

Fun and fear in False Bay Nature Reserve: Green space affordances in the post-apartheid city

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Abstract

The phenomenon and increasing rate of urbanisation is causing many researchers to look deeper at life in cities. Increasingly recognised are the benefits of urban green space and their associated recreational parks and nature reserves. While there is a growing literature on the environmental services provided by these areas; so too is there a growing literature on the numerous social benefits that recreational green spaces in particular afford their users. Although imagined and generally designed as salubrious public spaces, many parks often fall short of this. In fact research has shown that a park's design, its surroundings, and its management can all combine to exclude certain types of people. In this study I conducted ethnographic research to participate in and observe the activities of visitors to False Bay Nature Reserve in Cape Town. False Bay Nature Reserve includes a series of nature reserves and the Cape Flats Waste Water Treatment Works, and is situated in the area of Cape Town known as the Cape Flats. Much of the Cape Flats is beset by poverty, unemployment, and violent drug-related crime carried out by notorious gangs. Despite the challenges of the surrounding areas, my study reveals that False Bay Nature Reserve provides relative safety to its users as well a range of enjoyable recreational activities. Some of the key recreational activities are separated distinctively between two key sites in the reserve. Furthermore the visitors of these sites differ markedly in race, ethnicity and income. The legacy of apartheid almost certainly accounts for much of this separation; however, the study indicates that the barriers of this legacy are eroding and can potentially be further dismantled with engaged and informed management strategies. Due to its surroundings, the reserve is vulnerable and recently experienced a period where crime was prevalent, vegetation was overgrown, and it was feared by many of its users, particularly women. The reserve had in many ways become what researchers call a landscape of fear, a not so uncommon description of parks around the world. However, management and the majority of visitors feel the reserve has recovered from this period. This is in large part due to upgrades that improved recreational facilities and security in the reserve. Accounts from visitors highlight how important a sense of safety is for people frequenting this reserve, most of whom live in nearby neighbourhoods. The reserve still faces some challenges today, but is a significant asset to the City of Cape Town and many of its more marginalised residents. This study challenges much of the literature on the benefits of urban green space and associated parks. It shows that particularly in cities of the Global South such as Cape Town, parks require specific management strategies that prioritise safety and in doing so promote and ensure inclusivity for all.

Declaration

I know the meaning of plagiarism and declare that all of the work in this dissertation, save for that which is properly acknowledged, is my own.

Signed by candidate

Bruce Baigrie February 2015

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1. Introduction

1.1 Why urban green space?

Despite, and in many ways due to widespread environmental degradation and destruction, the natural world is being increasingly recognised as vital to the human species. The World Health Organisation's statement that "*Nature's goods and services are the ultimate foundations of life and health*" (World Health Organisation 2005) is an indication of the growing understanding that we are part of and dependant on, complex and interconnected ecosystems. With more than half of the world's population now living in urban centres and with this number expected to increase to 60% by 2030 (Wendel et al. 2012); urban green spaces are increasingly the primary gateways to the natural world for most people (Burgess et al. 1988; Madge 1997). Going by the literature, urban green space includes a variety of spaces, most notably in the form of recreational parks or protected areas such as nature reserves that are generally open to the public. Thus many researchers have stated that the relative lack of research on how people use urban green space, particularly in developing cities, is something that should be addressed (Byrne and Wolch 2009; Wendel et al. 2012). Despite this perceived shortage of literature, there is a small yet growing body illustrating the widespread affordances urban parks provide to their users and surrounding urban residents. Such affordances mean that access to green space is now considered an important indicator of quality of life (Wendel et al. 2012). The role of these pockets of nature in cities is slowly becoming better understood in how they alleviate increasing social and environmental problems. For example their part in reducing the impacts of climate change and providing public recreation space, in turn reducing the proliferation of large suburban plots and urban sprawl. It is therefore important that we better understand their relevance and role as we move towards an increasingly urbanised world.

This thesis aims to make a contribution to the field of Conservation Biology. Researchers have stated that if a human-driven process such as conservation is to be successful it is imperative to understand the human behaviour in relation to our natural environments (Mascia et al. 2003). The thesis aims to analyse the importance of urban green space to residents of the city of Cape Town. The study focuses largely around the social benefits afforded to people by urban green space. In particular, this study centres on residents who frequent a particular nature reserve that is known as a popular recreational site. There is limited research that focuses on urban green space in the Global South and thus this study should add to this literature (Wendel et al. 2012). Thus the objectives of this research are:

1. To create a user profile of people who frequent the reserve as well as data related to their recreational activities and preferences.
2. To investigate the perceptions of visitors towards the reserve particularly their preferences, and dislikes towards certain elements of the reserve as well as any barriers they may face in their enjoyment of the reserve.
3. To establish if and how the reserve may have changed temporally by engaging with management and visitors on their past experiences with the reserve.

1.2 Diversity in park-use, design and users

Parks are utilised and visited for a number of different reasons. The diversity in recreational preferences among park-users is the most studied topic and most authors have concluded that this diversity is generally formed along ethnic and racial lines (Byrne and Wolch 2009). In one study Payne et al. (2010) found that race and age play a significant role in preferences for what recreational activities people seek at parks. Black¹ people were more likely to prefer park land to be primarily for recreation than conservation. Other findings included that the elderly were less likely to prefer additional park land and less likely to visit local parks than their younger counterparts. Other studies from the U.S.A. have stated that Asians value scenic beauty over recreational functionality, while Latinos prefer good access to group facilities such as parking, picnic tables and restrooms (Byrne and Wolch 2009). Traditionally these preferences have been attributed to cultural differences; however, some researchers urge geographers to consider other largely ignored factors such as the role of parks themselves in shaping these preferences (Floyd 1998; Byrne and Wolch 2009). These studies review a wide range of literature that indicates that different contexts present remarkably different reasons for park use and non-use.

Byrne and Wolch (2009) propose a model of park-use that incorporates three elements to parks in addition to the basic socio-demographic characteristics utilised by most leisure scholars. These include the political ecology and amenities of the park which includes the design of the park and features such as the surrounding landscapes and neighbourhoods. This is particularly relevant in areas where existing relations of powers strongly favoured certain people along racial lines (Boone et al. 2009; Byrne and Wolch 2009). These relations of power are not restricted to race either and studies have shown that class, gender and age can affect people's access to and use of green space (Madge 1997). The ethno-racial profile of park-adjacent neighbourhoods; a lack of Spanish-language signs; and fears of racial persecution were all identified by Latino people as why they avoided a park in Los Angeles (Byrne 2012). The historical and cultural landscapes of the park are also elements

¹ The term 'black' in this instance is used to denote people of indigenous African and Afro-Caribbean descent in the United States of America.

identified by Byrne and Wolch (2009). This focuses on how the park has been managed and designed historically. This is particularly relevant where discriminatory practices have existed in parks and their legacy may continue to permeate the culture surrounding the park. The histories of such parks forge identities that are generally anglo-normative and perpetuate the inequalities of the past (Floyd 1998). During the American Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s the city council of Philadelphia deliberately destroyed the social control mechanisms at a popular urban park; dismantling the park guard, destroying its fences and even its benches which were sites of congregation (Brownlow 2006). This was an attempt to impede a politically active African-American community that utilised the park as a space to organise and politically engage with one another. The legacy of this period was a displacement of crime from the streets to the parks which the African-American community surrounding the park still deal with today (Brownlow 2006). Byrne and Wolch (2009) thirdly identify the individual perceptions of parks spaces as the final element of their model. This includes how park's conviviality, accessibility and safety are perceived by individuals. These often vary widely among certain groups of people where some may feel more welcome than others. This can occur subtly through activities that are often considered socially acceptable. Women have been shown to be discouraged from visiting parks frequented by speeding cyclists, while unleashed dogs may frighten children and repel cynophobic individuals (Byrne and Sipe 2010; Byrne 2012).

1.3 The theory of healthy parks creating healthy people

Historically urban parks were promoted and designed by city officials to be the "lungs of cities" (Maller et al. 2006; Byrne and Wolch 2009); and indeed parks with green space do help provide clean air to their surrounds (Chiesura 2004). The benefits of parks to people have sometimes been unexpected, such as increasing property prices adjacent to parks. Fredrick Olmsted, the famous landscape architect, managed to prove that the tax revenues from properties adjacent to Central Park easily offset the costs of building the park at that time (Boone et al. 2009). Envisioned as salubrious public spaces, historically it was and is still today hoped that parks will reduce disease, crime, and social unrest as well as provide spaces for recreation (Maller et al. 2006). Recreation is a core element of parks' intended purpose, as while some parks serve as conservation areas for urban biodiversity (Gómez-Baggethen et al. 2013); usually their primary function is to provide "enjoyment to the people" (Manning and More 2002). It is important to note that people visit parks for numerous reasons besides encounters with nature. Such reasons include: tourism, recreation, exercise, relaxation, education, spirituality, self-expression, socializing, being with companion animals, escaping the built up city for solitude and personal development, and to earn a living as one of the many staff needed to run an effective park (Byrne and Wolch 2009). Generally, regardless of the reasons for visiting, park proponents hope that one is encountering some form of the natural

environment and experiencing its often unanticipated benefits (Maller et al. 2006; Maller et al. 2009). Research shows that high volumes of city dwellers in the UK regularly visit parks, supporting the idea that parks deliver numerous benefits whether overtly recognised by park goers or not (Garner 1996). This should come as no surprise considering that significant research has shown that visits to parks afford substantial benefits for an individual's physical and mental health (Chiesura 2004). However, these studies are often limited to parks in cities of the global North as opposed to those serving users in cities in the South (Wendel et al. 2012). Many issues such as unemployment, poverty, high-crime rates and lower leisure budgets can create unique issues for specific contexts where the benefits highlighted by park proponents are not provided (Boone et al. 2009; Byrne and Wolch 2009).

Some parks have been shown to be associated with rigorous physical activity, particularly when those parks offer 'enjoyable scenery' such as natural landscapes (Bedimo-Rung et al. 2005; Thompson et al. 2007). In one particular study people living near to parks were found to be three times as likely to get the recommended amount of daily exercise when compared to those who live beyond walking distance (Giles-Corti et al. 2005). Data from experiments by Ulrich et al. (1999) seemed to explain why people prefer parks for exercise where they demonstrated that scenes of nature produce a response that includes a component of the parasympathetic nervous system associated with the restoration of physical energy. Authors have thus suggested that parks' role in stimulating physical activity is one such means of tackling the global health crisis of obesity where around half the world's population are classified as overweight or obese (Thompson et al 2007; Yatsuya et al. 2014). Maller et al. (2006) identify numerous studies that propose humans need nature for psychological, emotional and spiritual necessities. This has become particularly relevant today where the average life expectancy of the world continues to rise, but so too does the frequency of mental health disorders among its population. Currently 10% of the world's disease burden comprises of mental health disorders and this is expected to rise to 15% by 2020 when depression is predicted to be one of the largest global health problems (Maller et al. 2006). Youth seem to be particularly affected. A survey of 1000 young people in the UK found that 80% knew of someone in their age group who had experienced a mental health problem (Prasad 2003). Some researchers have hypothesised that the relatively limited contact with nature in modern life plays a major role in the global degradation of mental health (Maller et al. 2005; Maller et al. 2006). This is supported by data from experiments that suggest that green space significantly mitigates stress (Grahn and Stigsdotter 2010; Thompson et al. 2012); and one study suggests that access to a green view helps patients recover from surgery (Ulrich 1984). This phenomenon of receiving benefits through views of nature has also been demonstrated among school students, prison inmates,

drivers, and people in the workplace (Maller et al. 2006). Such benefits have led some psychologists to describe nature as a “restorative environment” and parks as “therapeutic landscapes” (Maller et al. 2006).

