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Being like a State: Policing Space in
Johannesburg



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Abstract

This paper looks at the legacies of segregation in Africa. The study is specifically interested in the aftermath of Apartheid, in Johannesburg South Africa. Now that the Apartheid plans and laws are on the scrapheap, a series of leftovers, hangovers and attenuated dynamics continue to help create urban divides across the city. These are not strict, marked, formal boundaries, but ‘frontiers’: semi-permeable, implicit zones which define where the various racial and class groups in Johannesburg go, and clarify how they are treated when they do. In order to understand the emergence of new urban frontiers, I engage with James Scott’s (1998) theory of spatial control and resistance in development planning outlined in ‘Seeing Like a State’. I explore how individual *mētis* is implicated in the reconstruction of authoritarian, or at the very least oppressive and non-democratic forms of social and political space in Johannesburg. I argue that the high modernist system of Apartheid was not simply embedded in plans and laws, but in the people who were responsible for its implementation and the people who were subject to the laws. I show how this institutional memory influences their responses to human mobility across the urban landscape.

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Contents

INTRODUCTION: THE AFRICAN STATE AND HIGH MODERNISM.....	7
A NEW FRONTIER IN HILLBROW: THE RIDGE	11
DEFINING CRIME: PEOPLE OUT OF PLACE	22
DEALING WITH THE DISPLACED 1: THE PROBLEM OF THE BLACK ITINERANT	27
DEALING WITH THE DISPLACED 2: THE PROBLEM OF THE WHITE PIONEER	33
Bibliography	40

INTRODUCTION: THE AFRICAN STATE AND HIGH MODERNISM

The development of the modern state in Africa is a story of the attempt to exert command over space. In part, this entailed colonial efforts to ‘find’ and ‘bind’. The ‘discovery’ of the ‘dark continent’ by European ‘explorers’ in the nineteenth century was followed by a series of farcical efforts to manufacture a series of territorially delimited states. Both processes culminated in the Treaty of Berlin, and have since attracted many a tongue-lashing from anti-colonial critics. However, perhaps the more important and enduring phenomenon since the arrival of European empires has been the state’s attempt to ‘settle’ mobile populations. This is partly about the controlled migration of European peoples to coastal colonies. It has more to do with the ongoing effort to manage and modernize the largely black (but also Indian) population that was gravitating towards new focal points of power and wealth.

For Frederick Cooper, the *stabilization* of the labour force was the defining theme of twentieth century African history. This theme helps us to best understand the sudden moment of decolonization. Over the course of a few decades, British and French rulers:

[m]oved from a conception of the African worker as a temporary wage earner at risk of becoming ‘destabilised’ if allowed to stay too long from his village – to a vision of the African turned into the industrial man, now living with a wife and family in a setting conducive to acculturating new generations into modern society.¹

According to Cooper, this peculiar concern with the stabilization of the population drew physical divides between imperial and conquered peoples but provided both with a common language. This common discourse provides us with the primary reason why the terms of decolonization in Anglophone and Francophone Africa, when this moment finally came, were largely consensual and non-violent. Both sides in this struggle for power concurred that a central objective of the state was to ensure that the urban labour force played a productive role in the economy and (gradually and partially) realize the accoutrements of modern citizenship: civil rights, residency rights and rights to political participation. Of course, at the same time as this limited membership in the political community was recognized for small sections of the urban population, they were being denied to the population at large. The policing of

1 Frederick Cooper (1996) *Decolonization and African Society: the Labor Question in French and British Africa*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

this divide, which required the maintenance of strict laws about who could come to the city and make claims upon its various rights-bearing institutions, became a central question for both the colonial and post-colonial state.

This paper looks at these legacies, using a case study of a city where this African form of statehood was carried to its illogical extreme: Johannesburg, South Africa. However, instead of poring over the slow playing out of the Apartheid regime, the study is specifically interested in the aftermath of Apartheid, as planners, developers and statesmen and -women have sought to chart a new path for the city, one based on racial integration and harmony. More specifically, I'm interested in the development of new patterns of segregation, despite the state's purported claims to produce a desegregated city. Now that the Apartheid plans and laws are on the scrapheap, a series of leftovers, hangovers and attenuated dynamics continue to help create urban divides across the city. Since these are not strict, marked, formal boundaries, in this paper I refer to them as 'frontiers': semi-permeable, implicit zones which define where the various racial and class groups in Johannesburg may or may not go, and clarify the manner in which they will be regarded and treated when they do.

In order to understand the emergence of new urban frontiers, I engage with James Scott's theory of spatial control and resistance in development planning. Scott's classic, *'Seeing Like a State'*² is a sweeping critique of high modernist thought and power. He takes aim at the radically simplified view of space which all sorts of planners (town planners, revolutionaries, foresters, agricultural reformists, etc.) have used as the templates for development schemes. The problem is that planners 'see' human settlements from above and from afar, through maps, statistics and other abstractions which erase the variety of human settlement practices and experiences from view. Since these tools fail to capture human life in all its complexity and character, they tend to produce development schemes that either fail miserably, or result in great human misery and suffering.

Scott uses this critique to launch an appeal for a different way of developing knowledge and designs for human development. Although a somewhat lesser feature of the book, his concluding chapters appeal for us to respect *mētis*, the practical knowledge which human beings, often individually and locally, deploy to manipulate and reproduce the world around them. Scott argues that we need to respect this form of knowledge, consisting of practical know-how, local nous and trial and

2 James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State : How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, Yale Agrarian Studies (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

error, if we are to resist some of the more monstrous failures of modern development planning.

In this paper I will argue that there is a suggestive, but ultimately unsatisfying argument in Scott's work about the relationship between socio-spatial knowledge and politics. Scott does not imply a direct causal relationship between, on the one hand, high modernist views of space and authoritarianism, or on the other, between *mētis* and democracy. However, his work strongly suggests that by encouraging the flourishing of *mētis*, we may resist some of the authoritarian impulses of extreme statism and build more democratic spaces. Thus, Scott concludes that the 'claim – that the state, with its positive law and central institutions, undermines individuals' capacities for autonomous self-governance ... might apply to the planning grids of high modernism as well'.³ He goes on to argue that 'democracy itself is based on the assumption that the *mētis* of its citizenry should, in mediated form, continually modify the laws and policies of the land'.⁴ So, in Scott's work we find a more nuanced pair of contentions: that high modernism enables more authoritarian forms of governance and undermines individual autonomy, while *mētis* enables democratic practice and continually contests authoritarian planning schemes (see Figure 1 below).

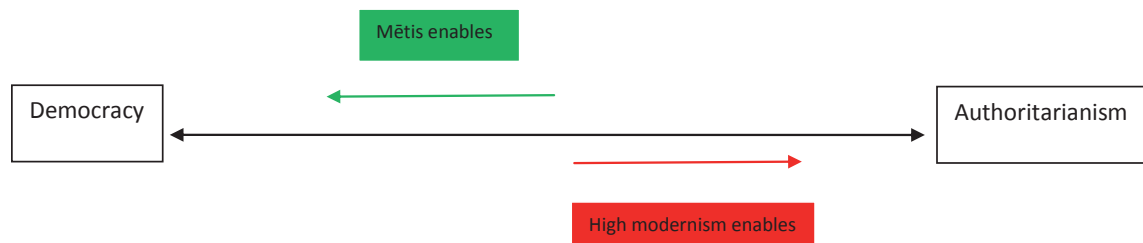


Figure 1: A Schematic Representation of the Spectrum of State Forms Depicting the Causal Claims of 'Seeing Like a State'

The significance of these associations in Scott's work is perhaps best revealed by what he leaves unconsidered or intentionally leaves out. Specifically, Scott spends little time thinking about the possibility that the relationships between spatial perspective and political order might be reversed. Scott recognizes that *mētis* might not necessarily be a particularly egalitarian institution because of its highly personalized nature. *Mētis* is prone to being monopolized by cliques and clubs. But he does not afford

³ Ibid., 349.

⁴ Ibid., 353.

much attention to the possible authoritarian tendencies inherent within the phenomenon of *mētis* or the possibility that *mētis* might in fact co-exist comfortably with an authoritarian regime or planning model.

There are many possible reasons for this tendency in Scott's theory, but it seems that the most likely source of bias is his disciplinary leanings. As an anthropologist and an ethnographer by trade, Scott is methodologically predisposed to afford recognition to the intuitively developed and highly localized ways of knowing and doing that are the subject of his craft. At the same time, and this is in part the strength of ethnography, Scott is predisposed to conceptualizing statistics, grand structural explanations and macro-political institutions as inherently problematic external impositions. Not all ethnographers/ anthropologists think this way, but Scott, whose other classic work, '*Weapons of the Weak*'⁵, is specifically focused on revealing localized forms of counter-systemic behaviour, appears to consistently lean in the direction of valorizing local forms of ingenuity and practice.

In the remainder of this paper I look critically at Scott's theory by exploring the manner in which the *mētis* of individuals is implicated in the reconstruction of authoritarian, or at the very least oppressive and non-democratic forms of social and political space in Johannesburg; to put it more simply, I'm interested in looking at individuals 'being like a state'. To do this, I adopt an ethnographic approach which is specifically suited to uncovering localized forms of knowledge and exploring its application on an everyday basis. I use this approach to show how the high modernist system of Apartheid was not simply embedded in plans and laws, but in the people who were responsible for its implementation and the people who were subject to these laws. I show how this sort of knowledge now forms a crucial part of the way they respond to human mobility across the urban landscape and how this behavior is implicated in the construction of new urban frontiers.

In order to get at this process of translation of historical planning models into contemporary segregational *mētis*, I draw on 18 months' fieldwork with the South African Police Services (SAPS) and Community Policing Structures across 6 police stations in Greater Johannesburg. However, I mainly draw upon my insights from the Precinct of Hillbrow. This research consisted of ride-alongs with police officers, accompanying officers and community members on street patrols, attendance at meetings, interviews with key informants and observation of encounters in the

5 ———, *Weapons of the Weak : Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

charge office. This approach helps me to show that *mētis* can be a crucial, if often subtle and implicit, way in which socio-spatial divisions are remade, and I use these findings to critically engage with Scott's valorization of *mētis* as a weapon of the weak.

