somewhat illusionary feel to what it means for people to live in a non-racial state (Goldberg, 2009:532). Importantly the findings in this research indicate that these contradictions are mirrored in the everyday talk of the participants, suggesting that we need to pay attention to the dialectical relationship between every day and national discourses on race and nationality. Notably the social imagery that was used to construct identities around place and race, and even distinguish between St. Andrews and St. Georges Street, drew from the structural geographic of inequalities within the country. So whilst Appiah"s assertion that "[t]he contours of identity are profoundly real: and yet no more imperishable, unchanging, or transcendent than other things men and women make" (2005:113) is correct, the viability of change is dependent to a large degree on the context of the national state. State formations and ideologies such as those under apartheid can forefront specific identities as inescapable. Theoretically democracy offers far more opportunities for the recognition and agency required to make identities more fluid, penetrable and possibly even perishable. Yet race at present in South Africa in many ways remains a prison etched into the skin, and without some form of state directed challenge against the historic and contemporary preference for essentialism in the politics of representation it will remain so for the foreseeable future.

For Zimitri Erasmus this "requires a shift away from using race as an analytical category towards analysing the changing, often hidden, use of race…in practice this entails resistance to both the effects of race *and* to its use as an administrative category" (2010:50, emphasis in original). Whilst Erasmus talks more broadly in terms of social justice, I suggest that her proposition should be appropriated to form the basis of change within the state. This can be done by using a two pronged approach, which creates both a philosophical space for people living in South Africa

to begin reimagining identities in their interactions and relations to the state; and simultaneously addresses the material inequalities that underpin the racialisation of society. I am not for a minute here suggesting that the state is the only mechanism through which social identities are constructed or deconstructed. Rather it is hoped that through a shift in its approach the state makes room for more open national dialogue on these issues, in turn enabling productive and inclusive narrative resources to which individuals can respond.

Creating a Philosophical Space

Core to creating a philosophical space that engenders a critical multiplicity as a common sense tool for thinking about social relations would be, as Erasmus amongst others suggests (see for example; Alexander, 2007 and Christopher, 2002 in the South African context), the removal of racial categories for administrative state purposes. How the continuation of racial categories by the state serves to construct race in South Africa was dealt with in more detail in *Chapter 1* and *Chapter 2*. Crucially however, this would need to be coupled with a willingness to begin an open public dialogue on the meaning of non-racialism in South Africa. Importantly a state led social campaign in which dialogue of this kind is encouraged would have to recognise that whilst ",banal" race thinking and race action continues largely unchallenged" (Maré, 2003:30), the fixing of race into policy and administrative categories contributes to, rather than alleviates this problematic racialisation. Likewise it would through necessity require a critical examination of how local understandings of race and culture support and undermine each other in diverse settings. Whilst in South Africa it could be argued that, to use Neville Alexander"s term, there is no "mainstream" culture that dominates whilst it agress to tolerate "the coexistence of other (minority) cultures" (2002:107). The tensions and debates on Multiculturalism from Europe, Brazil, Canada, Australia and elsewhere still offer important relfections and suggestions for the South African context, not least of which are some of the dangers associated with fixing culture into political cateogories.

Perhaps the most persuasive rationale for the insistence of these public forums is through acknowledging Appiah"s point that resistance to the "erasure of the term "race"" may be because "its absence threatens to leave too vast a discursive void"

(1989:41). In South Africa, a country whose past and present is interwoven with the construction of racial difference, we need a courageous social imagination and practical tools in which to jump into this void. If the state does not facilitate public discussions that alleviate this anxiety then removing race categories runs the risk of attracting reactionary backlashes from both organisations and individuals in society. Yet the success of creating this type of philosophical space, which could conceivably make possible the "democratic and cosmopolitan formations" that Gilroy (2000:282) speaks of, would have little effect if the underlying structural causes that continue to fuel all forms of segregation (race, gender, class, health, to name a few) are not addressed.

Creating Material Space

This step is rather more demanding as it challenges the capitalist framework that continues to mandate class and geographical differences, both of which feed into the production of capital in various stratified ways. In short this could only be brought about by massive structural and ideological transformations within a society; a revolution of a kind. Solving or even attempting to address these issues on this scale would simply be idealist and presumptuous for this thesis. Rather I would like to draw from the findings of the research presented here and focus on how smaller localised changes, which don"t necessarily require a revolution, may offer some insight into creating spaces of dialogue rather than spaces of exclusion.