It is suggested by some researchers that parks and their natural settings are also sites that facilitate social benefits for individuals, their families, and their communities (Chiesura 2004). Such benefits supposedly include the reduction of social deviance, strengthening of family relations, and improvement of community pride and child development (Manning and More 2002). Children’s relationship with the natural environment is thought to generally be a strong one while growing up. In one study, when asked about their childhood, almost all adults identified the outdoors as the most significant place in their childhood (Sebba 1991). The study accounted for this by showing that children interact deeply and directly with the environment rather than it acting as a background event. Researchers have supported the link between parks as sites of physical activity and associated health benefits and others now propose that access to parks in one’s childhood for such activity is especially important. Studies have found that adults are significantly less likely to visit parks if they did not frequent parks in their childhood (Bingley and Milligan 2004; Thompson et al. 2007). In theory these findings could thus have strong implications for future generations given the above mentioned health benefits of parks. The studies also point out that children’s play is increasingly confined to indoors of private homes as parents are simply too worried about their children being victims of crime. Unfortunately such children will not receive the demonstrated benefits of play in public parks and are less likely in turn to expose their own children to these beneficial outdoor spaces.

Some studies on the behaviour of children’s play suggest that it provides a number of crucial benefits to a child’s development (Taylor et al. 1998; Bingley and Milligan 2004). Among other things, when children play together they learn about cooperation, altruism, interchanging social roles, and development of self-control (Taylor et al. 1998). Parks are one such site that facilitates children playing together. Adult supervision and involvement in play activities of children is also very important for a child’s cognitive and social development. Taylor et al. (1998) found that 87% of children were supervised by adults in areas with relatively well vegetated outdoor space. This percentage dropped by a half in barren outdoor areas which were not as attractive for adults. Besides being places for children to play, parks with natural environments are thought to also be important places for children and young adults to escape their usual environments in times of stress or sadness (Bingley and Milligan 2004). As substantially different environments, parks could potentially give people the freedom to remove themselves from the usual sources of distress found

in their human-environments (Sebba 1991). Bingley and Milligan (2004) further suggest that natural landscapes provide far more opportunities for children and young adults to develop physical confidence and creativity than non-natural ones. If parks are indeed performing as these theoretical centres for important social interactions, their value goes beyond physical terms as they remain important tangible reminders of childhood and memories of community life (Burgess et al. 1988).

1.4 Parks as landscapes of fear

The elements identified by Byrne and Wolch (2009) can singularly or in combination create parks that exclude and disadvantage certain groups of people. They have also in some cases made parks places to be avoided rather than the idealised spaces they were historically designed to be (Byrne and Wolch 2009). The literature may suggest that urban parks afford numerous social and health benefits to their users and surrounding residents; however, the presence of a park does not necessarily guarantee that it will provide these benefits. On the contrary they may function as the complete opposite, acting as a burden to their users and surrounding residents. Environmental justice literature has often focused on the lack of provision of parks and access to them for certain kinds of people (Boone et al. 2009). For example one study found that people are much more likely to visit parks where they are within walking distance from their homes (Giles-Corti et al. 2005) and thus residents in neighbourhoods with few parks, or where access to parks is limited, suffer an environmental injustice (Boone et al. 2009). However, it is crucial to understand that the adequate provision of parks must be in tandem with their proper management and maintenance (Boone et al. 2009). Access to parks, as incorporated in Byrne and Wolch's (2009) model, can be hindered just as much for social and psychological reasons. Some parks that have been mismanaged or not managed at all, have eventually come to be described as 'crime havens' as opposed to the sought after "oases for urban residents" they are meant to be (Byrne and Wolch 2009). Where this perception of a park as a dangerous place prevails, fewer people tend to visit it, exacerbating the problems at the park and triggering a rapid degeneration to a landscape of fear. The fear of park-users further discourages people from visiting and thus the park loses the informal surveillance provided by park-users, further exacerbating the situation (Valentine 1990; Madge 1997).

Areas with residents who were racially discriminated as government policy, such as African-Americans in the United States, are particularly vulnerable to having their parks turn into adverse environments (Boone et al. 2009). Through the legacies of racist social planning and policies, these areas are generally still impoverished today as is the case in Cape Town for example (Turok 2011). In terms of park management, discrimination against these areas may have been, and may still be, in the form of providing insufficient or zero funding for park management as opposed to other more

affluent areas generally inhabited by white people. In the case of Cobbs Creek Park in Philadelphia management was hindered to deliberately constrain African-American civil rights activism (Brownlow 2006). In impoverished areas, crime rates can sometimes increase as formal social control mechanisms such as law enforcement officers, or informal mechanisms such as community cohesiveness, are either removed or become ineffective at curbing crime. Both these controls have so far proved to be insufficient at dealing with crime in parts of Philadelphia and much of the Cape Flats in Cape Town. In both these cases gang violence is also prolific (Standing 2003; Brownlow 2006). If the mechanisms of social control such as park management or park guards are removed or fail, crime from surrounding areas is increasingly likely to migrate to parks as was the case at Cobbs Creek Park in Philadelphia (Brownlow 2006; Boone et al. 2009). There is now a global and widespread trend that has come about through neo-liberal economic policies that has seen a general decline in funds allocated to budgets and job cuts for park management (Burgess et al. 1988; Madge 1997; Byrne and Wolch 2009). Ravenscroft (1993) identifies this neo-liberal shift where management and ownership of leisure facilities such as parks shifted from local governments to the private sector. Rather than transferring management to “people” as proponents of this shift argued, it transfers power to certain types of people, those who are of a certain class and can better access resources such as parks. This class is dominated largely by middle-class white males and those that can emulate them, all described by the author as “leisure gainers”. This follows the line of market ideology where things such as health, education and in this case leisure, are not seen as rights but rather services that are earned. Another study described another trend of this politicisation of leisure provision, where politicians often need to be continually convinced of the benefits and services of urban parks (Burgess et al. 1988); while Whitzman (2002) described a case study to this effect in great detail. Women’s rights groups campaigned for years with limited success for changes to improve women’s safety in Toronto’s High Park.

The deterioration of parks can promote various crimes that affect certain groups of people more than others making them feel more vulnerable and unwelcome in these spaces. The vulnerability of certain people is generally determined by existing structural inequalities in society, thus these inequalities become translated into spatial behaviour in public space (Madge 1997). For example women are particularly vulnerable to the crimes associated with unmanaged parks. By simply not mowing park lawns and trimming shrubs, vegetation densification led to a spike in violence against women at High Park (Whitzman 2002). Other seemingly minor misdemeanours like littering, graffiti and other signs of vandalism are all factors that have been found to indicate a threatening environment to women (Valentine 1989). Burgess et al. (1988) found that many women avoid open spaces in the United Kingdom out of fear of sexual violence. Many women state that they would not

visit such spaces without male company. This fear of sexual assault creates other fears for women such as getting lost or being in places after dusk (Burgess 1996). To further compound the issue, many women do not report instances of crimes against them. In many cases the crimes against women are so ingrained in society (groping, flashing, cat-calling) that they do not bother reporting them (Madge 1997). The frequency of these incidents of harassment means that women are seldom in control of how they interact within public parks, further reducing their sense of security (Valentine 1989). Perhaps the most tragic legacy of societal patriarchy is that women are often blamed, despite being the victims, for the sexual attacks against them in public spaces. This is due to a perception that victims should have been more vigilant and avoided the public spaces they were attacked in (Valentine 1989). This then leads to many women shifting their threat assessment from men to public spaces such as urban parks. This gender-based fear has a knock-on effect where caregivers of small children and the elderly who are predominantly women become reluctant to visit parks (Burgess 1996). This significantly reduces the frequency of visits to parks as women taking children to play has been shown to account for 40% of total park visits in some areas (Burgess et al. 1988).

This fear of public spaces is not restricted to women. Studies have found that the elderly are particularly afraid of muggings, while ethnic minorities fear racial attacks in public spaces resulting in studies finding that older adults and black people are the least likely to visit parks (Madge 1997; Pain et al. 2010). This fear of parks by ethnic minorities can have far-reaching effects. Members of the black² communities in the United Kingdom have lived through a history of racial discrimination beginning with being brought to the country as slaves (Kinsman 1995). This discrimination has permeated into the famous British Countryside, known as the traditional landscape widely associated with the national identity of the United Kingdom. Photographer Ingrid Pollard displayed photos in an attempt to display how the experiences of racism by black people serve to exclude them from these landscapes and thus the national identity, serving to further exacerbate their feelings of exclusion. This racism has ranged from subtle feelings of being made to feel unwelcome by residents to violent attacks, and so these landscapes, while remaining such highly regarded and important landscapes to some, are exclusionary to others (Kinsman 1995). Both Burgess et al.'s (1988) and Madge's (1997) studies agree that in general the most common fear of park users is of violent bodily crimes against the person. The most prevalent included mugging, sexual attacks, gangs of young people, concealed areas, people approaching children, dogs, and racial attacks. These fears have had further effects on certain groups of people by constructing them as victims or perpetrators (Pain 2001). Young adults for example are often perceived as dangerous and their 'hanging around'

² The term 'black' in this instance is used to denote people of indigenous African, Afro-Caribbean, and Asian descent in the United Kingdom.

in public spaces has caused moral panic, where people are scared of a disruption of the social order, in Western societies (Pain 2001). Thus young people, particularly those from low-income areas, sometimes feel unwelcome in parks, worried about being seen as perpetrators of crime (Pain 2001; Byrne and Wolch 2009). This is illustrated by the fact that the biggest fear for young boys and men, particularly in larger wilderness parks is getting lost (Burgess 1996). However, the fear of getting lost for these men, unlike for women who fear being attacked, is a fear of accidentally breaking rules or trespassing and finding themselves on the wrong side of the law. While many parks may not be large enough to get lost in, the point remains that young men fear being unfairly persecuted as criminals in public space. The fear of young people, particularly young men, is often highly publicised and is often deceptive considering young people have been found to be four times more likely to be mugged than the elderly (Pain 2001). Young men are further vilified as society generally conditions women to fear unknown men in public spaces despite the fact that statistics on rape and attack emphasise that they are more at risk at home and from men they know (Valentine 1989). A closer and more critical examination of the literature suggests that the history and current functioning of urban parks is complex. Two largely unmarred views are presented where people in cities evidently need parks and their benefits, but that many people do not use or benefit from parks for unjust reasons. It is important that research moves forward in examining specific contexts of parks in meeting the challenges of making parks beneficial for all who use them.

The literature makes it clear the urban green space and its associated public spaces such as parks have the potential to afford significant benefits to those that use them or live in close proximity to them. The values of the social benefits in particular are in many cases invaluable and are not afforded except by such spaces. However, the literature is also clear that such green space can become a liability or indeed spaces of danger for many in our societies. Inequalities along ethnicity, race, class, gender and age can all be exacerbated by these spaces under certain conditions. This latter conclusion in the literature is particularly important in relation to this study where the study site resides a city with massive inequality, particularly along racial, classist and gender lines (Standing 2003; Turok 2011). Despite this, the inequality and poverty of Cape Town also presents the possibility that green space benefits are not only more crucial to marginalised people, but afford less understood or studied reliefs to the particular struggles faced by these people. It is within this framework that the study's empirical research is framed.

1.5 A park in post-apartheid Cape Town

The focus of my study is a protected area that serves as a recreational park for many people in the city of Cape Town. Cape Town is the second most visited city in Africa by tourists (BDLive 2014).