The remainder of the paper will consist of four sections. In Section One I explore a range of ways in which the securitization of individual spatial *mētis* is helping build a new urban frontier in Hillbrow. Section Two examines the linkages between these contemporary forms of *mētis* and those of the Apartheid era through an in-depth analysis of a police training session in Mayfair. Here, I suggest that the core form of practical knowledge that Jo'burgers take from their past is the notion that crime is a product of people being 'out of place'. Sections Three and Four return to Hillbrow and look at the experiences of people who are discovered 'out of place' on either side of the frontier. These sections show that segregation is not simply embedded in the movement control practices of the state but in a dense matrix of segregational *mētis*, which objectifies, stereotypes and ostracizes people who dare move outside of their residential zones.

A NEW FRONTIER IN HILLBROW: THE RIDGE

There are strong reasons to study the police as an institution of informal segregation. While race remains an underlying force behind the construction of new socio-spatial divides in Johannesburg, security has become the primary sphere in which racial, class, religious, ethnic and other underlying forms of social division and segregation are mobilized. While previous racial and elitist proxies such as pseudo-scientific theories of contagion, bio-social fears of miscegenation and moral decay, and ethnocentric claims to territorial ownership and integrity, have each lost legitimacy in South African public discourse, security against criminality has grown in stature. In part, this is understandable. The 2001 Institute for Security Studies' appraisal that South Africa has 'an extraordinary high level of violent crime' probably remains accurate.⁶ In part, this focus on security verges on paranoia and is infused by racism and xenophobia, a development which can be traced through South Africa's growing investment in private security. In 2007 South Africa had a private security industry worth R14 billion, employing a total of 300 000 active security officers, outnumbering the police

6 (2001) South Africa: World crime capital?, *Nedbank ISS Crime Index*, 5 (1).

by 2 to 1.⁷ This does not count the investments that all property owners make in insurance, high walls, electronic security and surveillance systems, anti-hi-jack systems, vehicle tracking devices, guns and self-defence training. Crime has also risen steadily on the political agenda. At least one poll from the 2009 election suggests that crime and policing now ranks amongst the top four issues for South African voters, along with unemployment, job creation and poverty⁸, although there remains a racial division in these numbers with voters favouring the Democratic Alliance (a party formed out of the remnants of the Nationalist Party) rating crime and policing much higher on their agenda than ANC voters.

This increased interest in crime and security has had implications for the physical landscape of cities like Johannesburg. We have seen the rise of gated communities across the city, either through the new construction of private walled developments or through the *ad hoc* and often illegal process of ‘boom-gating’ previously open suburbs.⁹ While private security, security technology and gated communities are often the domain of the wealthy, on the other side of this equation poorer South Africans regularly participate in, or seek security, from a range of non-state groups ranging from community policing forums to self-defence communities to run-of-the-mill vigilantes. Spatial claiming and ethnic closure is often a key *raison d’etre* of many such groups, as has often been witnessed over the past five years, with the rising incidence of vigilante and mob attacks on foreigners and other South Africans who are perceived as outsiders.¹⁰

We can see a more specific example of these changes in the police precinct of Hillbrow, which sits on the north-eastern side of the Johannesburg inner-city. Over the past decade Hillbrow has become renowned as a centre of criminality in Johannesburg, and regarded as representative of all of the problematic dynamics driving South Africa’s high-crime rates. Indeed, other high-crime precincts are consistently compared with the Hillbrow benchmark. Newspaper reports emphasize other precincts’ rising levels of ‘dangerousness’ by giving them the moniker of this most infamous precinct, e.g. Sea Point in the Western Cape has been dubbed the ‘Hillbrow by

7 Raenette Taljaard (2008) ‘Private and public security in South Africa’ in Sabelo Gumedze, *The Private Security Sector in Africa*, ISS Monograph Series, n. 146.

8 Kersting, Norbert (2009) ‘Voting Behaviour in the 2009 South African Election’, *Africa Spectrum*, 44 (2) 125-133.

9 Karina Landman (2000) ‘The Urban Future: Enclosed Neighbourhoods?’, Paper Presented at the *Urban Futures Conference*, 10th-14th July, Johannesburg.

10 Loren Landau (forthcoming) *Exorcising the Demon Within*, WITS University Press: Johannesburg.

the sea'. Quigney in the Eastern Cape was labelled the 'Hillbrow of East London'. Sunnyside in Pretoria was called 'Hillbrow No. 2'.¹¹ The story of the demise of the once highly prized high-rise apartment complexes and entertainment precinct which lie at the heart of Hillbrow precinct has become one of the ways in which Jo'burgers narrate and lament the advent and expansion of the city's crime and grime dilemma.

Hillbrow precinct partially covers eight suburbs: Berea, Braamfontein, Houghton, Joubert Park, Killarney, Parktown, Riviera and – somewhat confusingly – the *suburb* of Hillbrow.



Figure 1: Hillbrow Precinct and Sector Boundaries

The media stories which have given so much attention to Hillbrow's high level of reported crime rarely differentiate between the wider precinct of Hillbrow and the much smaller suburb of Hillbrow itself, treating them as one and the same entity.

¹¹ To some extent, this reputation is warranted. The precinct has consistently featured in the provincial and national lists for reporting high levels of priority crimes. However, these figures need to be read against the fact that Hillbrow is one of, if not the most, densely populated police precincts in South Africa. It contains large numbers of the nation's tallest residential buildings, many of which are over-occupied. Yet, the rankings are based on absolute numbers of reported crime, rather than the number of crimes per head of population and so may overstate the problem. Furthermore, while there is no reliable national measure of service levels, compared with some of the township precincts we studied in our comparative ethnography, service at Hillbrow's Client Service Centre is remarkably professional, which may result in higher reporting rates and raise the precinct's levels of reported crime.

However, the many Jo'burgers who live, work and travel through the area, recognize that, in fact, the precinct is deeply divided and sharply differentiated right down the middle. I'll introduce you to this unique geography by giving you a sample of a Hillbrow Sector Manager's tour through the area.

Hillbrow police station assigns a sector manager to each of the suburbs in the precinct. The sector manager is responsible for community liaison, intelligence gathering and operational planning for his/her suburb(s). Killarney and Houghton sit at the bottom of a valley and, along with the other valley precinct of Parktown, are divided from the hill-top sectors of Berea, Braamfontein, Joubert Park and Hillbrow by a tall, rocky ridge. Inspector Gower is Sector Manager for Killarney and Houghton. He is in his 40s (one of the few white officers in Hillbrow), is a keen amateur gardener, has a measured portliness and a wicked, albeit somewhat school-boyish sense of humour. For the most part, he seems comfortable with the fact that policing in the valley is relatively easy, or at least, much more so than the dangerous, high crime areas on the hill.

For the first hour or two of his tour Gower drove me through the sector's wide boulevards and tree-lined, high-walled streets. He pointed out the homes of Presidents Mandela and Mbeki, making sure to emphasize the quality of the landscaping in the latter, speculating how many years he would have to work to buy such a nice garden. He took me to a couple of scenic view points, told me stories of the old ladies he listens to on the Community Policing Forum, and complained about the cheap residents who won't pay five rands to for secure parking at the mall. As we drove around, he waved at some of the security guards who stood at their posts outside the larger residences and on key corners, and they waved back.

The climax of this relaxed afternoon came when Gower took me to his favourite spot in Houghton: 'The Wilds'. The Wilds are a botanical garden where, as Gower put it, you 'take 10-15 minutes out of your day, and can just relax'. We walked through the park on foot, admiring the landscaping and the views. As we came out of one of the greenhouses, the ridge came into view, rising up majestically and partially concealing the high-rise apartments of Hillbrow and Berea. Gower continued walking, gesturing at the vista and reiterating the merits of his little Eden 'and when you're here you can say stuff that place [pointing at Berea] and stuff that place [pointing at Hillbrow]'. We laughed.

The remainder of the tour through Killarney-Houghton was uneventful. Unlike my trips with Motshekga in Berea or Devilliers in Braamfontein, sector managers on the hill, Gower was never distracted by random requests for assistance from citizens or other officers. For most of the trip he seemed happy about this, chatting with me about his children and their sporting interests along the way. But at some point he seemed to get bored or self-conscious of the fact that I wasn't getting enough *action*. So he drove back up in and through the heart of Hillbrow and Berea. Here we began to cruise the most infa-

mous drug selling corners and Gower began to give me the ‘dirt’ on Hillbrow’s cellphone snatching racket. Mimicking his earlier moves, he waved at a couple of people, but after receiving a couple of blank stares, gave up.

In some respects, Gower’s tour is a classic tale of a police officer in semi-retirement. Despite the fact that Gower works in one of Johannesburg’s most dangerous precincts, he has eased his way into a sector with a lot of office work, a lot of listening to the concerns of old ladies, and a lot of time to stop and smell the flowers.¹² Gower’s comments become more revealing when we reflect on the fact that the ridge he was pointing at is not only a divide between low-level crime stats and high-level crime stats or ‘active’ and ‘leisurely’ policing, but also represents a new demographic divide. As the maps below suggest, the ridge now separates the largely black, poor renters and unemployed populations on the hill from the largely white, wealthy, home-owning and fully employed populations in the valley where ‘The Wilds’ are. So Gower knows that crossing the ridge from valley to Hillbrow not only entails heading back into the criminal heartland of his infamous precinct, in certain respects this represents a step back into an entirely different city.