Evident in the data is that most essentialist practices, such as identifying, homogenising and blaming people who are considered „township", „foreign", or „black", are mostly responses to finding explanations for the disjuncture of living in a democratic urban space – and all the promises of freedom, equality and quality of life associated with this – and experiencing a lack of fulfilment of social needs around housing, employment and crime. This does not condone these practices, and admittedly forms of discrimination may be exogenous to these social concerns, but it does hint at some possibilities for tackling discriminatory discourse. Whilst at a national level the state should engage in the philosophical debates on racial categories and non-racialism, at a local level rather than focus on the classificatory practices themselves, it may be more beneficial to tackle the underlying issues that fuel these practices. Indeed for me Priscilla"s comments on the improvement of

security in the area since the arrival of the visual presence of the Metro Police, acutely illustrates the power of this. This extract was used in *Chapter 4* but it is worth repeating here:

> **Priscilla:** Because we used to point fingers and say it"s the foreigners doing that and it"s not us – you know – before we got the Metro, but now since we got the Metro I don"t hear nobody pointing fingers because at least the truth has come out. Because they take the people and lock them whether you are a Zulu, a Xhosa or a Sotho, they just lock you up, they don"t ask you who you are. Like before we used to say no it"s the foreigners take the bags because now we think they were the only people to do wrong things and we were wrong, we were definitely wrong because everybody does stupid things sometimes.
>
> **Kira:** Absolutely, it doesn"t matter who you are.
>
> **Priscilla**: You don"t have to point fingers because that one is like that, now people also realise that now that was wrong. Because it wasn"t only the foreigners who"s were doing wrong, everybody was doing it, whoever needs money and was not working. They don"t want to go and work, they want to work from us. We work and buy phones and they"re taking it from us.
> (*Interview with Priscilla 11ᵗʰ May 2010*)

Here the possibilities of viewing your neighbours in more inclusive ways that disrupt stereotypes are driven through the provision of a service delivery that is both needed and desired by residents. Taking into account the spectrum of activities in Albert Park such as general theft and muggings, the exploitation of tenants and owners that occur in "bad buildings", to the violent mob attacks on foreigners, it is highly feasible that criminal conditions have "negative effects on emancipatory movements" (de Souza, 2009:45) and, I would argue everyday social relations. This is not to suggest some simplified notion that positions people who commit crimes as criminals in need of police discipline, but instead it points to the possibilities that providing people with services at a local level, which enhance rather than restrict their everyday experiences presents exciting spin-offs for dismantling prejudice and essentialist thinking. Indeed if we are to build "new forms of collective association premised not on familial notions of racial membership, but on civic belonging and social justice"

(Erasmus, 2010:57) then local municipalities need creative initiatives that enable this rather than compound segregation.

One way of doing this is to respond more critically to global and national discourses that favour private development as a panacea for urban blight. Indeed whilst iTrump"s interventions "to stimulate private sector interest " (iTrump website), more specifically through funding a row of palm trees and new paving in St. Andrews Street, may have been appreciated by some residents, in practice it served to reiterate existing spatial and social divides between St. Andrews Street and St. Georges Street. Through classifying an area of St. Andrews Street as a "cultural precinct" iTrump (*Interview with iTrump officials* 21st July 2010) also inadvertently contributes to the urban myth that foreigners are the causal agents of urban deterioration in St. Georges Street. The classification of space by city officials here directly impacts on the classification of people living in these spaces. On a local level this type of differential treatment of geographic space is a microcosm of the national spatial segregation that remains a lived reality of South African existence. If we are to escape the "tradition of modern raciological reflection organized between the disciplinary axes of anthropology and geography" (Gilroy, 2000:328), or to use related terms, culture and space, then at both a local and national level a concerted effect to reduce rather than reproduce spatial inequalities is required. At a local level this could perhaps be conceived as a shift in thinking from pavements and palm trees to people and possibilities. Whilst new paving and palm trees may create a more pleasing aesthetics for some, offering resources and finance for social goods (subsidised crèches and clinics, meeting halls, learning centres and libraries) would offer a better form of nurturing inclusive public spaces and moments of connections for all residents. It is conceivable that these connections may in turn start to tackle some of the exploitations carried out by unscrupulous landlords and criminal entrepreneurs, forging an alternate path to fixing up „bad buildings".

Conclusion

Certainly the idea of forging alternative paths is also important for researchers and theorists in the field of race and race thinking. One step along this path is committing to critical discussions on what happens when academics move from the

layer of social constructivist abstraction into the messy practice of researching race in everyday settings. Serious consideration of this direction positions researchers" and participants" dialogues and interactions as an integral part of the production of race in society. It is hoped that this thesis offers at least one way of tackling these spaces of tension. This focus requires consistent reflection on our openness to the interconnections, intersections and fluidity of identity, and more especially being willing to set aside academic assumptions about the meaning we presume participants may attach to race. Indeed research willing to engage in the messy contradictions of how and why identities are constructed in specific ways, within a local and national context, offers valuable contributions to creating these more inclusive state projects. Research of this kind can provide "an innovative and comparative framework where attention to „the local" can be used to probe and complicate understandings of dominant discourses and their links to wider sites of social relations" (Gunaratnam, 2003:178).