Chief among its attractions is its natural beauty, including its mountains, oceans and incredible plant diversity; the latter of which is the highest in the world for any city (Rebelo et al. 2011). The City of Cape Town is home to approximately 3.7 million people and occupies about 2460 km² of land (O'Farrell and Anderson 2012; Gómez-Baggethun et al. 2013). As with most cities around the world, it experiences a high growth rate with net population growth of 20.91% between 2001 and 2007, the highest of all South Africa metropolitan areas (Wright 2010). Cape Town and other South African cities are different to most around the world in a few crucial ways. One of these is that their density profiles are inverted so that they increase as one moves away from the city centre (Turok 2011). This inverted density profile is a legacy of decades of colonial and apartheid rule where under the 'Group Areas Act' black³ people were forcibly removed to live outside of the central areas that were reserved for whites (Standings 2003; Jansen 2004; Turok 2011). In the City of Cape Town the collective name for the outlying black areas is still today known as the Cape Flats, a geologically low-lying sandy region (O'Farrell and Anderson 2012). However, the apartheid government went even further in its segregation policies, segregating black people themselves into different areas based on whether they were classified as African, Coloured⁴ or Indian⁵ (Jansen 2004). This legacy of areas that are strongly segregated by race still exists today (Turok 2011). Cape Town's apartheid history is particularly relevant to my study considering I focus on a park that largely situated in the coloured area of the Cape Flats. Many people in the communities surrounding this park would have been directly affected by these forced removals, while it is safe to assume that all residents have been affected by the social and economic consequences of them.

Collectively the Cape Flats remains an area with high unemployment and poor infrastructure (Standing 2003; Jansen 2004; Goodness and Anderson 2013). These characteristics of the area are not restricted to this city, but throughout South Africa as well as much of the Global South (Wendel et al. 2012). The poverty in the area is a direct result of the racist policies of the apartheid regime that economically excluded the majority people in the area; however, some perceive the current market-focused neo-liberal economy to have only exacerbated the poverty of the area (Standing 2003). Unemployment is around 17% while roughly 38% of households live on less than the Minimum Living Level of US\$230 (R2780) per month set in 2010 (City of Cape Town 2007). There is of course large variation among these statistics and a recent survey has revealed unemployment to be up to 46% in Khayelitsha and Mitchell's Plain, both areas on the Cape Flats (Standing 2003).

³ Black in this instance refers to all South Africans who were discriminated against by the apartheid government including those people who were classified as African, Coloured and Indian (Jansen 2004).

⁴ "Coloured is an ambiguous catchall term for lighter skinned mixed race people devised by the architects of apartheid" (Standing 2003).

⁵ South Africa has a large Indian diaspora, primarily residing in Durban.

However, the most publicised issue on the Cape Flats is not the poverty or the unemployment, but its associated violent crime that is heavily linked to gangsterism and drugs, particularly in the coloured communities (Standing 2003; Achmat 2014). South Africa has a national murder rate that is four times higher than the global average 6.9 per 100 000 per year (Lancaster 2013). However, recent crime statistics have revealed that on average 84 people are murdered per 100 000 in the 15 most dangerous areas of the Cape Flats per year which is three times higher than the national average (Achmat 2014). Furthermore this number is 14 times higher than what the 15 safest areas in Cape Town experience, highlighting not just the seriousness of violent crime on the Cape Flats, but the stark social and economic inequality that persists in Cape Town (Standing 2003; Turok 2011; Achmat 2014).

Drug dealing, prostitution, theft and other illicit forms of income generation are widespread on the Cape Flats and form a major component of the local economy. Standing (2003) notes the pervasive nature of this crime - "Organised crime is not a fringe activity but rather a core dimension of society". Given that drug use, prostitution and gangsterism have often been prevalent in urban green space (Boone et al. 2009; Sreetheran and van den Bosch 2014); public parks on the Cape Flats are almost certainly particularly vulnerable to becoming what researchers have described as landscapes of fear (Madge 1997; Burgess 1996). However, given the benefits afforded by urban green space, parks on the Cape Flats could act as crucial spaces in alleviating some of the socio-economic problems of the area where emerging literature notes their benefits for health and social cohesion (Chiesura 2004; Byrne and Wolch 2009; Wendel et al. 2012). Investigating whether this possibility is in fact a reality is part of the rationale for why my study focuses on the protected area of False Bay Nature Reserve (Figure 1). False Bay Nature Reserve is visited by thousands of people every year, unlike the nearby Wolfgat Nature Reserve which is hardly utilised because of crime among other factors including pollution and the encroachment of thick bush comprised primarily of alien plants (Wolpe 2005). I explored whether False Bay Nature Reserve, given its surroundings, is in fact providing its users with benefits and what these benefits are. Given South Africa's racist history and unequal present, a number of the elements identified by Byrne and Wolch (2009) may well be at play at the reserve. Thus I am also interested in the interaction between park visitors and their relationship with the park and its management. Utilising ethnography techniques including participant observation and interviews, I observed and recorded the activities of park-users as well as their perceptions to create a holistic profile of the area. This study sheds light on the complex dynamics of the use, design, and often challenging management of parks in low-income areas of Cape Town and South Africa that research indicates should be so vulnerable. The conclusions and

findings of this study should further be applicable to many of the green spaces in the cities of Global South that also suffer from poverty, unemployment and violent crime among other things.

2. Methodology

2.1 Study Site

2.1.1 False Bay Nature Reserve and its Eastern Shore

False Bay Ecology Park (FBEP) covers approximately 1 200 ha of land on the southern edge of the city of Cape Town on the Cape Flats. Within False Bay Ecology Park are Zeekoevlei Nature Reserve, Rondevlei Nature Reserve, the Cape Flats Waste Water Treatment Works (CFWWTW) and its associated Strandfontein Birding Section, the Coastal Park Landfill site, as well as a section of coastal strip. Both the areas of Pelican Park, to the east, and Capricorn Park, to the west, are also seen as future extensions of the False Bay Ecology Park by the Environmental Resources department due to their botanical importance (City of Cape 2005).

This study focuses mainly on the area called False Bay Nature Reserve that includes Zeekoevlei Nature Reserve, Rondevlei Nature Reserve, the CFWWTW and its Strandfontein Birding Section (Figure 1). This was for convenience reasons, as the coastal strip of False Bay Ecology Park is situated further away and separately from the bulk of the park. False Bay Nature Reserve is largely bordered by the low to middle-income townships of: Lotus River on its north-eastern; Pelikan Park on its eastern; and Grassy Park on its northern boundary (City of Cape 2011b). Close by and beyond Pelikan Park is Mitchell's Plain, one of the largest townships home to over 310 000 people and 8% of Cape Town's residents in a city with 190 suburbs (City of Cape Town 2011b). In these areas the percentage of households with a monthly income of \$270 (R3265) or less ranges from 32 to 40% (City of Cape 2011b). Many of their communities originated from elsewhere before they were forcibly evicted under the Group Areas Act of the 1950s (Wolpe 2005; Ernstson 2013). These communities are comprised mostly of coloured people where in Lotus River, Grassy Park and Mitchell's Plain they make up on average 91% of residents while they make up 63% of Pelikan Park's. The suburb of Zeekoevlei, a more affluent area with just 421 residents that are predominantly white, also borders the park (City of Cape Town 2011b; Figure 1). It was classified as a whites-only area during apartheid. Racial tension in these areas was at times high during apartheid; with demonstration against the white-minority regime resulting in deaths of protesters close to the reserve (Ernstson 2013).

The location of the reserve is of particular conservation value, serving as one of the few corridors from the Table Mountain chain through to the coast of False Bay. Its value to conservation is highlighted by its Important Bird Area (IBA) status classified by Birdlife South Africa and during certain years has supported up to 30 000 birds and 168 species (Wright 2014). The reserve also contains remnants of the critically endangered Cape Flats Sand Fynbos and the endangered Cape Flats Dune Strandveld (Wright 2014). Zeekoevlei Nature Reserve, and more specifically its Eastern Shore (Figure 1), a multi-purpose open space, is the major focus of this study. Zeekoevlei Nature Reserve gained its protected status in 2004 making it a relatively young protected area (Pers. comm. Dalton Gibbs).

The Eastern Shore serves predominantly as a recreational site containing braai⁶ and picnic facilities, toilet blocks, and is a well-known fishing site. This site essentially serves as what are traditionally considered recreational parks by the broader literature despite its title as a Nature Reserve. The vlei



Figure 1: Ariel photograph of False Bay Nature Reserve. The green line outlines the border of the reserve. The Eastern Shore of Zeekoevlei is where this study is focussed and a pilot survey was also extended to the treatment pans of CFWWTW. The built-up area on Zeekoevlei's peninsula, encircled by green, is the suburb of Zeekoevlei.

⁶ Afrikaans word for barbecue, but is used across South African languages.

contains no indigenous fish, but instead contains an abundance of the invasive common carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) from Europe which is the target species for most of the fishermen. The other two species, the Mozambique tilapia (*Oreochromis mossambicus*) and sharptooth catfish (*Clarias gariepinus*) are also invasives. Sailing, rowing and the occasional power boating are also still popular on the water body. Along with the Strandfontein Birding Section, Zeekoevlei Nature Reserve attracted on average 85 199 visitors annually during the period of 2009 – 2011 (Pers. comm. Joanne Jackson 2014).

2.1.2 Background to the recent upgrades on the Eastern and Southern Shore

In May 2010 a proposal was submitted to the National Department of Tourism's (NDT) Social Responsibility Programme (SRP), via the Provincial Government: Western Cape's (PG:WC) Tourism Department, for funding for infrastructure development and upgrading on the Eastern and Southern Shore of Zeekoevlei. The NDT pledged R25 million while the PG:WC contributed a further R1 million. The funding was utilized to upgrade and establish picnic and braai facilities on the Eastern shore of Zeekoevlei, and contributed to the completion of the False Bay Nature Reserve Headquarters Node on the Southern shore of Zeekoevlei. As the SRP project is an Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP), it is labour intensive project, and was planned to provide between 50 and 70 jobs for a minimum period of 2 years (City of Cape Town 2011a). The upgrades are currently still underway, although the management headquarters, the picnic site and the majority of braai areas and toilet blocks have been completed.

2.2 Data Collection

2.2.1 Survey

I conducted an initial pilot survey to get a sense of the visitor profiles at two of the better known sites on the reserve. Questions were asked of reserve users in the form of a basic survey to gather socio-economic data as well as other questions relating to recreation in the reserve. This survey was highly valuable in highlighting to the most important issues of reserve as told by the visitors and was thus vital in informing my subsequent data collection.

I created a simple survey of nine questions relating to the visitors perceptions of, and relationship with the reserve (Appendix A). The survey began with three initial questions which were: how often the visitor frequented the reserve; their principle reasons for visiting; and the visitor's home suburb. The other questions covered topics such as the visitor's preferred recreational activity at the park, their home language, mode of transportation, their knowledge of the False Bay Ecology Park. The Five questions relating to demographic data were also asked, but were voluntary and asked at the

end of the survey. Questions were also designed to be as simple as possible with no jargon. Seven of the questions were closed-ended and two were open-ended as potential answers were too numerous to pre-code. Closed-ended questions formed the bulk of the questionnaire because they are quick to administer and are generally more amenable to coding and analysis (Kelley et al. 2003). The nine questions of the survey were administered as interviews whereby I read out the questions and recorded the visitors' answers. Interviews were preferred as opposed to handing out questionnaires as they generally have a higher participation rate (Cozby 2009). However, I allowed the final five questions relating to personal socio-demographic data to be filled out by the visitors themselves. This had a number of advantages such as allowing the visitor to personally identify their race and gender as well as choose which of the many brackets they fell into for their income and age.

2.2.2 Ethnography (Participant observation)

Qualitative data formed the bulk of the study and this was primarily gathered through ethnographic techniques. Qualitative methods are more suitable for exploring attitudes and values about park space because such approaches are grounded in the contexts of people's daily lives (Burgess et al. 1988). It is important to follow a technique that can reveal the depth of feelings and explore more fully the feeling that visitors have towards False Bay Nature Reserve. For this reason ethnography was preferred. According to Emerson et al. (1995), ethnography comprises two core activities: "First-hand participation in some initially unfamiliar social world," and "the production of written accounts of that world," based on such participation. Thus the value of the pilot survey was extended in further allowing me time to interact and observe the field site and reserve visitors before conducting ethnography.