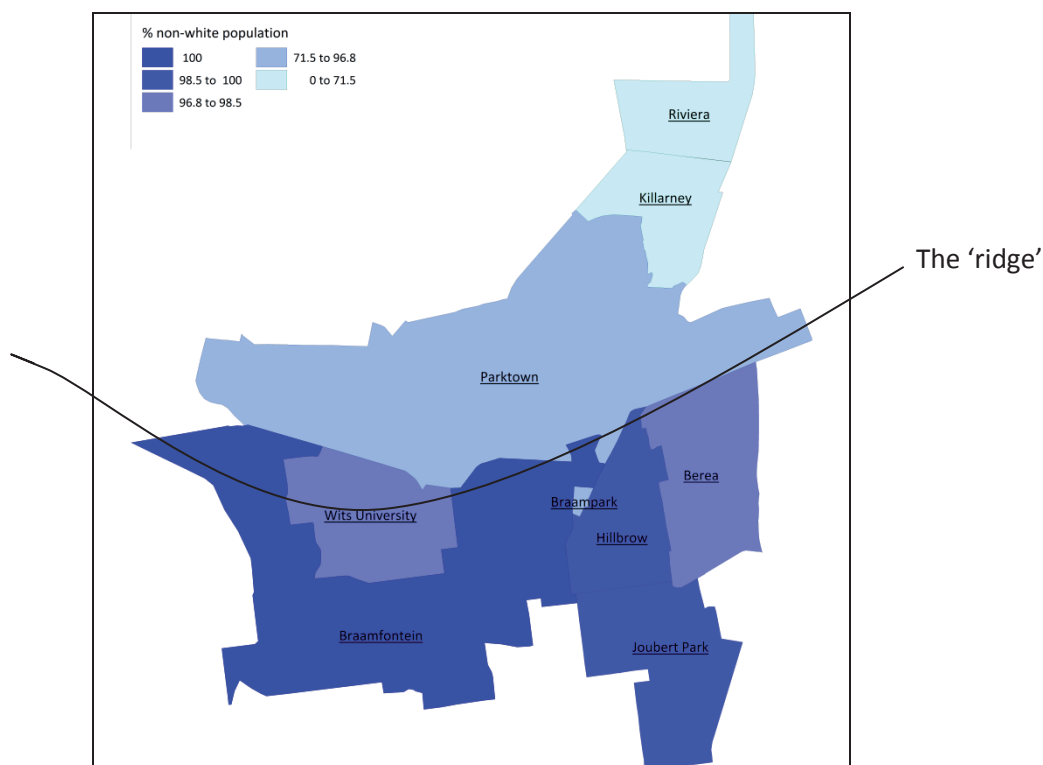
Johannesburg, a city once deeply and artificially segmented into strict, racially defined settlement areas, is slowly becoming a more mixed population: the boundaries are blurring. At the same time, as the processes of white flight, urban decentralization and renewal, private securitization, public transport remodelling, mallification and international migration, simultaneously remake the city, Jo’burgers are creating new forms of urban divide. A good example is the short distance between, on the one hand, the newly constructed CBD of hotels, banks and malls in Sandton, and on the other, South Africa’s oldest township of Alexandra, where many residents still lack running water and electricity. The Sandton-Alexandra barrier was graphically and poignantly depicted in *Tsotsi*, a film about township gangsters and their brutal and mutually perplexing confrontation with South Africa’s *nouveaux riche*. The ridge which runs through Hillbrow precinct is a similarly recent protrusion in the social contours of the city.

When these factors are taken into account, Gower’s tour can be seen as the opposite of that depicted in *Tsotsi*, where the down-and-out would-be-gangsters journey into the realm of the new upper class. It is a journey across a similar frontier, into the

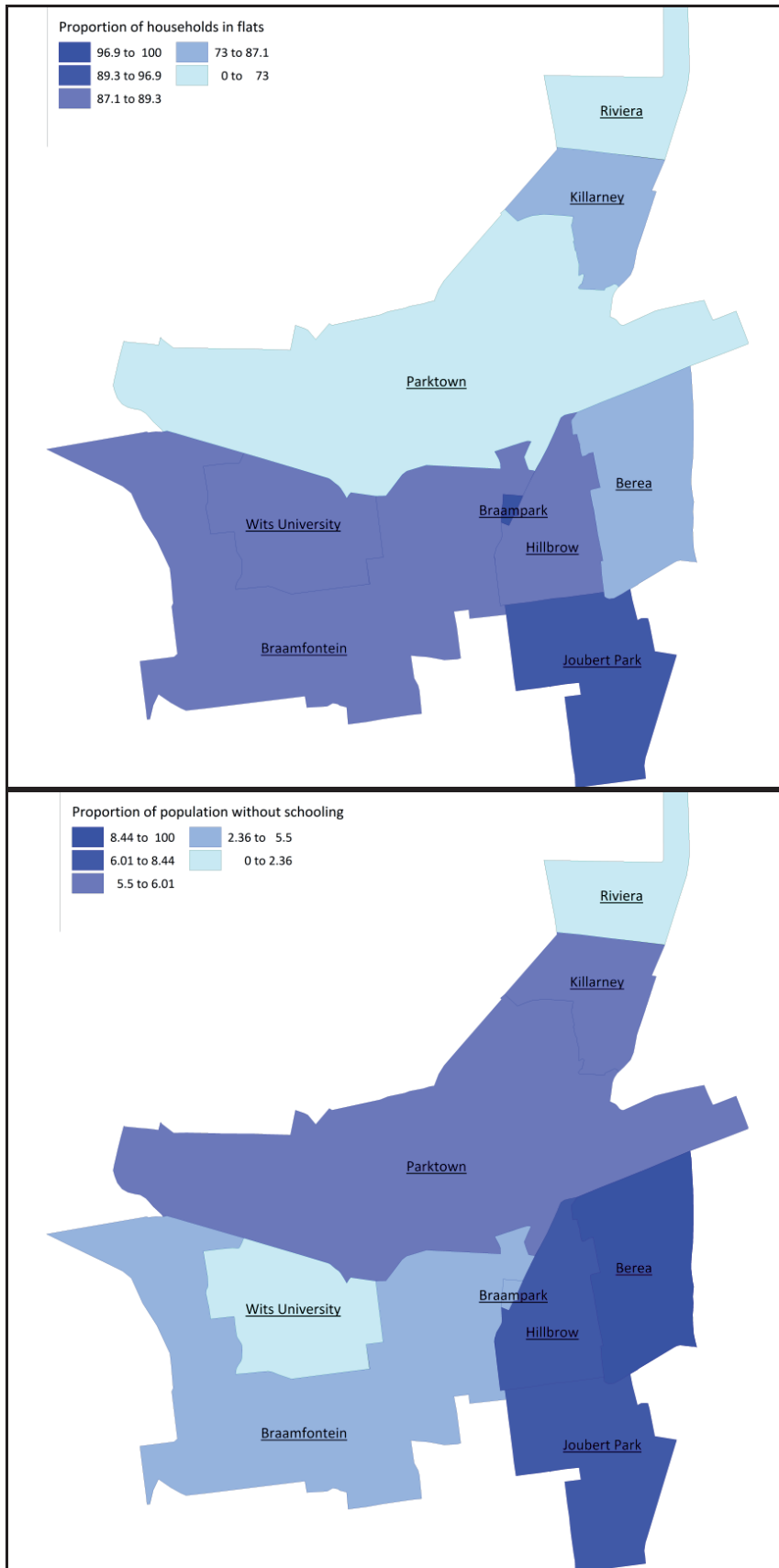
12 For the most part, private security companies take care of patrol duties in his precinct and usually only call on the police when they want to make a report. Occasionally SAPS members will cruise the mall looking for car thieves or roust potential smash and grab artists from their hiding spots on the roadside corners.

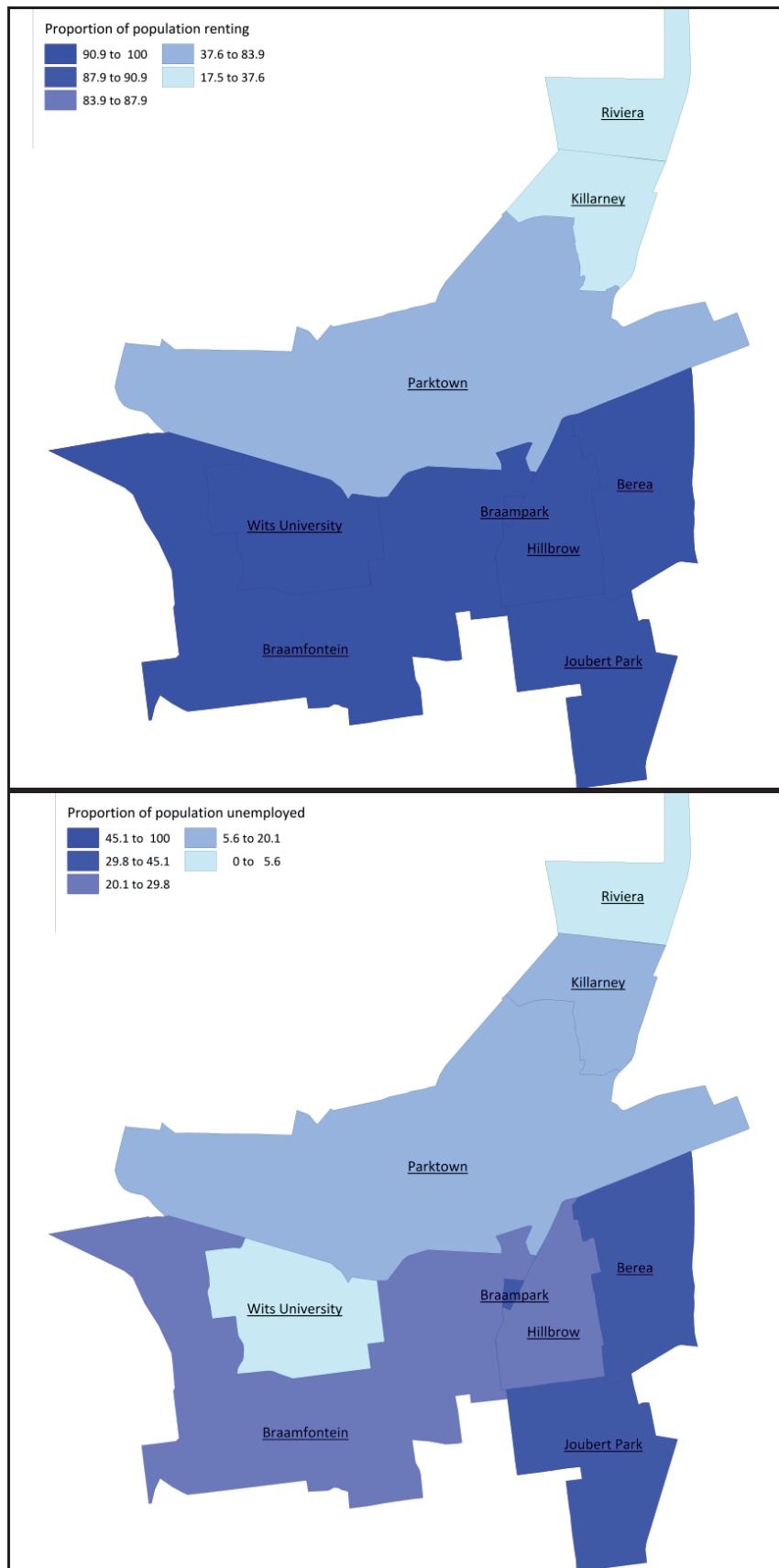
wild zone of gangsters, by a middle-class man who, some time ago, began to beat a personal strategic retreat. When back in *The Wilds*, Gower revels in the tranquillity of his life and ‘work’ in the valley and reflects on the way this distance can dramatically separate you from the troubles of that other world on the hill. However, eventually his police officer’s sense of adventure – and probably, his knack for a rollicking crime story – encourages Gower to take me back into a world where a wave from a police officer is rarely welcomed. Yet, Gower is still coming to terms with this difference and perhaps kidding himself about what it means for the way he must act in the two different zones: hence, he continues to try out a wave or two.