For example, whilst not anticipated from the beginning of this thesis, the data from Albert Park illustrates the powerful connections between the classification of people through social identities, and the classification of geographic space; on a national level between townships, cities and suburbs, and on a very local level such as the differences between St. Andrews Street and St. Georges Street. This in itself is an important reminder of the powerful agency that lies within national and city urban planning, an agency that impacts on how people form commonalities and reproduce segregation. Drawing the reader"s attention back to the imagery and conversations of Albert Park represented in this thesis, perhaps then it is fitting to end with the following quote from David Theo Goldberg; "to change one"s geography – not only to move from but equally to transform one"s spaces and its representations – may well be to change one"s world" (1993:205). It is to the possibilities of change that this thesis is dedicated, from imagining ways of researching, thinking and interacting that resist our habits of essentialism in all their forms; to a conceptual movement towards a politics of multiplicity. It is in this willingness to explore these possibilities as serious alternatives that we may imagine a South Africa that realises social justice for all.

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Human Genome Project Official Website
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Appendix A: Data Lists

Interviews (15)

- Interview with Janet and Roger 25th March 2008
- Interview with Jabulani 1st April 2008
- Interview with Charlini 25th June 2008
- Interview with Investor Owner 7th July 2010
- Interview with Marge 18th November 2009
- Interview with Jacob 10th February 2010
- Interview with Manager from a Social Housing Company 12th February 2010
- Interview with Sanele 5th March 2010
- Interview with Priscilla 11th May 2010
- Interview with Anet 31st May 2010
- Interview with Jamal 1st July 2010
- Interview with iTrump officials 21th July 2010
- Interview with Legal Administrator 4th August 2010
- Interview with Jade 19th August 2010
- Interview with Metro Police Officer 30th August 2010

Field Notes used in data extracts (19)

- Field Note 31st October 2007
- Field Note 8th November 2007
- Field Note 10th November 2007
- Field Note 13th November 2007
- Field Note 11th July 2008
- Field Note 4th July 2009
- Field Note 8th October 2009
- Field Note 29th October 2009
- Field Note 3rd February 2010
- Field Note 24th February 2010
- Field Note 11th March 2010
- Field Note 31st March 2010

- Field Note 15th April 2010
- Field Note 6th May 2010
- Field Note 26th May 2010
- Field Note 9th June 2010
- Field Note 22nd June 2010
- Field Note 8th July 2010
- Field Note 15th July 2010

Additional Field Notes (10)
- Field Note 11th March 2008
- Field Note 6th November 2008
- Field Note 10th February 2010
- Field Note 12th February 2010
- Field Note 24th March 2010
- Field Note 23rd April 2010
- Field Note 13th May 2010
- Field Note 24th May 2010
- Field Note 31st May 2010
- Field Note 19th August 2010

Others Notes (1)
- Authors Minutes of the Better Buildings Minutes 21st July 2010

Other Documents (1)
- iTrump Better Buildings Minutes, 2010

Newspapers (26)
- The Daily News 11th June 1987
- The Daily News 18th June 1987
- The Natal Mercury 19th June 1987
- The Post 20th June 1987
- The Daily News 24th June 1987
- The The Daily News 29th June 1987

- The Post 28th September – 1st October 1988
- The The Daily News 25th March 1989
- The Natal Mercury 30th March 1989
- The Daily News 19th April 1989
- The Natal Mercury 5th June 1989
- The Natal Mercury 5th July 1989
- The Sunday Tribune 24th May 1998
- The Sunday Tribune 31st August 2003
- City Press 18th January 2004
- The The Daily News 9th May 2006
- The Mercury 21st May 2007
- The Witness 13th October 2007
- The Daily News 30th May 2008
- Mail & Guardian online 22nd July 2008
- The Daily News 17th October 2008
- The Mercury 6th January 2009
- The Daily News 6th January 2009
- The Daily News 6th January 2009
- Mail and Guardian 7th January 2009
- The Independent on Saturday 16th May 2009
- Mail & Guardian online 4th July 2009
- The Daily News, 5th November 2010

Additional Interviews (3)

- Interview with Estate Agent Manager 18th August 2009
- Interview with Estate Agent 22nd June 2009
- Interview with Civic Leader on Tenants Rights 7th July 2009

The above interviews were conducted by the author as part of the "Urban Transformation in South Africa" research project for Brown University; the project can be viewed at www.s4.brown.edu/southafrica/homepage.htm.

Many thanks for their permission to use extracts from the above three interviews in Chapter 3 of this thesis.