After the completion of the pilot survey, I decided that I would restrict all ethnographic interviews to the Eastern Shore of Zeekoevlei Nature Reserve. There were a number of reasons for making this decision. From a practical standpoint Strandfontein was almost entirely used by visitors bird watching while driving around the site in their cars making it difficult to conduct interviews. By contrast on the Eastern Shore the majority of visitors were outside their cars and were settled at a location generally either braaing or fishing. Perhaps most importantly though, is that I observed that the Eastern Shore attracted a far larger amount of visitors and more visitors from local areas around the reserve. I also noticed that the Eastern Shore was catering for much more diversity in terms of the types of visitors and their recreational activity.

Each interview followed a semi-structure interview schedule (Appendix B). Every interview began with a basic introduction to the study and the visitor would be asked if they wished to be

interviewed. If they were fishing I would usually sit down next to them on the grass or join them on the benches if they were braaing. After the introduction to the study the interviews would proceed with the asking of three basic questions which when asked, served to help settle the participant. These questions were the same three that were asked at the beginning of each survey. These questions were helpful in informing much of my following questions. For example if a resident was from the bordering Lotus River or Grassy Park I could ask them questions relating to the history of the reserve. This was also true of residents who told me they came often to the reserve and had been doing so for years. After the initial questions the rest of the interview was always conducted in a conversational tone. I thought a structured format to these interviews could potentially limit the responses given by visitors. Instead the preferred conversational tone to the interviews allows questions and answers to unfold more naturally and this is thought to also develop trust (Madden 2010). I did not shy from any issues and in some cases I engaged participants, and they engaged me, about sports and politics. I felt this helped my participants to relax and not overthink their answers to some of my questions. It further helped them to view me as a human being they might relate personal stories to, rather than just an inquisitive researcher who was a complete stranger. So by not shying away from topics as they arose I had hoped that visitors would be more receptive to my presence. This certainly seemed the case, where those visitors I engaged in more general conversation were much more comfortable, and I was able to sit with these people for longer periods of time. Some visitors understandably were uncomfortable or uninterested with my intrusion and where I picked up on this I tried to ask some key questions before leaving. However, I was at no point turned away by any group or individual that I approached.

While the interviews had a mostly unstructured conversational tone I was continuously identifying important talking points prior to heading into the field. These talking points were often based on information from previous interviews as well as the pilot survey. Such themes included: what recreation visitors enjoy and where they like to go; whether visitors specifically enjoy False Bay Nature Reserve more than other places; visitor's recollection of the reserve if they were older visitors; and their feelings towards safety in the reserve and at other recreational sites they visit. At the end of the interview I asked visitors if they would prefer to remain anonymous or provide their first name if they hadn't done so already. During interviews I would use some paper on a clipboard to record the answers of the initial basic questions; as well as capture any important quotes or anecdotes from the visitors. However, I mostly restrained from vigorous note taking during the interviews so that I could focus on facilitating the conversation as well as help ease the visitors. Instead, after the interview, I would retreat from whomever I was interviewing and spend some time writing up the majority of the main findings from the interview while it was still fresh in my mind.

2.2.3 Interviews with management

As a final component to my data collection, I conducted three interviews with people involved with the reserve's management at three different scales and with differing expertise (Table 1). Asieff Khan is responsible for managing False Bay Nature Reserve and all its sections. Joanne Jackson is with the City of Cape Town and has been working on False Bay Nature Reserve for 15 years. She mostly works in a strategic role of project facilitation and implementation; particularly in planning infrastructure development and securing funding for reserve. My final interview was with Dalton Gibbs who is the head-manager of the majority of nature reserves, including False Bay Nature Reserve, for the south of Cape Town. Like the ethnographic interviews, I kept these interviews semi-structured and revolving around core issues informed by previous data collection. They were performed in private offices as opposed to on site at the Eastern Shore and were voice recorded. The interviews ranged from 45 minutes to an hour.

2.3 Sampling

After consulting with some of the management of the reserve, the survey was conducted over the weekend period of the 2014/09/12 to the 2014/09/14 to attain maximum respondents. Sampling effort was restricted from 9:00am to 12:00pm and then again from 2:00pm to 4:00pm on each day. I conducted haphazard sampling of visitors (Cozby 2009). I would begin by conducting surveys on all people I could find along the Eastern Shore, before driving a short distance to Strandfontein and doing the same. If I surveyed all visitors before the end of the sampling period I would return to the Eastern Shore and repeat the process as more people would generally have arrived. While the survey had few questions, many visitors did not want to be stopped at the gate on arrival and preferred to settle themselves before I conducted the survey. I surveyed 68 visitors to the reserve in total.

Ethnographic interviews were conducted during certain weekends of the months of November and December 2015. Overall 20 groups of visitors were interviewed in which 32 people from those groups responded to the interviews (Table 1). Participants were haphazardly selected, whereby I approached groups randomly and asked them whether they would allow me to join them. Groups

Table 1: List of individuals interviewed during this study including their home suburbs and the date they were interviewed. This list is to help with following data presented by specific individuals in my findings section. Names that are followed by a * are pseudonyms chosen by the author.

Visitor name/s	Home suburb	Date interviewed
Michelle* and Edmund*	Lotus River	2014/09/14
David* and Cheryl*	Bishop Lavis	2014/09/14
Jacob* and Daryl*	Mitchell's Plain	2014/09/14

Chris	Eagle Park	2014/09/14
Gabriel* and Bryan*	Mitchell's Plain	2014/09/20
Timothy*	Lotus River	2014/09/20
Matthew *	Eagle Park	2014/10/14
Raymond	Lotus River	2014/10/14
Piet*	Bothasig	2014/10/27
Tariq*	Mitchell's Plain	2014/10/27
Janina and Erma	Ottery and Mitchell's Plain	2014/10/27
Shirley* and Dale*	Mitchell's Plain	2014/10/27
Poobalam, Victor and Jen	Eagle Park, Lotus River and Phillipi	2014/11/01
Richard, Trevor and Audrey	Mitchell's Plain	2014/11/01
Jason*	Mitchell's Plain	2014/11/01
Grant	Grassy Park	2014/11/15
Kathy and Danelle	Zeekoevlei	2014/11/15
Shabbeer	Oceanview	2014/11/16
Charne* and Susan*	Mitchell's Plain	2014/11/16
Henry*	Delft	2014/11/16

Table 2: List of members of management interviewed during this study as well as their position in management.

Management name	Management description	Date interview
Asieff Khan	False Bay Nature Reserve Area Manager	2014/10/16
Joanne Jackson	Head of Projects and Partnership Development for Department of Environmental Resources (City of Cape Town)	2014/11/27
Dalton Gibbs	Regional Manager for Area South of Cape Town which includes multiple nature reserves such as False Bay Nature Reserve	2015/01/09

that responded positively were interviewed, while some groups for example indicated that I should come back a bit later.

Two of the members of the reserve's management that I interviewed were initially suggested by my supervisors. These were Asieff Khan and Joanne Jackson (Table 2). After conducting their interviews, both of them indicated that an interview with Dalton Gibbs would also be particularly valuable.

2.4 Data analysis

No statistical tests were used on the data acquired from the survey beyond working out the basic means of certain parameters. This produced the basic percentages seen later in the survey results (Table 3). I coded all field notes and transcripts from interviews according to themes that I felt persisted throughout much of the data. I used a process of coding that served to identify broad first-order themes that were encountered across most of the interviews. By re-examining my data through these first-order themes I further identified more specific second- or third-order themes within them that were revealed by narratives from my participants (Madden 2010). As is common in qualitative research, these themes were constantly evolving as I collected and re-analysed new data throughout different phases of the study (Madden 2010). Once finalised, these themes formed the skeleton of my findings section below.

2.5 Ethical considerations

Ethical protocol for work with human subjects of any nature is set by the University of Cape Town's (UCT) ethics committee. This protocol was followed based on the 'UCT Code for Research involving Human Subjects'⁷. However, the data I collected from visitors was generally not information that could compromise them in any such way. This meant that I had just a few ethical considerations to make. It was important for me to introduce myself and my study to all participants in my study. Any questions relating to the study or my identity were answered. All visitors were allowed to remain entirely anonymous and for those that gave me their names, I have not included their surnames at any point in this report. I obtained verbal consent for the interviews with management and all three participants allowed the interview to be recorded. Finally, during the pilot survey all participants were allowed to self-identify their race, income, age and gender, but were given the option of not disclosing this information.

2.6 Other considerations

2.6.1 Language

Many of the visitors interviewed spoke Afrikaans as a first language, although the majority could speak English as well. English is my first language, and as Afrikaans is my second language, it was sometimes difficult to fully understand if visitors spoke it amongst themselves. Furthermore, while many visitors were happy to switch over to English they may have not been able to convey some nuances to me. Despite this, visitors and I were always able to understand each other.

⁷http://www.education.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/image_tool/images/104/uctcodeforresearchinvolvinghumansubjects.pdf

2.6.2 Interviewer bias

Interviewer bias is always a potential problem when conducting interviews where the interviewer might inadvertently bias the responses from participants (Cozby 2009). Parts of my findings are simply objective facts acquired through my interviews and survey. However, interviewer bias certainly means that some responses by participants present in my findings may be elicited by my positionality. Furthermore much of what I presented in my results and discussion has been accompanied by my own intellectual and theoretical predispositions (Madden 2010). It should be noted though, that interviewer bias is generally more of a problem in studies with multiple interviewers with different characteristics. More importantly proper ethnography does not require researchers to be objective, but rather to co-construct their knowledge with their participants. However, as a young white male from a privileged background, my positionality is markedly different from the majority of those who participated in this study. As a white person, particularly a white male, the balances of power in South African society and society in general certainly benefit me. For this reason I had to be especially respectful and understanding to participants so as to play down these power relations. I tried to make it clear that participants were very much doing me a favour by engaging in my study and I always thanked them for such. In keeping this manner to my interviews I hoped participants would feel empowered to talk to me as they wished. Finally the opportunity to voice their views on a recreational site they frequently visit may have tempted some visitors to exaggerate their experiences. To counter this I explained at the beginning of each interview that I was in no way linked with the management of the site or the City of Cape Town in an attempt to convey that I had no power to make changes to the reserve.

3. Findings: A place of enjoyment, nostalgia and fear

3.1 Socio-demographic and recreational profile of reserve users

While reserve visitors engaged in a number of activities, the majority preferred just a few depending on what part of False Bay Nature Reserve they visited. The visitors of the two sites, Zeekoevlei's Eastern Shore and the Strandfontein Bird Area, differed noticeably in their socio-demographic characteristics. Of those who chose to identify their race, the majority of visitors at Strandfontein (83%) identified themselves as white, in contrast to Zeekoevlei where the majority (79%) identified themselves as coloured. Many of the visitors surveyed at Strandfontein (15%) and Zeekoevlei (38%) chose not to identify their race. The monthly incomes of visitors also differed between sites. Those who frequented Strandfontein generally had higher monthly incomes than those visiting Zeekoevlei. While only one visitor at Zeekoevlei reported having an income higher than R40 000, 35% of visitors at Strandfontein reported this monthly income. Other differences included that 20% of those visiting

Strandfontein were pensioners while 10% of visitors to Zeekoevlei earned either no income or just R1500 a month; none surveyed at Strandfontein fell into these income brackets.

The average number of people in a group also varied among the two sites. At Strandfontein over two thirds of those surveyed either came by themselves or as a pair, while one group of five was the largest group recorded at the site (Table 3). However, at Zeekoevlei just over a quarter of visitors came alone or in pairs, while just under half came as a group of four or higher. There were also some larger groups and over 10% of visitors came in a group of 10 people or higher. It was obviously noticeable to me that Zeekoevlei attracted far more families and sometimes multiple families. This was in stark contrast to Strandfontein that usually had just a single person or a few people driving around in their cars. I generally saw no children at Strandfontein, further indicating that it is not really a site utilised by families.