Aerial Maps depicting Distribution of Various Demographic Groupings Across Hillbrow¹³



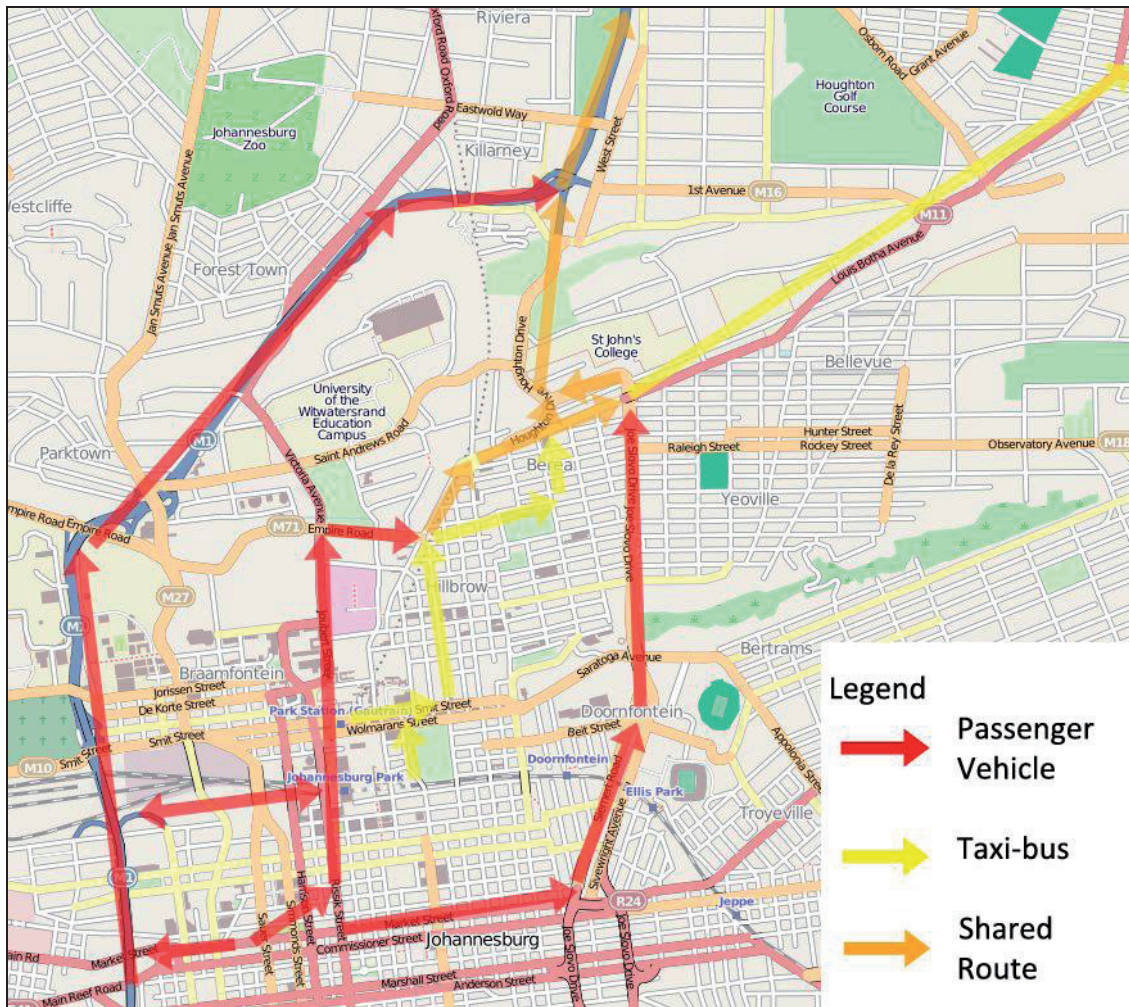
13 Source: 2001 Census. The two anomalies here are the relatively well employed and educated populations of Braamfontein and Wits University, which are explained by their student population and the high-proportion of flat dwellers in Killarney, which primarily consists of multi-storey, but considerably more expensive flats, than the high-rise flat lands of Berea/Hillbrow.





Of course, Gower is not the only person whose movements are consistently influenced by this emerging frontier; and the physical geography of the ridge is not the only way in which Hillbrow is separated from the rest of the city. Here it is worth reflecting on how public perceptions of Hillbrow and Berea influence the way the city drives.

Johannesburg is a city of cars. When Jo’burgers head home from their inner-city workplaces in the evenings to the suburbs and townships of the Northeast, they take two routes. The working class black population who are travelling in mini-bus ‘taxis’ to homes in townships like Alexandra and Erasmia make a bee-line. Their drivers shoot up through the four lane one-way streets of Hillbrow before cresting the hill, dashing through the backstreets of Berea and spilling out and across the ridge on Louis Botha. In contrast, the passenger vehicles driven by individual members of



Traffic Routes Towards Johannesburg’s Northeastern Suburbs and Townships

Johannesburg's middle and upper class skirt around Hillbrow, jumping onto the M2 ring road freeway East or the M1 freeway north. Sometimes, in high traffic, their radios will tell them to sneak between the two freeways through the back streets of Orange Grove or Observatory. If they must head directly through Hillbrow precinct, they tip-toe around the suburb of Hillbrow, along the ridge, up Empire and between Parktown and Hillbrow on Cavendish and then Louis Botha.

While crime stats have long suggested that you're more likely to be hi-jacked in 'illustrious' Sandton (where else would a car thief go to steal fancy cars?) than 'dangerous' Hillbrow, the car-owning citizens of Johannesburg do not factor stats into their travel plans. Instead, they use a set of intuitive associations between place and security to choose their routes, and to skirt around those areas they have collectively deemed to be off-limits. The result is that Hillbrow becomes not merely a place where certain sections of the population tend not to reside, but a place that Jo'burgers rarely experience, even in the most superficial manner: out the window of a passing car. In this sense we might say that for Jo'burgers, Hillbrow is becoming a new frontier.

The frontier analogy is often made more explicit in the pedestrian experiences of newspaper journalists. Many journalists' accounts of their 'visits' to Hillbrow combine the performative sensationalism of wartime 'action' journalism with the delightful terror and authoritative taxonomy of animal documentary. Take, for example, this reporter's analogy to his holiday in a real 'wild' nature reserve:

Walking in the heart of Kruger National Park is much safer than being in the crowded and mean streets of Hillbrow... We had been walking for just a few minutes when Gordon stopped to show us the marks made by a black rhino marking its territory. Man was I scared. But I thought that in Hillbrow nobody warns you. Everybody looks the same, no horn, no long neck, no spoor, so its almost impossible to tell who's the bad guy. Here in the Kruger at least I know the difference between a rhino and an impala. And I can climb a tree if attacked.¹⁴

While this rather poorly chosen and poorly constructed analogy is an extreme example, it also represents a general tendency to represent Hillbrow as wild and dangerous, a place that one must enter with extreme caution. It also lets us know about the dehumanizing force of Hillbrow's reputation, which licenses this black journalist to compare his fellow citizens to an undifferentiated mass of inhospitable beasts.

Like almost any socio-political phenomenon in Johannesburg, the emergence of this frontier is deeply linked to the themes of race and racism. These factors are

¹⁴ Lucas Ledwaba (2004) 'A Walk in the Park' in *This Day*, 2nd April, p. 8.

clearly products of Johannesburg's history of Apartheid. Yet, understanding how these historical artefacts weave their way into the present can be a difficult task. If my account above is correct, we may not necessarily find these connections within the state itself. Instead, we may need to look to more organic sources of segregation, i.e. a) site selection in the residential housing market; b) police officers' navigation of their working environments; c) route planning by commuters; and d) the imagination of space and place by influential voices in public discourse. If we put this in Scott's terms, while the high-modernist vision of a segregated Johannesburg has fallen away, perhaps we need to look to the manner in which individual *mētis* is collectively reshaping Johannesburg in the image of its past.

This requires a closer look at the relationships between state and society. Over the past few decades we have seen the emergence of a fairly robust literature on the ethnography of the state.¹⁵ This literature has utilized participant observation and other related techniques to not only explode the myth of a monolithic state, but to show how the formal practices and procedures which constitute the core of state business are sustained by a litany of informal, micro-cultural and social phenomena. Crucially, while classical Weberian conceptions of the state suggest that the historical continuity and consistency of this organization lies in its use of the written form: constitutional principles; guiding statutes; bureaucratic manuals and historical archives,¹⁶ this literature argues that local traditions of state practice are also embedded in people, in their bureaucratic routines, work cultures and organizational norms. If we take this socio-cultural foundation of the state seriously, then we can begin to imagine the manner in which individual *mētis* can not only resist, alter and reshape high modernist planning models, but also how the series of localized practices which have been developed to implement, support and sustain authoritarian schemes like that of Apartheid, might outlast both the grand plans and grand planners behind this system and the constitutional and legal mechanisms which were developed to put these plans into action, and take on a life of their own: being like a state.

15 Michael Lipsky, *Street-Level Bureaucracy : Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services*, Publications of Russell Sage Foundation (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1980); A. Gupta, "Blurred Boundaries – the Discourse of Corruption, the Culture of Politics, and the Imagined State," *American Ethnologist* 22, no. 2 (1995); Giorgio Blundo and Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan, *Everyday Corruption and the State : Citizens and Public Officials in Africa* (New York: Zed, 2006).

16 Michael Mann (1986) *The Sources of Social Power, Vol. 1: A History of Power from the Beginning to A.D. 1760*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

DEFINING CRIME: PEOPLE OUT OF PLACE

In order to get at this process of translation, I want to look at the process of skills transfer. The skills associated with the interpretation of and command over space is a particularly vital variant of *mētis* for operational policing. As Steve Herbert's study of Los Angeles has powerfully shown, territoriality infuses a multitude of everyday practices of police officers.¹⁷ As the lawful executors of the state's monopoly on the legitimate use of force, police officers are necessarily equipped and trained to use violence to subdue suspects and to protect members of the public and property. However, the art of policing relies more on an officer's capacity to read the geo-coded character of criminal behaviour in the spaces where the officers work and to deploy a series of non-violent, symbolic and strategic *displays* of their ability and preparedness to use force. For example, an officer might be able to interpret changes in the criminal balance of power in her precinct by observing the different sites where particular gang colours are being worn or graffiti thrown up. Alternatively, an officer might shout out to a suspect who is hiding behind their door that 'I'm armed and ready to shoot' in order to encourage acquiescence without necessitating combat. Beyond this verbal communication, police officers are trained to use a series of spatial signals and tactics, which display their capacity to use violence and improve their strategic positioning vis-à-vis any potential conflict. Techniques such as approaching a suspect's vehicle from behind (thereby ensuring greater visibility than a potential assailant), or ordering two suspects to separate from one another (thereby reducing the possibility for collusion) are two of a multitude of spatial practices that are included in an officer's basic training and which they master and internalize through daily practice and routine. An experienced officer will recognize that this repertoire of body language signals, individual and group manoeuvres and knowledge pertaining to the categorization of space, not only gets results in the form of successful operations and arrests, but prevents a range of potentially violent scenarios from escalating into bloody conflicts. In this respect, spatial *mētis* helps your everyday cop stay alive on her beat.

For those civilians who become engaged in policing structures, this repertoire of technical knowledge is a highly valued form of wisdom, which, if passed on, has the potential to rapidly enhance their capacity to defend themselves against crime. In a town like Johannesburg it is probably a good idea for most citizens to have a

17 Steve Herbert (1997) *Policing Space: Territoriality and the Los Angeles Police Department*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.

somewhat enhanced spatial awareness and a modicum of self-defence training. So, ensuring access to this knowledge holds the potential of empowering civilian policing groups while curbing the more violent and immediate forms of vigilante justice. Yet, here it is perhaps worth pausing to consider the way in which such knowledge is generally passed on in practice and then internalized and applied.

Within the SAPS generally, training is in short supply. Cadet police officers undergo a six month induction, combining practical and theoretical elements of the profession. After this they enter the workforce, where information on skills development is inaccessible and constables rely heavily on on-the-job training and (if they are lucky) mentorship by a superior officer. The emphasis on seniority and leading by example can play a useful moderating role, as senior officers consistently pass on various tips and rules of thumb to junior apprentices. At the same time, junior officers are often able to select the most appropriate example for themselves, depending on the sort of police officer that they aspire to be. These aspirations can vary wildly, depending upon the personality of the officer concerned. On the one hand, you may run into an Officer Makwayiba, a street-level philosopher-type who is able to see that in the daily rigour of opening and closing dockets at the station, he is being given both a way to understand his precinct and a window into the human condition:

From just sitting here I can learn that in Braamfontein there is car theft... in Jeppe simple muggings and theft. In Braamfontein every day there is four cars will be stolen... but you don't only learn about crime, you also learn a lot about life and how to live yourself.

On the other hand, you may run into officers with a somewhat more morbid understanding of their profession. Take, for example, student constable Tshale's banter with his colleagues on the way pepper spray ought to be used as an instrument of torture:

You guys know nothing. I saw the pepper spray thing from Jonker. That one deals with a suspect for only 10 minutes and the suspect confesses! Our constable is afraid of the pepper spray and says it's choking him too! Jonker is the man!

It depends on whether you are a Constable Makwayiba or a Constable Tshale as to what sort of example you are going to see as relevant for you. Are you looking to learn how to rapidly apply force as a short-cut means to justice or are you looking to absorb what knowledge you can about the precinct around you and adapt yourself to this context? In short, what sort of *mētis* are you looking to learn?

These dynamics of technical self-selection are prominent within the police force. However, when translated into community policing structures, where there is little

if any training and no formal disciplinary structures, the room to pick and choose is much wider. Letäs take the example of a training for street patrollers held in the suburb of Mayfair. The Mayfair street patrollers were established by an ex-Mkhonto we Sizwe soldier, Pravin. The group is made up of the mostly male and mostly Muslim members of the Indian community that dominates the suburb. Given the patrol group's middle class status, they are well equipped with private vehicles, radios, reflective vests and even makeshift sirens. Several of the senior members carry guns and/or pepper spray. After a recent surge in new members, some of the senior patrollers pooled their resources to hire an experienced Warrant Officer to train the group, particularly in the interests of schooling the younger and newer members.

Warrant Officer Cronje is a middle-aged Afrikaaner who had been in the force for over three decades and now makes a profession out of training younger officers. He is a performer, with a sense of humour, stage presence and a good feel for his crowd. In Cronje's talk, crime or criminal activity always came embodied in the form of a potential human perpetrator. This became clear in his opening discussion where he described how to develop suspicion of a criminal offence, while trying to win over his audience:

'If you see something out of the ordinary while on patrol you must ask yourself 'why'?'

As to what might constitute something out of the ordinary, Cronje suggested that it always depends on the context: 'If you're patrolling around these areas (Mayfair) and you see three white guys roaming around the neighbourhood you can say something is not right here, something is not right.' The crowd burst into laughter.

In this opening remark, Cronje uses a classic comedic device to establish common ground with his audience. The common ground is their shared acceptance that 'something out of the ordinary' will usually be 'someone out of the ordinary'. More specifically, that person may be out of the ordinary because they are dressed wrong, but it is more likely because of their race, and more specifically, *because their race doesn't belong in this place*.¹⁸ What is left out here is also important. Rarely in Cronje's three-hour lecture did he move on to the two ways in which a patrol officer might develop

18 Both he and the street patrollers may have had black suspects (or in their code language: 'Bravos') in mind. But given that he was speaking to an Indian audience in a post-Apartheid setting, Cronje could not say that the hypothetical suspects were black. So he used the proxy of white suspects, who in a suburb like Mayfair would also look out of place. At the same time, he makes a 'local's joke' by indicating a familiarity with the brown com-

a suspicion of criminal activity: 1) encounters with victims of criminal activity (e.g. an injured person lying on the street, a scream for help, etc.) or 2) encounters with physical evidence that a crime may be about to occur or has already occurred (e.g. an open window, an abandoned car, etc.)

Given this focus on embodied criminality, it is not surprising that Cronje's training manual then focused on how one should handle suspects (and not evidence or victims): the way one should approach a potential suspect, interrogate them and how to disarm a suspect or defend oneself. Here, Cronje's lecture balanced emphasis on the exercise of restraint and the merits of caution with a range of useful tips on how to deploy force (how to hold a gun, how to use pepper spray, how to search a suspect, etc.). With Cronje applying his plentiful powers of performance and suasion, the hundred or so men and one woman in attendance enjoyed the entire ride, interjecting infrequently and only speaking when prompted or encouraged. This gave me the sense that they generally shared his take on policing and perhaps respected his generally non-violent approach or the fact that, in his words 'in 30 years of policing, I've only once had to get rough with a suspect'.

This impression quickly changed as he began to interact more with his audience:

Towards the end of the talk, Cronje received questions from the floor. A wide range of the older and more experienced members, in their 30s and 40s, raised their hands. Each of them had a question to ask about the use of force. 'How should I hold my gun?' 'Can I use a gas gun?' 'What is the procedure for a citizen's arrest?' 'Can I shoot a suspect in the back?' 'Should I fire a warning shot?'

Each of these questions either envisaged hypothetical scenarios where the audience member might want to use force against a suspect or referred back to specific personal experiences where the audience member had been unsure of how to act.

This outburst of questions about violence ran against the grain of Cronje's talk. While he had spent his time explaining how to command space in order to avoid violent altercations, the street patrollers were more interested in the types of violence they could use to avoid legal sanction. This made me wonder whether I had been listening to the same speech, or rather, why the street patrollers were interpreting the same speech in such a different way. Interestingly, instead of the younger, teenage members of the group asking the 'Rambo' questions, it was the older and 'wiser' heads pursuing this line of inquiry, compelling Cronje to recapitulate his central message of

plexion of Mayfair, and the fact that even he would be out of place in this suburb at night. Hence, the laughter.

restraint. And this is the nub of the problem, because the moment the teacher leaves the room, it is this clique that will lead the group of 100 or so men on their nightly patrols and pass down the ways and means of policing to the younger generation. This was graphically illustrated a few nights later on patrol when the group caught two young black suspects in possession of a screwdriver walking through Mayfair:

After questioning two suspects, one of whom was under the influence of drugs and unable to communicate, Pravin left them in possession of the senior colleague who had first encountered them and the three or four teenage boys who had been placed in his charge to learn about policing. Over the next hour we heard back intermittently from this party over the radio and Pravin was encouraged by reports that they were 'roughing them up' before sending them on their way. When all the patrol groups reconvened for a break, the boys who had been left behind with the suspects returned to their friends in a rush, giddy with an excitement akin to a sugar high, boasting to their friends about their newfound experience.

Here, it is worth reflecting on this training by describing it more explicitly in terms of Scott's theory of spatial perspective and political transformation. In this sense, Cronje represents a somewhat ambiguous and paradoxical figure. He is ambiguous, because he embodies the translation of the high modernism of the old regime into *mētis*. On the one hand, he is the product of the high modernist structure of Apartheid, and its authoritarian methods of enforcing its unique spatial order. On the other hand, as a former soldier of this regime, he shows that this scheme lives on in individual *mētis*, in the practical knowledge of the generations it shaped. And this is revealed in his deeply ingrained sense that criminality stems from people who are literally 'out of place'. Crucially, although his audience is partly made up of anti-Apartheid activists, they are also products of this system and share this form of practical knowledge.

This recognition, that the authoritarian structures of the past are also embedded in South African (non-state) citizens, leads us to the sense in which the Warrant Officer constitutes a paradox for Scott. The Warrant Officer is paradoxical because, to oversimplify, he is simultaneously an agent of authoritarianism and freedom. Despite being the means by which the authoritarian system of the past is translated into present practice, in this scenario he is the voice calling for limitations on the *mētis* of oppression or the tactics of sheer brutality. Here, it is the community members who also represent a paradox. While they represent the outcomes of the democratization of policing, they are also pushing in the opposite direction, for unbridled capacity to apply their newly learned violent techniques.

Of course, a combination of ambiguity and paradox rarely make for compelling theory. However, these examples point us in a useful direction, suggesting the need for us to recognize the complex relationship between high-modernist planning and individual *mētis*. This is a relationship which may become inverted over time, particularly in situations of rapid political and social change. From here we can avoid Scott's causal dichotomy and better understand the potential democratizing outcomes and authoritarian echoes of the various clashes between competing perspectives on social space. In order to flesh out these issues, I want to return to the frontier in Hillbrow and look more closely at how policing constructs and reinforces this divide.