Despite being so close by, very few of the visitors to Strandfontein (15%) and Zeekoevlei (17%) had visited the other site. This may in part be explained by the fact that over half of those surveyed did not know there were other sites to the reserve besides the one in which they were surveyed in. Roughly a quarter of those surveyed at both sites were visiting for their first time and a similar percentage of those visiting Strandfontein (50%) and Zeekoevlei (43%) said they visited the site around once a month. However, only two of those surveyed at Strandfontein visited several times a week. One of these visitors was a local cyclist and his group was the only one I observed cycling. In contrast to Strandfontein over a quarter of those surveyed at Zeekoevlei reported that they visited the reserve several times a week. Besides the cyclist, all Strandfontein users had driven to the reserve in their own private vehicle. This was similar for visitors at Zeekoevlei although 13% of them had walked to the reserve.

The overwhelming majority of people who visited Strandfontein were bird watchers (16 out of 20 - Table 4). Unlike at Zeekoevlei, all visitors surveyed at Strandfontein only mentioned one specific reason for their visit.

Table 3: The number of those surveyed and their corresponding number of people in their group.

No. of people in group	Zeekoevlei (n = 47)	Strandfontein (n =20)
1	13%	35%
2	32%	35%
3	11%	15%
4	11%	10%
5	4%	5%
6	11%	

7	2%
8	4%
10	9%
20	4%

One first time visitor from Lotus River, who was one of the two visitors who identified themselves as coloured, cited family time as his reason for the visit. He had brought his daughter to the site to help her with a school project on flamingos and ostriches which she had not seen before. At Zeekoevlei the majority of visitors cited either having a braai/picnic (17 out of 47) or fishing (16 out of 47) as their reasons for visiting. A large contingent of visitors also cited the ambiance and views as reasons for their visits and the same number also cited family time (Both 11 out of 47 - Table 4). Many of the visitors checked multiple reasons for why they visited as many fishermen liked to braai at the reserve and vice-versa.

Table 4: Visitors' primary reasons for visitation. Visitors were able to select multiple reasons.

Reason for visit	Zeekoevlei (n = 47)	Strandfontein (n = 20)
Braai/Picnics	17	
Fishing	16	3
Views/Ambiance	11	
Family time	11	1
Dog Walking	3	
Birding	1	16
Cycling		1
Other	1	

Despite its obvious popularity, many of the visitors to Zeekoevlei had strong suggestions regarding what potential changes they would like to see. The most frequent one (38%) was providing some sort of facilities for children such as a jungle gym. Many of the women I surveyed brought this up, while some jumped in when they heard me asking their partners what changes they would like to see. Issues surrounding the toilets were also a common complaint (19%). Reserve visitors were not happy with the eco-toilets that had been installed and would prefer flush toilets. As with the previous concern, this seemed to affect women much more. Many men told me that although they did not like the toilets, they at least they did not have to sit on them. Security inside the reserve was also a relatively widespread concern for visitors (17%). Those concerned with security often said

they would like to see more visible security inside the reserve, while a few mentioned the lack of fencing as a concern. At Strandfontein just one visitor mentioned security as a concern, citing he wanted better access control. As a local who cycled around the area almost daily, he had noticed a number of unaccompanied minors around and felt they were at risk. During my surveys and through personal communication with management it was clear that the Eastern Shore overwhelmingly attracts the bulk of False Bay Nature Reserve's visitors. Thus the bulk of my research effort was focussed on the Eastern Shore.

3.2 Fun and fear on the Eastern Shore

The following findings attempt to organise and explain participants' feelings towards the reserve. These feelings are generally either very positive in regards to the affordances the park gives them, particularly in terms of recreational activities or as places to relax and reflect. In juxtaposition to these feelings, are the participants' feelings of unease with regards to their own safety and that of their loved ones as well.

3.2.1 Pull of the reserve

The large distances some visitors travel to the reserve highlights its importance to them (Figures 2 and 3). Some visitors drove from as far as Kuilsrivier (34km) and Durbanville (42km). Michelle, a visitor at the reserve, stressed to me she has friends who come and join her "all the way from Bellville" (26km). David initially did not seem to want to talk to me and seemed very suspicious. However, after Edmund who I had just spoken to vouched for me, David invited me over to his picnic site. I joined him with his girlfriend Cheryl and their young daughter where they offered crisps and some soft drink. They told me they were from Bishop Lavis and that they had made an expensive journey to the reserve taking four different taxis as they did not own a car. They also had to make a 2 km walk with their food and drink from the main road to the picnic site, highlighting their determination to get there.

3.2.2. A place etched in childhood memory

The history of False Bay Nature Reserve and the Eastern Shore in particular has influenced how the reserve is perceived by many of its visitors today. A large number of the visitors interviewed grew up in the surrounding suburbs and frequented the Eastern Shore in their youth. For example Henry grinned as he proudly told me he has been visiting the Eastern Shore since he was 11 and is now 53. Asieff, who grew up nearby in Grassy Park revealed it was a great place to play as a child: "It was a very different place back then. I lived there between 1979 and 1988 and I remember it had a lot of grass for us to play cricket and soccer on."

Many of the visitors that I spoke to also frequented the reserve as children and all of them told positive stories of their past experiences of the reserve. Chris from the neighbouring Eagle Park, who had brought his young son along with him, remarked on his past on the Eastern Shore. We sat down next to some other fishermen who showed his son how to bait a hook for carp while he talked to me: “I really love what this place has become. It feels like it did when I was a kid, although you could see the fish in the water back then.” Timothy had a similar remark about the water: “I used to come here often as a kid. We used to spear the fish with garden forks, although the water was much clearer.”

Matthew, who grew up near the reserve, was a friendly and talkative visitor who was at the reserve with his family. He was more than happy to talk to me about growing up near the reserve and I noticed he also specifically referred to a clearer vlei.

“We used to swim in the water all the time, although now there’s no chance of that happening. But my favourite thing to do here wasn’t swimming but catching Turtle Doves in Traps. I’d then braai them even though they didn’t have much meat, but the fun was in catching them anyways. I used to catch carp with a handline as well because I’ve never had a rod. I brought my young nephew with me the other day to come and fish with his fancy rod but he caught nothing! When he saw me catch a fish with my handline so he broke off his reel to turn it into a handline!”

Matthew did not miss my slightly surprised face when he told me about braaing wild doves. He was quick to reassure me that back then there were loads of them and I assured him that I was not worried about the conservation of such an abundant species. However, I was curious about this consistent referral to a cleaner and clearer vlei and I decided to follow up with Dalton Gibbs, the Regional Manager, who had been working in the area for decades. In our interview I asked him whether these visitors had selective memories about this cleaner water. However, he reckoned that the water was almost certainly cleaner during the 1970s when many of the older visitors would have been in their youth.

“In the seventies it was much cleaner than now. There’s been a huge amount of urbanisation since the seventies and also mass industrial farming in Philippi where a lot of the mass nutrient loading has come from.”

3.2.3 A space to escape

Just under a fifth of people I surveyed in Zeekoevlei used the word “ambiance” as a reason for their visit and many people elaborated on this when interviewed. Many appreciated the quiet of the

natural setting, citing their enjoyment of the “tranquillity” in some cases. I spoke to Timothy after he cycled up to me while I was talking to Gabriel and Bryan. He sat down next to us. None of them knew each other, but were nevertheless remarkably friendly to each other. I asked him if I could speak to Timothy and he reminded me that I had surveyed his friend earlier at Strandfontein. He said it was his first time there and so I probed him about his thoughts on the birds. He told me he was amazed by them. He never knew that there were so many birds just around the corner from where he lived. Gabriel and Bryan hear this and are curious about it, also unaware of the birds. He tells them, “daar is dik flamingos, hulle is pragtig mooi!⁸”. However, he usually visits just the Eastern Shore and spoke fondly of it as a space to think quietly: “I enjoy the lekker⁹ quiet... There’s the open air to think quietly”. After hearing this Gabriel cracked a joke aimed at Timothy that “he’s probably just in trouble with the wife”. We all laughed, but Gabriel and Bryan had just told me they sometimes preferred not to bring their families to the reserve so they “can escape the stress of family life”. Like Timothy, Bryan appreciated the quiet, describing the Eastern Shore as “lekker rustig”¹⁰ and “nice and secure”. For David, the reserve offers him a place to escape the fighting: “There’s nobody fighting here... there’s always fighting where I live, at home and in Bishop Lavis.”

For other visitors it is a nice way to relax from work; like for Shabbeer who said the reserve is a great place for stress relief from work. More visitors elaborated on the reserve as a space to escape the stress of their home neighbourhoods. In our interview Edmund told me that coming to the reserve is a great way to escape the crime of Lotus River before looking over the water and saying “But this place is very nice”. A man from Manenberg who I met during the earlier pilot survey had brought his pitbull terrier in his car and told me that he came to the reserve: “Because I feel safer here than at home”. He gave me an orange while we chatted and told me that he hoped that entry to the reserve would remain free of charge.

⁸ Roughly translates to: “There are many flamingos, they are very beautiful”.

⁹ Almost translates to good or great in English. Generally expresses approval of something.

¹⁰ Direct translation - Lovely quiet

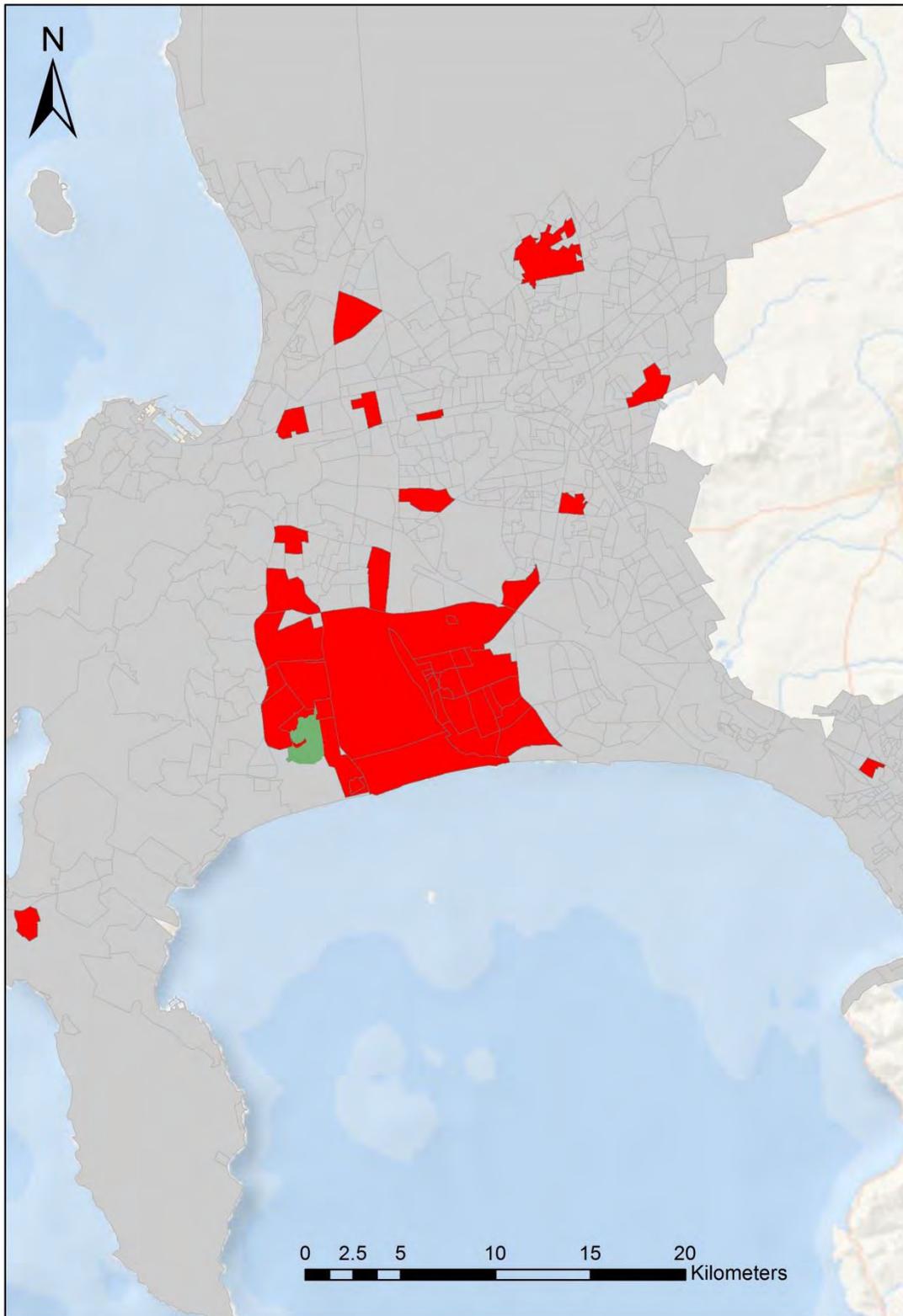


Figure 2: Map of Zeekoevlei and visitors' suburbs. Zeekoevlei is highlighted in green, while the visitors' suburbs are in red. The majority of visitors came from nearby suburbs mostly on the Cape Flats to the east of the reserve

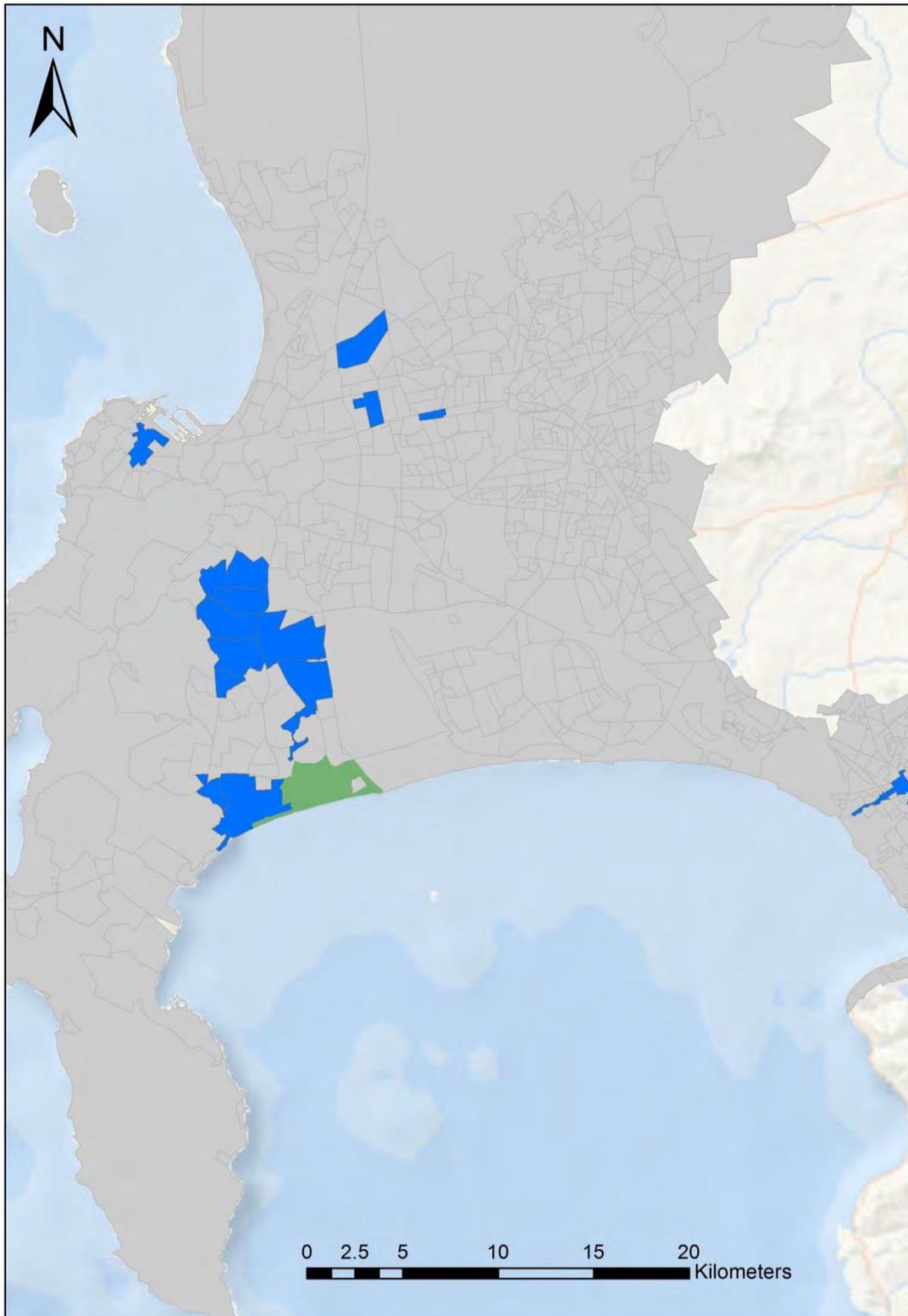


Figure 3: Maps of Strandfontein and visitors' suburbs. Strandfontein is highlighted in green, while the visitors' suburbs are in blue. The majority of visitors came from an area known as the southern suburbs, seen on the map as the conglomeration just to the north of the reserve.

While in my car at the reserve I noticed that Chris, before we had spoken together, had left his car windows half-down when he moved away to the picnic site with his son. This is not something many people would do in South Africa, let alone on the Cape Flats, indicating how at ease he felt at the reserve. Shirley and Dale also see the reserve as a nice way to escape the crime in their neighbourhood and were celebrating their son's 16th birthday during our interview. They tell me there are no nice outdoor places for them in Mitchell's Plain. Shirley begins to get particularly upset talking about Mitchell's Plain. She had anger and sadness in her voice as she told me her son was recently beaten up in school for not smoking "dagga"¹¹. Her husband solemnly shook his head whilst looking at the floor. She told me the gangsters in the school often target other children to try and draw them in. She said she gets scared every time the phone rings during the day in case her son has been killed and finished by telling me: "It's not like we have other choices though, we just have to deal with it and get on with life."

Gabriel and Bryan also spoke to me about the gangsters in Mitchell's Plain whom they describe as "out of control" particularly the 'Americans' gang¹². They explain to me that people they grew up with as children, who were once friends, are now gangsters and want to kill each other. While we were talking about gangsterism, eight boys probably from ages seven to thirteen came down the picnic area with no adults accompanying them. They spoke with thick accents and in a mix of English and Afrikaans¹³ and Gabriel began talking to them in the same dialect. The boys excitedly walked around us, chatting loudly amongst themselves and when they passed us by, Bryan told me that they were using gangster talk in gangster accents. The fishermen reckoned they were probably from Pelican Park, and told to me that they are the type of children that are most likely to be pulled into gangs. I remarked that at least in the reserve they were less likely to encounter gang members and they nodded seemingly in agreement, but did not seem too optimistic. Considering their childhood experiences it was not hard to understand why.

3.2.4 A lingering fear and class conflict

Despite the reserve being portrayed as a place to escape dangerous neighbourhoods, some are not entirely convinced it is completely safe from the danger of home. On top of this, the large low-income housing development is has not been well received by many of the visitors, sighting the fact that this development will bring in undesirable people.

¹¹ Slang for marijuana

¹² Widely regarded as the largest gang in the Western Cape; one of the so-called "super gangs"
<http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2014-05-26-the-capes-youth-gangs-bigger-deeper-more-dangerous/#.VLktHkeUdic>

¹³ This mixture of English and Afrikaans is a dialect mostly restricted to parts of coloured ethnic population of the Western Cape. It is a dialect rich in colloquialisms and idiomatic expressions.

Richard, Trevor and Aubrey also brought up the question of gangsters in our interview. Richard was particularly vocal and I could tell that the three of them were particularly upset about certain issues at the reserve; one of which was the safety situation. Richard told me that: “When the sun goes down, you get out... The gangsters like the dark... The skollie¹⁴ elements are going to come through and they’re gonna rob us here cause there’s easy access.” When I pointed out to him that the perimeter fence was almost complete he said “the fence means nothing”. When I asked them what they thought of the two security guards who were patrolling at night Trevor said: “If gangsters come those security guys don’t stand a chance.”

I asked them what they suggested was needed to improve the situation and they told me that the reserve just needed more visible security. They also said they would pay a bit of money to come in, around R18 to keep the ‘skollies’ out. I asked them if there were any other recreational places where they live and Richard told me: “Recreational places in Mitchell’s Plain are non-existent.”

The fishermen were also concerned about the nearby housing development and Trevor remarked to me: “If the development was for middle-class houses it would be fine. But now gangsters are already marking off their territories dividing it up”. Aubrey said he dropped off one of the reserve’s security guards up the road and that the guard had already seen a lot of gangsters. I asked how they knew if someone is a gangster and they say “you just know”. Trevor continued: “The biggest problem with the gangsters now is the age is so low, now as young as ten or twelve”. He said that the reserve is no more dangerous than other places: “No it’s scary all over... this place is just like the other unprotected areas¹⁵”. They also lamented the fact that they could no longer fish along the ocean where they used to. Trevor said: “Since the townships¹⁶ moved towards the beach... Don’t misunderstand me, but before 1994¹⁷ my life was worth more. I could leave my windows open at night”. The men also lamented over what local communities do to the public facilities provided to them in reference to the vandalised toilets of the reserve. On this vandalism Raymond said: “I don’t know why they do this, because these things have been built for us, for the community.”

The three fishermen were not the only visitors concerned with the nearby housing development. Chris told me he thought they would bring more crime into the area. He justified this by saying that many of the new residents would be coming from low-income areas. However, he was obviously conflicted about this and had a guilty expression when he told me: “But everyone is free to live

¹⁴ In this instance “skollie” refers to a gangster or criminal. Can also mean a homeless person.

¹⁵ This used by the participant challenge the notion that the park was a protected area.

¹⁶ Reference to the informal slum-like settlements of Cape Town overwhelming inhabited by those of African descent or who were classified as such under apartheid.

¹⁷ In 1994 South Africa had its first democratic elections after 56 years of white minority rule. The African National Congress won elections and has been in power ever since.

where they like". He told me he used to live in Lavender Hill, one of the low-income areas nearby that is notoriously dangerous, and thus sympathised with the incoming residents. Others were not so sympathetic. Janino and Erma also believed that the development would bring more crime, and furthermore felt that their children would no longer be safe. The two of them are family friends and had brought their children who were running around us to play together. They occasionally shouted at them to not go too far away and more than once interrupted our interview to check on their whereabouts. Janino explained to me his concern with the housing development: "You see man, now you can leave your kids to go play and not worry as much".

This attitude of many of the visitors towards their potential low-income neighbours made many of them suggest that a reserve entrance fee would be preferable to keep, as one resident described them, the "riff-raff" out. Asieff rejected this suggestion and explained to me his thoughts on the nearby housing development.