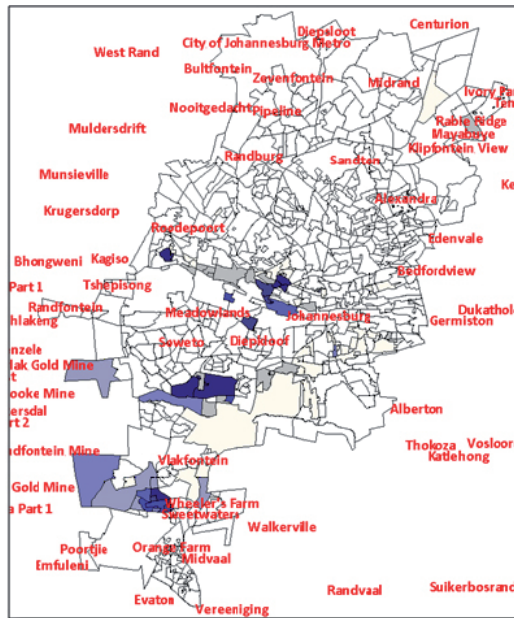
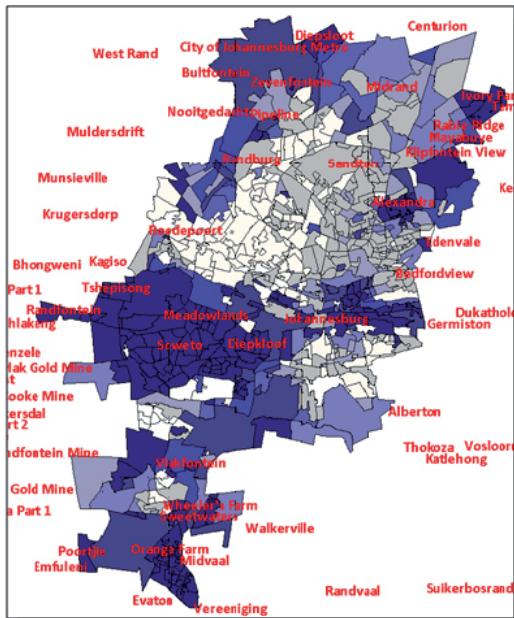
DEALING WITH THE DISPLACED 1: THE PROBLEM OF THE BLACK ITINERANT

During the Apartheid era, Johannesburg possessed a single, catch-all response to those people who were found 'out of place', namely the forced removal of black people: find them, arrest them and send them back where they 'belong'. In some respects, as suggested by the case of our Mayfair street patrollers decided 'sending a message' to their 'suspects' not to come back to Mayfair, we continue to find both state and non-state actors living out these old routines. So, in some respects, the story of policing and segregation is a simple matter of 'old habits die hard', or, as I have argued elsewhere, finding new targets for old weapons.¹⁹

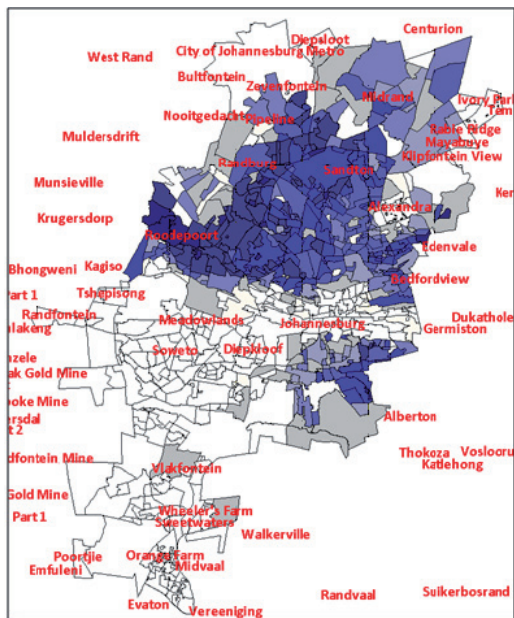
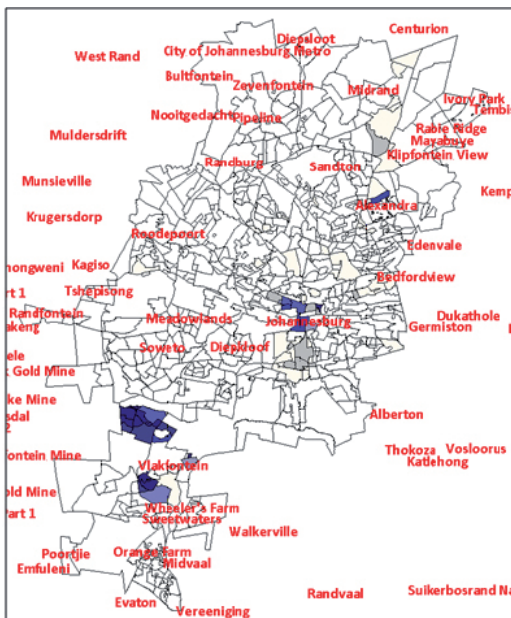
Yet, forced removal, the direct and physically violent form of policing space is only one – one particularly obvious – way in which emerging frontiers in Johannesburg are 'policed'. Here we should recognize that the places on either side of emerging frontiers are in fact strongly wedded to one another. Despite the significant divide in racial residential settlement patterns between adjacent suburbs like Houghton and Hillbrow, the two places remain deeply wedded together by a range of economic and social factors. This has always been the case in Johannesburg, even during the harshest periods of enforced segregation, because 'white' areas have always remained heavily dependent upon black labour. So, somewhat paradoxically, the black population

19 Darshan Vigneswaran (2011) 'Separation Anxiety: The Historical Origins of Institutionalised Xenophobia' in Loren Landau (ed) *Exorcising the Demon Within: Xenophobia, Violence and Statecraft in Contemporary South Africa* (WITS University Press: Johannesburg).

of Johannesburg, which the Apartheid regime specifically aimed to keep out of the cities, also remained the most deeply integrated urban population, living in almost all parts of the city and working across an even wider sphere. This is depicted in the maps of settlement patterns across Greater Johannesburg depicted below.



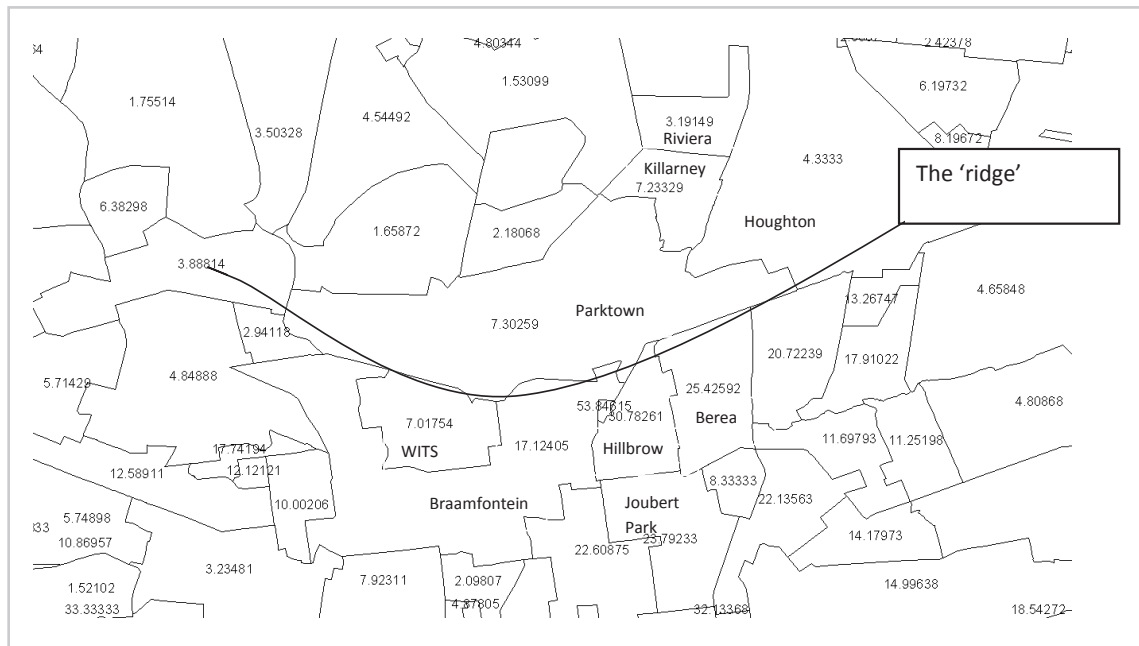
Residential Distribution of Black Population Residential Distribution of 'Coloured' Population



Residential Distribution of Indian Population Residential Distribution of White Population²⁰

²⁰ Source: 2001 Census.

Despite this fact, and partly due to the fact that in many former white areas the black population live in semi-detached housing (as on-site domestic workers or renters of housing built for those purposes), the black working class population are often still not regarded as belonging to, or defining the make-up of these suburbs and treated as outsiders.



Personal and protective service workers as a percentage of the employed population

In order to explore the manner in which this group is conceptualized and policed, my next example looks at the case of a motorcycle accident near one of Johannesburg's most fashionable malls in Killarney:

I was driving around Hillbrow precinct in the company of four, 20-something male constables. Soon after we crossed the ridge through Houghton and into Killarney we came across a traffic accident.

A motorcycle rider was lying on his back, clutching his leg, while trying to rest his head awkwardly on his helmet. A civilian motorist was parked directly behind him.

Our four constables parked, got out of their vehicle and approached the scene. Officers 1 & 2 interviewed the motorist and the rider. They quickly determined that the motorist had not hit the rider but had merely stopped to call an ambulance, and that the rider's leg was probably broken. With this cleared up, Officers 3 & 4 headed into the mall. The motorist also decided to take his leave. However, Officers 1 & 2 did not check with the motorist whether the ambulance was coming or which ambulance provider he had called.



A possible cause of the accident soon became evident. A construction company, working on a new addition to the mall, had opened a large gash in the road to adjust the power lines, but had failed to deploy the protective coverings designed to allow cars and bikes to safely cross the gash.

After a couple of minutes, a tow truck driver arrived. He asked the officers whether an ambulance was coming. Officer 1 said yes, but couldn't say which company was sending the ambulance or when they might come. After five minutes, the tow truck driver began to get impatient and decided to call an ambulance from his own company. In the mean time, the rider started to wiggle around, to see if he could find a more comfortable resting place. Both officers were chatting with the tow-truck driver, and did not take any notice of his movements. I worried. From my little first aid knowledge, I know that the rider should try to keep still.