"We've just received this new development on our borders and there are something like 25 000 people being added to our borders from communities across Cape Town like Lavender Hill, Lotus River, Hanover Park and that is just a melting pot waiting to explode in one way or another... Look in any community no matter where you go there are going to be a percentage of people who will be good of heart and just want to enjoy their lives... I'm of a belief that there are a greater number of people who are good natured, and have just received new houses and probably want to improve their lives. The vlei is just an extension of that improvement in that it is a space for people to escape to get that break and be around a resource that would not have been attainable in any other area that they have previously lived. So it's actually a privilege in a way to live here because you have got that ability and facility available to you and if I was a kid growing up in this community I would think what better place that I could just come down after school and kick a soccer ball, fish ride your bike etc. and that will probably have a much more lasting impression on that child's existence rather than the norm of violence and crime that they are used to in their other communities, the vlei might provide the relief and escape in terms of their growing up. And so I said this to myself long ago that so long as I'm here no one is going to actually get charged entry fee coming into this gate. There aren't really any places left that are free, and I'd like to keep this place free and hope that the people using it will realise they've got something here."

Certainly many reserve users would appreciate hearing this. The men I surveyed from Manenberg, Matthew and Jason, all expressed their concerns that the reserve would eventually start charging an

entrance fee, particularly in light of the upgrades which Jason said: “If the city gives money, it will want some back”.

These findings reveal in more detail the notable class divides among the visitors at the reserve. Those who have particularly low income fear being excluded from the reserve by a future cover charge to enter. These feelings are not entirely unreasonable, as although management are committed to keeping the reserve free, many visitors from more middle-class areas would seek a cover charge to exclude people who they fear as potential criminals. This tension only seems to be escalating, as the nearby housing development fuels the fears of the more middle and upper class visitors.

3.2.5 A period of decline and a landscape of fear

Much of the lingering fear for their safety felt by some visitors can be explained by a tumultuous period in the Eastern Shore’s past. Despite fond childhood memories for many of the reserves older visitors, the reserve underwent a problematic period identified by Asieff Khan, as mostly between 2000 and 2005.

“In 2000 the management of the area changed over from City Parks to Nature conservation. In that change the infrastructure – resources, man power and vehicle resources were taken away and never given to nature conservation. So nothing was happening for five years – and when you have a void like that, something has to fill that void and unfortunately the wrong sort of elements filled that void. So for a long time you had a lot of drug dealers, prostitution, and an ideal place to strip stolen cars.”

Joanne confirmed this change in management:

“Zeekoevlei became a nature reserve in 2000 and prior to that it had been run by City Parks. I remember after 2000 one of our residents said to us “What happened to the one million rand budget?” and as I understand it when it became a nature reserve it didn't have a budget. At that stage the nature reserve management was included within City Parks who had originally been managing that land and when it came under Nature Conservation the budget didn't track with it. Only around 2004 did City Parks join the Environmental Resource Management Department.”

Dalton Gibbs said that Zeekoevlei was left with five staff and approximately R40 000 in its budget, but in his opinion this was not the main problem with the changes:

“I was given five staff and R40 000 to maintain Zeekoevlei, while before there was something like about R1.2 million, but more importantly than anything else Zeekoevlei used to have a full-time law enforcement presence. So on the Eastern Shore there used to be a building and there used to be full-time law enforcement municipal officers. That was all taken away and now none of our nature reserves (On the South Peninsula) have any proper security presence whatsoever. There is private security, but they have no jurisdictional powers. You have something like a two kilometre stretch of braai areas and toilet blocks and you just can't run a recreational resource of that scale without any security law enforcement”.

The reduction of the budget and thus the security presence meant that the reserve underwent a sharp decline that certainly did not go unnoticed, as I found out through my interviews with visitors. Many of the women interviewed were particularly vocal about this period. Jen from Shkaapkraal told me that from the 1990s onwards many people thought of Zeekoevlei as a place of murder where bad things happened. She says stories of women being abused or raped were fairly common. Michelle told me that during its period of decline, she never went to toilets at Zeekoevlei unless accompanied by her husband while Erma described the reserve as “very dodgy” during this time. Jason, a young man from Mitchell's Plain said he also used to hear stories saying: “People did f**ked up things to females and kids in there”. Where he says “in there” he is referring to the encroachment of mostly alien shrubs and trees that covered much of the Eastern shore. This made it “a scary place” for Shirley who referred to the Eastern Shore as “just bush” before the upgrades. Kathy and Danelle also talked about the Eastern Shore as a place “with a lot of bush” and said they always brought a dog with them while visiting. Piet, who was fishing with his son, told me that he always felt vulnerable to someone sneaking up on him before the “bush” was cleared. He told me that the reserve has a more “professional feel to it” since the upgrades.

When interviewing Joanne she sympathised with the feelings of unease expressed by many of the women:

“When I first started working at FBEP I had site meetings and I would feel uncomfortable if I drove in there and was early for my meeting and would have to hang around... I have no issue now and I will take my daughter there. And yes there are issues of safety and security but by and large the nodal areas people go to are generally as safe as you can say you're safe.”

These perceptions of the reserve as a dangerous place, particularly for women, are not unwarranted. After speaking with Matthew, he told me I had to go and speak to his friend who he introduced to me as Raymond. Raymond, who has lived in the neighbouring suburb of Lotus River all his life, recounted a disturbing story to me associated with the reserve. He told me he was once walking back with some friends after a night at the 'Piweljoen'¹⁸, a popular night time spot along Strandfontein beach, when they were offered a lift home by the some men. After accepting the offer, the men then drove them to the Eastern Shore and wanted to rape the women in his group. However, Raymond and his friends stood their ground and he said in the end they backed down and everyone was unhurt. He finished the story by telling me there were always stories of rape and murder like his along the Eastern Shore. During my interview with him Asieff told a story more of a place where criminals would often visit after committing a crime, although these crimes often were of a more violent nature than drug dealing and prostitution:

“It was an isolated place at that stage, you had one road in and you had bush and forest and enough space to easily hide. Crimes would often be committed elsewhere, including murders, and quite a number of bodies were dumped here.”

Kathy and Danelle called the Eastern Shore a murder dump site during this period and told me that they heard about it on the news regularly. Dalton said that bodies were being found at one stage roughly every second week, but to his knowledge most of them were body dumps as opposed to murders on site. Furthermore the infrastructure that used to exist was rapidly destroyed:

“So we had entire toilet blocks that were completely dismantled. People came in at nights with vehicles or tow trucks and just pull the doors off and just gut them... sell the toilets the piping.”

3.2.6 Reclamation through upgrades

Many visitors spoke to me of their appreciation of the “changes” or “upgrades” to the Eastern Shore. These upgrades began in 2012, and resulted in the revamping of the braai and toilet facilities whilst also creating a new grassy picnic area. The latter made Zeekoevlei unique for Charne and Susan, who told me other fishing places that their husbands enjoyed do not have nice grass for their children to play on. As mentioned earlier, Chris felt that the upgrades made the reserve feel as good as it did when he was a child. When talking to Raymond he also talked to me about how much he enjoyed the Eastern Shore as a child and says now he often brings his family: “This place has changed... I must say this place looks beautiful now”.

¹⁸ Translates to Pavilion in English

Tariq, an elderly man, told me he had not been to the Eastern Shore in over ten years, but after seeing the upgrades he thinks people will come back when the word gets out as it is a safe place now. On a similar note Jason told me that people are talking about Zeekoevlei as a nice place again. He said: “around 12 years back it was lekker, everyone knew each other.”

Erma who described the reserve as dodgy during its period of decline now brings her family and young children citing the changes as the reason for her return. Shirley said the reserve was “a real dump” before the upgrades and is glad the “bush” is gone. It became clear to me that one of the most well received changes with the upgrade was the mass clearing of what many described as the “bush” and Joanne described to me what it was before:

“Previously you would go down that Zeekoevlei road¹⁹ and it would be all this alien invasive trees and piles of rubble and it just didn't have a good feel at all. You felt someone could jump out of these bushes.”

Poobalam, Victor and Jen also talked to me about “the lovely changes” and lamented that there used to be no facilities for people and that everything had been vandalised or stolen. “Now it’s nice for the children” Jen said to me. Grant told me that the vlei is a lot better and says the upgrades are having a knock-on effect by improving the safety of the reserve by attracting more people. Even Richard, Trevor and Aubrey who remained sceptical of the reserve’s safety told me the reserve is much better now than it used to be.

While many people often had minor grievances, particularly with the non-flush toilets, it was clear the majority of visitors I spoke to were overwhelmingly happy with the upgrades. Kathy was an elderly person who had lived near the vlei for years and who I noticed was particularly upset when speaking about the dangerous period the reserve underwent. However, her appreciation of the upgrades was apparent and when I asked her what she would change if she were management, she replied to me: “Keep it natural, it’s lovely the way it is now”.

The fact that visitors are willing to travel relative large distances at often relative great financial cost is a testament to the reserves popularity. Furthermore it is clear that the reserve has been an important space of forming fond memories for many of the visitors. Those who enjoyed time in the reserve as children now bring their own young family to enjoy the space as well. There was a widespread feeling of enjoying the reserve as a space to reflect and relax in a way that is not possible in many of the participant’s home neighbourhoods. The burden of violent crime in these areas results in the reserve becoming a sanctuary of sort, where families can have time together free

¹⁹ A tar road that goes along the Eastern Shore

from the troubles at home. While Asieff was immensely grateful for these upgrades, he is still nervous about the lack of long-term funding to pay the extra staff he received with the expanded public works program. This is especially concerning for him, since right now his staff are overworked despite only a third of the stretch being utilised at this time:

“There’s actually too much work for them (his staff) to handle at the moment and this is just a third of the stretch we’re managing right now. The funding we have for the cleaners is also not secured because they’re on an expanded public works system on a month to month contract and it be retracted at any point. I have only 17 permanent staff across the reserve and the reserve is over 12 000ha.”

Despite widespread appreciation for the upgrade, many visitors have not forgotten that the reserve was once a space to be wary of. The period identified by management as of increased incidents of crime did not go unnoticed by the reserve’s visitors. Indeed some believe this still to be the case, despite the obvious improvements accompanying the new upgrades.

3.3 A selective desire for law enforcement

The following section outlines findings that related to issues of existing and potential conflict between visitors and management regarding rules around recreation. Throughout the participant observation process, two of the most important recreational activities namely braaing and fishing, were often accompanied by alcohol consumption. Furthermore the attitudes of fishermen towards fishing permits were markedly conflicting in some cases. This section seeks to set out some of these conflicts and indeed contradictions that the reserve’s management will ultimately need to deal with.

3.3.1 The importance of a place to drink

Whilst talking to visitors on the Eastern Shore their views were often conflicted when it came to law enforcement at the reserve. Many visitors, due to their fear of crime, spoke of a desire to see more security or law enforcement officers on the site. However, some of them and many others spoke fondly of the fact that there was limited enforcement of certain laws, giving them more freedom in their recreation. For example drinking alcohol is banned in all public spaces in Cape Town and False Bay Nature Reserve is no different, but I found in some cases there was a perception that alcohol consumption is in fact legal at the reserve as one individual told me: “it’s a lekker lekker spot this... people like that it is legal (to drink) here.”

In our interview Asieff explained the current management situation:

“Yeah it is illegal to drink at the vlei, but it has been happening here since I started working here. We haven’t tried to put a stop to it yet, because we don’t have the resources to do that. But there will inevitably come a time where this will have to become a dry zone like any other public facility.”

I asked him whether it bothered the Muslim visitors, many of whom live in the neighbouring Pelican Park and whom I had encountered during my pilot survey.

“It doesn’t seem to bother our Muslim guests... There’s nothing wrong with people coming together recreationally and having a good time, but obviously Council has its own rules and technically they are breaking the rules. Although I can’t do anything about it until I have more resources. At the moment I have two private rangers who are for security and are with a private company and don’t have the delegated authority to confiscate alcohol. When alcohol consumption is eventually controlled it won’t be us as management, but by law enforcement.”