As we waited for the second ambulance, two workers from the construction company arrived and began to inspect the scene, taking photos from various angles. This scene attracted a secondary crowd of onlookers: drivers peering out of windows; pedestrians staring at the rider and a range of workers from the mall taking up vantage positions along the car park railings.

The rider's boss called on his cell phone and the rider passed the phone to me. I explained that his rider had had an accident. The boss asked whether he had hit a pot-hole or whether it was his own fault. I told him that the ambulance was on its way and he promised to send someone down to collect the bike.

The construction workers then began to take command of the scene, asking the officers questions and, despite having not seen the accident, declaring their version of events: that the rider had tried to 'cut the corner' behind a traffic cone and in so doing had ridden across the gash and come undone.

I asked Officer 1, 'Should we take some photos in case the rider might want to make a claim of some sort?' He smiled in reply. 'This is an *accident* not an *incident* so we don't need to open a docket.'

About five minutes after the tow-truck driver had called his company, their ambulance arrived. Another five minutes passed and they had comforted and immobilized the rider, diagnosed a broken leg, removed his shoes with a pair of scissors, placed the shoe on his chest, placed him on a stretcher, obtained payment approval from his boss, taken photos of the scene, transferred his stretcher to the ambulance and left.

When the ambulance left, Officers 3 & 4 returned with a 2L bottle of coke. Now that the ambulance workers had relinquished control of the scene, the construction workers started to make adjustments, laying covers over the gash, moving the warning traffic cones, moving the bike off the road and taking more photos. Officer 3 opened the courier box, but when its contents began spilling out, he quickly shut it again. All the officers then crossed the road back to their vehicle to share the drink, gossip in the sunshine and wait for the rider's boss to arrive. About 1 ½ hours later a new tow-truck driver, sent by the rider's boss, arrived for the bike. Officer 3 informed the new tow-truck driver that no-one had tampered with the vehicle or opened the courier box. At this point, officer 4 informed me that he thought the construction workers were worried that the rider's boss might want to sue.

This is a typically Johannesburg tale of police incompetence, private sector professionalism and the dubious levels of humanity shown to the members of its black working class population. Our four constables lost control of the scene, allowing the construction company to erase evidence of its liability. While our rider received good healthcare, his personal dignity and rights to potential compensation are ignored or sidelined in various ways.

The reasons why he has been treated in this way have a great deal to do with his location. When our officers move over the ridge into Killarney, they know they are moving into a dense matrix of private interests, where their responsibility to exert command is considerably lessened. Hence, while they take over the scene from the motorist on arrival, they perhaps never envisaged holding on to this command for very long, or at least, of having much responsibility for the driver's welfare. When the tow-truck driver arrives – and tow-truck drivers are inevitably the first on the scene at any accident in Johannesburg, to the point of often causing accidents themselves – the constables happily relinquish concern for the rider, and hang around for a cou-

ple of hours until their primary duty is taken care of: protecting the property of the courier company.

Perhaps more poignantly, despite the fact that our officers and the rider are all black, that the rider is an elderly man and a victim, if only of his own making, the officers do not give him much attention. They do not seek to ensure that his legal interests, in the form of the evidence trail, are preserved. They do not attempt to ensure that his personal health is protected. They do not even attempt to provide him with comfort of any sort, taking care of cool drinks for themselves. This may be because our four officers are particularly callous and uncaring yahoos, but it may also have to do with the fact that, again, they feel as though Killarney is not only out of their zone of responsibility but is also a zone of survival for anyone coming over the ridge; that here it is every worker for themselves. Many other pedestrians did nothing for the rider. The only person to talk to him was a black domestic worker of about the same age who moved into his line of sight and asked 'Are you ok?' He answered, 'No, I'm in a lot of pain.' At this, she winced and continued walking towards the mall.

So, while our rider is surrounded by people on that pavement, in certain respects, he is also completely alone, and he is alone in a very specific way, in that some of the ties of race, community and ethnicity that we might expect to reach out to him have been suspended. Instead, he is left to a regime of accident management that has sprung into action around him and that our four constables are letting run its natural course. This regime is privately run and profit oriented. The tow-truck drivers are looking for a fare. The ambulance drivers are looking to see their fees are covered. The courier company boss wants to know if his bike is ok. The construction workers are avoiding a potentially expensive law suit.

Within this matrix of responsibility, the driver's accident is rendered as a problem, but a particularly 'bare', in the sense used by Agamben, sort of problem. He is not primarily a problem regarding family, for while several people mention the problem of finding his boss, who is responsible for his bills, no-one talks about contacting next-of-kin who might want to know what has happened to a father or husband. He is not a problem regarding human emotions. Even the professional care-givers, the ambulance drivers who do such an amazing job at settling the rider, deploying all the techniques of eye-contact, physical contact and a calm and clear voice, regard the rider as an abstract task. So when they cut off his shoe in order to re-position his foot in a brace, they place the remnants of the shoe on his chest, so that the property remains connected to the problem. Finally, he is not a problem regarding rights. So, when the construction company workers come over to the scene, while they probably

do not even envisage the rider coming at them with a law suit, they do imagine the possibility that his boss may want to recover his medical expenses. And so, they set about coldly erasing any possibility that the rider might see some compensation for the suffering he is currently and very palpably experiencing.

While it is by no means clear whether our rider would have received ‘better’ treatment, in terms of quality of healthcare, had he been in the suburbs of Hillbrow or Berea on the other side of the ridge, it is also likely that he may have been the subject of a qualitatively different accident response. While there are a range of private security companies in Hillbrow, it is unlikely that we would have seen this regime of private interests reach out and envelop the rider, removing him from the hands of the constabulary and objectifying him as a particularly depersonalized profit-loss problem. A more likely scenario is that the cops would have had to take control. So, it is precisely because of his physical location that the rider has been objectified in a manner similar to that which Mitchell described in his account of the imperial exhibitions of colonial artefacts.²¹ Yet, and here it is important to bring our discussion back to Scott, individually each of the professionals who attended the scene of the accident was merely deploying their own intuitive form of spatial understanding to the problem. The police officers on patrol are looking for problems. They spot the accident, seek to determine whether there was a collision and then try to secure property. The tow-truck driver waits at key intersections, listens to police radios and rushes to the scene. He ensures swift arrival of the ambulance team, who respond to the callout, stabilize the victim and vacate the area. The courier boss pays for his rider’s expenses and sends a recovery vehicle. The construction workers recognize they have had an on-site accident and move to re-create the scene. When assessed within the confines of their own professions, each of these actors is individually deploying their innate practical knowledge to the situation in order to fulfil their organization’s core objectives. Yet, when applied in concert, the outcome is a thoroughly dehumanizing fracas with all the hallmarks of a society built on segregation.

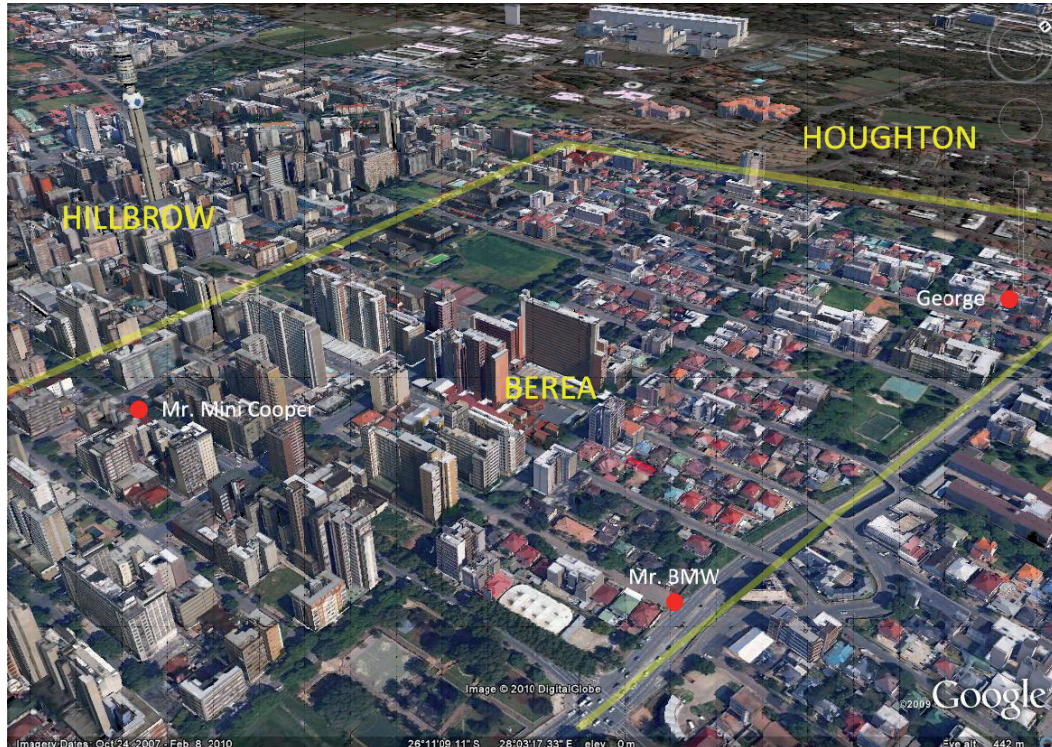
DEALING WITH THE DISPLACED 2: THE PROBLEM OF THE WHITE PIONEER

Of course, the dynamics of a frontier work in both directions. So when white South Africans – or for that matter, any non-black South Africans – venture into Hillbrow

21 Timothy Mitchell (1988) *Colonising Egypt*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

or Berea, they also find themselves being typecast, othered and objectified, albeit in different ways. In order to illustrate this point, I'm going to take you on a drive with another Sector Manager, but this time we'll travel with Inspector Motshekga of Berea. Berea is often seen as the little brother suburb to Hillbrow, similar in terms of having high-rises and crime, but not quite as dangerous and not quite as iconic. This is somewhat strange given that Hillbrow's most infamous building, Ponte tower, is actually located in Berea and Hillbrow's most infamous crime problem, West African drug trafficking, is also concentrated in Berea, where it is run out of the buildings near the corners of Tudhope and Fife streets.

Inspector Motshekga used to live in Hillbrow and has been working at the Station for over a decade. He's a fairly quiet guy, fairly thin, average height, and heading into his mid 40s. He's seen the precinct go through its crime spike in the early years of the millennium, and wishes that people from the outside recognized that crime stats have been going down in the precinct for the last few years. In stark contrast to Gower's tour, when out on patrol with Motshekga we are repeatedly drawn into the 'real' work of a police officer. Somewhat more bizarrely, most of the main protagonists in the events on this day were white people moving through or living in the suburb.



After an hour of circling around the streets of Berea, Motshekga pulled to a stop at the edge of the Joe Slovo freeway, which many commuters use to skirt around Hillbrow. He lit up a cigarette and rested against his car door. The next moment, there's an accident on the freeway below. A middle-aged white male in a BMW rear-ended an older white male in a Toyota. Both drivers got out of their vehicles and walked towards one another, and Mr. BMW started screaming 'fuck' and 'puss'. Then a truck drove slowly in the lane closest to us, obscuring our view. By the time the truck had passed, the scene had changed. Mr. Toyota was on his arse looking a bit dazed and Mr. BMW is back at his car, remonstrating at the guy he's just floored.



Motshekga continued smoking and yelled out 'stop it!'. Traffic began to build up behind the BMW. Other cars beeped at the drivers to hurry up. A truck driver came to a halt in front of the Toyota and the truckie got out and started remonstrating at Mr. Toyota.

Sensing trouble, Motshekga put out his cigarette and made his way down the stairs and onto the road. All of a sudden he looked like a different person, shoulders set, chest puffed up, voice loud and distinct. He told the truck driver to fuck off back to his car. At this point Mr. BMW came back for more in a flailing, I'm-gonna-look-like-I'm-trying-to-smash-you-while-secretly-hoping-that-this-cop-intervenese kind of way. Motshekga stopped Mr. BMW and asked him to inspect his vehicle. Not a scratch. Both drivers quickly headed back to their cars.

When Motshekga got back to the squad car he complained: 'These old guys, they just want to fight. You ask them if they want to go to the station and open a docket they say no. They just want to fight, fight, fight, fight.'

He turned the car around around and headed back towards the heart of the precinct, towards the drug dealing hotspot at Tudhope and Fife. Suddenly Motshekga began speeding up. I thought he was responding to a callout, but he was actually trying to evade one.



There was a white guy standing on the road directly in front of us, next to his Mini-Cooper, flagging us down. He was pretty gaunt and wearing track suit pants. If I had seen this guy in Melbourne I'd have instantly guessed he was looking to score heroin.

Motshekga said, 'No baba, no baba, don't stop me now.' But he did, and Mr. Mini-Cooper got his story out in a hurry. Apparently he had just had his cell phone stolen and the guy who stole it was somewhere nearby. At this point, another sharply dressed guy with a Sopiatown-style chapeaux, black skivvy and brown leather jacket appeared at the window and pointed illustratively behind us, suggesting that's where the thief had gone.

Motshekga offered to call another vehicle, gesturing at me and saying that he was busy, but eventually he agreed to help out. Mr. Mini-Cooper came round to my side of the car, but Motshekga pulled quickly into a U-turn so now we were heading back towards where the thief was supposed to be. Mr. Mini-Cooper came to the door again but Motshekga said, 'Run ahead and I'll follow.'

We cruised for two blocks back in the direction we had come, with Mr. Mini-Cooper struggling to keep up, running along the road next to us. As we travelled Motshekga began a slightly grumpy rendition of events:

'You see these white guys come here for drugs and then they get robbed, and now they call us. What else is he here for but drugs? And then they get robbed. It is only because

we were passing by that we've been called on. It's coincidence. They must use that 10111 number, but they don't think to do that.'

Spotting nothing, we turned and drove back towards the Mini-Cooper, leaving Mr. Mini-Cooper flailing wildly at us to return in the rear-view mirror. We came to a stop next to Mr. Sophiatown, who had a more measured exchange with Motshekga, explaining that there is a guy who does petty theft in this area but he's long gone and nobody knows where he lives.

Motshekga drove off to continue his tour. As we prepared to head back to the station, he drove through the north-eastern section of Berea, which is mostly made up of free-standing houses. We cruised past a heavy-set white man who, much like all the drug dealers and loiterers we'd been prowling past all day, is standing still, back up against the wall, seemingly looking out into space.

Motshekga says, 'Oops, I'm glad that guy didn't see me.' I'm baffled. 'You see that old white guy, yoh, if he catches you he will want to talk and talk.'

'Oh he's got lots of stories to tell,' I venture.

Motshekga (pulling a U-turn), 'You know, he will be a good person to speak to. He knows this area well. He can tell you a lot of things.'

We slowly pull up in front of Henry who, after introducing himself as part of Motshekga's Community Sector Crime Forum, quickly launches into a discussion with Motshekga on the issue of the 'sector profile', a document prepared every so often outlining crime trends. Apparently the Secretary of the Policing Rorum wants to get his hands on the Sector Profile and Henry is lobbying for Motshekga to hand it over.

Motshekga will not concede: 'I'm responsible for the sector profile. I'm the sector manager and these documents must be kept in a filing Cabinet in my office. When the National Office people come to the station they will want to come and see the Sector Profile and use it in their reports.'

Henry capitulates. 'You see Inspector Motshekga, I've tried to tell these people that the 'Community Forum is under the SAPS. There's no point having two heads and one head trying to tell the other what to do. The citizens are there to help the police. Not tell them what to do.'

Motshekga: 'The sector profile is **my** baby.'

Henry got the message and so spent another five minutes conveying his support. Eventually we pulled away and Motshekga gave his slightly contradictory reading of the exchange: 'He's standing there all day looking to see what these guys [signalling at some workmen] are taking away. He likes to look at everything that is going on. He's a good man.'

In some respects, Motshekga's tour is a relatively simple tale of an older officer, trying to avoid work. Like Gower, Motshekga has been on the beat in Hillbrow for a long time, but unlike Gower, he has not got a cushy post out in The Wilds. Instead,

Motshekga has to build his own Eden by using a unique form of bureaucratic magic, based largely on confidence games, mis-directions and subtle threats. So he calls Mr. BMW's bluff, seeing if he's prepared to take his fight inside and turn it into a war of words and paper. He tells Mr. Mini-Cooper to get the police on the phone instead of expecting his nearest officer to help. He tells George to back off and leave the Sector Plan alone.

These are the classic games that police officers play. If an officer is adept enough and committed enough, they can spend their entire career doing virtually nothing and being bothered by no-one, so long as they do not overstep the bounds between mere bureaucratic obfuscation and sheer corruption or contempt. From this angle, Motshekga's problem is partly that he is conscientious. So even though he has sorted out a nice morning's ride with a gullible researcher and nothing much else to do, Berea keeps calling him for help and his policeman's sense of duty keeps saying 'yes', or at least, 'maybe'.

But there is something more to Motshekga's practiced attempt to create a work bubble and this lies in the racial and spatial dynamics of his encounters with these three encounters with out-of-place white men on the hill. Here, well before Motshekga has made each encounter, he has fit each of these characters into a specific type of white trouble-maker: Mr. BMW is the road-raging prima donna; Mr. Mini-Cooper is the drug-addled schemer; George is the busy-body hold-out. And he uses each of these stereotypes to determine what his largely pre-coded responses to their complaints might be: talking sense; leaving the scene or asserting himself. In some respects this is concerning, but in other respects it is perfectly understandable. In the first two scenarios Motshekga has to make a decision, in a short space of time, that might force him, a lone officer, with an incompetent ride-along partner, to put himself at personal risk. In the last scenario, he's acting less on stereotypes and more on lengthy experience of George and his equally lengthy security complaints. So these coded, ritual responses are exactly the sort of approach we should expect from Motshekga.

Motshekga's stereotypes are also not based on thin air or mere rumour. They reproduce a game which plays out almost every day in the Client Service Centre at Hillbrow Police Station. This game invariably involves white complainants from the valley entering the centre, insisting on their rights and anticipating incompetence while the mostly black constables roll their eyes, joke in local dialects and think up ways to prove the complainants wrong. Invariably, the complainants leave with their arms in the air, having proven their worst expectations right, and in anticipation of a

cleansing bitch-session with their friends about the problems with democracy. Meanwhile, the constables reinforce their several stereotypes about the different ways in which white complainants make trouble for the police.

More interesting than the stylized way that Motshekga resists each man's pleas, is the way he uses them to simultaneously maintain a decorous relationship with each party, while manoeuvring himself into a position of rectitude, integrity and authority. So he goes and inspects Mr. BMW's car knowing that this will lead to capitulation and retreat. He goes on the wild goose chase with Mr. Mini-Cooper, but forces the latter to stay on the street. With George, whom he knows slightly better, he is more forceful, claiming the Sector Profile as his baby and challenging George to say otherwise, until the latter comes on board with him, possibly because he fears losing an ally. In each of these interactions, Motshekga gains a little victory, without ever having to show his cards. The snide comments, complaints and petty dismissals about each man come out in the margins, in his summary comments, which he keeps to himself, or in this case, hands on to me.

Of course, this set of subtle tricks and power by-plays have few linkages to the former Apartheid regime, though of course, it had its fair share of double-speak and propaganda, and more resemblance to the techniques of black resistance against this high modernist monstrosity. Robbed of the capacity to directly confront white people in public, some vocal South Africans found respite in the discourse of black pride. Others sought recourse in a litany of minor oppositions, workplace shenanigans, under-the-breath rebukes and innocent forms of mimicry of the oppressor, or in Scott's terms, 'weapons of the weak'. However, in Motshekga's case this same tradition is woven into the practices of a much more powerful figure, that of the senior officer on patrol, and combined with his hard-earned spatial *mētis*. So Motshekga is able to puff out his chest and separate the white men on the freeway, pull a U-turn and leave the white addict to run like a fool in the street, and cruise by his white neighbourhood busy-body's house and remind him who's boss. The type of state that Motshekga weaves around the lost white pioneers in Hillbrow is at the same time similar to and starkly different from the all-consuming, profit-driven machine that envelopes our bike rider. It communicates difference, type-casts outsiders and explains who belongs where. Yet, it is more akin to the bureaucratic maze which Josef K. wakes up in, in Kafka's 'The Trial', than the humanity-stripping state of exception described by Agamben. Correspondingly, the nature of anomie which the remnants of the white population of Hillbrow and those who might seek to join them experience is qualitatively different to that experienced by our rider: more blinding frustration and

disorientation than powerlessness and dislocation. At the same time, what is clear is that in both examples we can see the manifold ways in which individual *mētis*, when practiced continually and ritually over time, can create and reinforce spatial frontiers without having to result in physical capture and expulsion. And in this way, a newly segregated Johannesburg is made.

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