Many of the visitors I spoke to, particularly those who were braaing were drinking alcohol and they almost always offered me a drink as the atmosphere was generally very festive with more than one family coming together. During all my visits to the Eastern Shore I only encountered one individual whom I considered to be extremely inebriated and was simply asleep on the floor. Indeed while many visitors highlighted that they enjoy the lack of enforcement on alcohol as opposed to other places, many also like that the drinking culture never seemed to get out of hand on the Eastern Shore. Raymond told me that in his opinion people are very aware of their neighbours and never fight or quarrel with them. He said it is out of respect of the fact that many people come as families with young children. Janino and Erma told me that braai areas offer a lot of privacy where different parties do not spill over into each other’s space and that this is in stark comparison to other places such as Princess Vlei where people get “gesuij”²⁰ and bother you. Poobalam, Victor and Jen told me they also like the fact that nobody bothers them and claim that it is because Zeekoevlei is generally frequented by families and that there are no “hooligans” around. Jason does not like the idea of law enforcement at all however, as he is very sceptical of law enforcement officers, particularly the police who he describes as “the most corrupt”. Much in line with the visitor’s perceptions, Asieff told me that alcohol, while illegal, has not caused any issue for reserve management.

“I know that alcohol consumption here is a big part of the recreational activity and people do like to come here and have a drink while watching the sunset. There is a kind of a

²⁰ Translates to drunk

gentleman's agreement; they know that management is not looking at it so closely so long as they manage it themselves. The whole time I've been working here I've not had a single alcohol-related incident, drugs yes, alcohol not."

3.3.2 The freedom to fish

Fishing is obviously one of, if not the most popular activity on the Eastern Shore with many visitors fishing with their friends and children. Many of these fishermen have fished the vlei for years. The fishing situation of Zeekoevlei is an interesting one from a conservation perspective in that none of the fish are indigenous. Despite all the fish being alien and invasive, fishermen are still required to have a permit to catch them. However, due to a lack of resources for law enforcement, fishermen are not asked to provide them. As with conflict of visitors desiring more law enforcement for security but not for alcohol laws; enforcement of permit laws creates an interesting conflict among certain fishermen. The lack of permit enforcement is a great pull for Shabbeer, who drives 30 minutes from Oceanview every week to come fish with his friends and family. He is part of a large group when I speak to him and he tells me him and his friends enjoy not being harried for permits as they often are elsewhere. In our interview Asieff acknowledged that many of the visitors struggle to get permits. However, Richard, Trevor and Aubrey had an opposing view to Shabbeer. It upsets them that they have paid for permits, yet so many other fishermen who fish next to them have not. The lack of permit enforcement for them only encourages the "skollies" to visit the reserve. Since the species are alien invasive fish a strange set of rules plays out as Asieff explained: "The law says that if you catch a carp you must remove it off site since it's an invasive, but you can't sell it legally as tender because it supposedly belongs to council."

Carp is generally a difficult fish to eat as it is very slimy and bony, requiring a lot of preparation so it has traditionally just been caught for purely recreational reasons. However, this has changed recently as Timothy explained to me that foreigners, referring to them as "Pakis, Japs and Chinese", will pay around R100 for a good sized carp. He told me along with Gabriel and Bryan that they sometimes sell their catch as it is a nice way to supplement their income while having fun at the same time. Asieff told me that at one point people were coming to buy fish at the Eastern Shore: "We used to have people buying on site a few years ago and we put a stop to that very quickly. You can conduct your business elsewhere, but this is not a place for business."

The findings of this section reveal that alcohol consumption is not only extremely popular, but its legality on site is also often misunderstood. It is clear that banning alcohol would alienate many of the current visitors, however overturning this law is outside of management's jurisdiction. Fishing remains a core activity for many who visit the reserve. As it stands permits are required to fish which

for some are relatively expensive and thus they do not acquire them. Management has sympathised with this situation, but now faces a situation where it spurns those fishermen who buy permits, often despite the expense of them. It is apparent that a conflicting attitude towards law enforcement and management exists among visitors which management will need to deal with carefully.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study expose a range of themes regarding the dynamics between the visitors, management and False Bay Nature Reserve. This discussion pulls the relevant themes into six sections, while linking them to the broader literature. The discussion starts with a summary of the findings, which describe the dynamic nature of the reserve as it has been a place of flux for its visitors. The second theme touches on the spatial diversity in socio-demographic characteristics of visitors between two core recreational sites in the reserve that was revealed in the survey. This section explains this diversity that is largely a result of South Africa's troubled past, but that this does not entirely explain it. The third section incorporates all the data that explains the numerous benefits afforded by the reserve. The section also looks at how these affordances compare with other green spaces around the world and notes some of the unique benefits the reserve provides. The fourth section tackles the challenge of providing or maintaining viable green space in an area such as the Cape Flats. By drawing on participants' descriptions of the struggles they face, as well as literature from the Cape Flats; this section highlights the difficulty, the importance and the conflicting agendas of green space management in the region. Section five looks at the period of decline in the reserve's profile as seen by the visitors and management. The section extracts the primary reasons for this decline as per the data, particularly confronting the relatively higher vulnerability of certain visitors, much of which is explained by the socio-political dynamics of South African society. The section also looks at the similarity of these causes of the reserve's decline to other spaces around the world as well as just a few kilometres away. The sixth section attempts to explain the final section of the findings, where visitors showed inconsistent attitudes to the laws and management of the reserve. As some literature shows, this is likely to be a tendency not restricted to False Bay Ecology Park. The final section is the conclusion section that sets to summarise the main themes emerging from this study and how they link with the broader literature on urban green space.

4.1 A vibrant and vulnerable asset to all who use it

This study reveals that False Bay Nature Reserve and its Eastern Shore in particular have been in a state of flux for decades. It has been a place that is held dear in childhood memories and a place that

many people were afraid of, and by the reserve management's own admission, were perhaps right to be. Many of the unfavourable consequences of the poverty and inequality of the Cape Flats manifested in the reserve, turning it into a landscape of fear for many people. However, through reinvestment in the form of upgrades from the national and local governments and relatively improved security measures, the reserve is once again a popular recreational site. The establishment of private security patrols and the increased visitation rate has reinstated a degree of formal and informal social control mechanisms. I found a landscape that is undoubtedly a popular site for many different reasons, and which affords a range of benefits to many different people who would often struggle to find them elsewhere. Many visitors told me how they, and others they knew, were prepared to travel at personal cost and trouble to be in the reserves, validating that this space is revered by many. Although the long driving distances travelled in this case should not be compared to studies analysing walking distances to parks as mentioned in the introduction. The relative Recreational activities such as picnics, braais, fishing and bird watching are prevalent at the reserve, but I also encountered people walking their dogs, cycling, running, boating and even flying toy aeroplanes. This diversity in available activities has visibly helped create a site of bonding between families and friends from surrounding communities. Perhaps most importantly though, it is a place for many to escape the fear and trials associated with living on the Cape Flats.

4.2 Explaining visitor diversity between Strandfontein and the Eastern Shore

The initial survey revealed that the Eastern Shore and Strandfontein cater for generally different visitors seeking different recreation. Strandfontein, predominantly a bird watching site, attracted mostly white visitors with higher monthly incomes. The disparity in incomes between whites and coloureds is the norm throughout South Africa where coloured workers earn on average just 28% of what white workers earn (Stats SA 2010). This is just a minor improvement since apartheid and thus inequality remains high between whites and other races (Stats SA 2010). In other parks where this racial divide is so apparent, it is usually the result of a range of physical and psychological discriminatory barriers (Boone et al. 2009; Byrne and Wolch 2009; Byrne 2012). Given South Africa's history of extreme state-sponsored racism is only a few decades in the past; it is not hard to imagine that such discriminatory barriers might exist at False Bay Nature Reserve.

In this reserve I believe it is important to note that almost all visitors to Strandfontein came for just bird-watching or fishing as opposed to visitors to the Eastern Shore who often cited numerous reasons for coming to the reserve. I believe this difference in recreational preference is almost certainly the main reason for this racial divide between these sections of the reserve. The Strandfontein birding area is comprised of the settling ponds of the Cape Flats Waste Water

Treatment Works, thus providing habitat and food for the birds. This means that bird-watching, fishing and perhaps exercising are the only viable activities. None of these are likely to attract young children and the smell at Strandfontein is probably off-putting, as one of the few non-bird watchers there complained to me. Under apartheid and its authoritarian conservation policies, coloured and other non-white communities were deliberately excluded from visiting, using or benefiting from protected areas (Picard 2003). This isolation would have prevented most people proper opportunities to engage in bird-watching and this legacy may account for the apparent lack of interest in this site by the local coloured community. However, many coloured people I spoke to did not know of the bird area without any signs to guide them to it. Furthermore two first time visitors to Strandfontein, who were not birdwatchers, were highly impressed by the birds in the area. This perhaps bodes well for management's plan to improve signage to the bird area and they may attract more visitors from the adjacent Eastern Shore. More integration to this site may well help to tackle this legacy of apartheid by introducing people to bird-watching who have been traditionally isolated from it. However, as it stand the reserve's statistics show that just 6% of the visitors come to the reserve for bird watching and this statistic is likely just a bit below how many visit Strandfontein considering people fish there as well (Pers. comm. Joanne Jackson 2014). It is thus clear that the Eastern Shore attracts the bulk of False Bay Nature Reserve's visitors. It is also clear that through my pilot survey and interviews that the majority of the Eastern Shore visitors are different from those who visit Strandfontein and come for different reasons. In comparison with some parks (Boone et al. 2009; Byrne and Wolch 2009; Byrne 2012), this reserve is fairly unique in being a space that is able to attract so many different types of people.

4.3 A source of positive feelings, beneficial services and escape from stress

As a large green space, False Bay Nature Reserve provides important ecological benefits of green space such as air purification, wind and noise filtering, urban heat mitigation, protection of biodiversity (Byrne and Sipe 2010; O'Farrell et al. 2012) and perhaps most importantly, water purification. Zeekoevlei is in a near-permanent algal bloom state dominated by cyanobacteria (Matthews et al. 2010), as a function of the fact that it acts as a massive sink for the nutrient run-off from the city, alleviating pressure on other water bodies including the nearby coast and its popular beaches. Besides these environmental services, the reserve crucially provides psychological and social benefits widely regarded as essential to healthy living in urban centres (Chiesura 2004). According to Chiesura (2004) some of the main benefits parks should provide include reducing stress, enhancing contemplation, rejuvenating the city dweller, and providing a sense of peace and tranquillity. In many of my interviews with visitors, each of these benefits has been explicitly described with even the word 'tranquillity' specifically associated with descriptions of the reserve.

Previous studies have highlighted people's need to escape the stressful rhythm of city life and that urban parks provide a space to do so (Sebba 1991; Bingley and Milligan 2004; Chiesura 2004; Grahn and Stigsdotter 2010; Thompson et al. 2012). Visiting the reserve for escaping the stress of family life and that of the workplace were both brought up by visitors. One visitor singled out how the open air of the reserve affords him the solace to think clearly and reflect on things. Visitor responses in this regard make it clear that the reserve is fulfilling these crucial psychological and immaterial benefits that parks are expected to provide (Manning and Moore 2002; Chiesura 2004). Furthermore the importance of the reserve increases when one considers it is the most visited nature reserve in Cape Town's Southern Peninsula (Pers. comm. with Dalton Gibbs 2014).

False Bay Nature Reserve's Eastern Shore is undoubtedly a place of family and social development. On all my days in the field I saw large groups of families and friends braaing and fishing together. Many of them were from the same or adjacent neighbourhoods and evident joyful interactions between families and friends indicate that bonds are being fostered at the site. I observed many women with young children on the picnic lawn and two mothers pointed out that the addition of picnic sites allows them space at the reserve as opposed to just the fishing sites that previously existed. This is encouraging as mothers and caregivers bringing children to parks accounts for a large proportion of visits at other parks around the world (Burgess et al. 1988). This further increases the likelihood that these children will return to the reserve as young adults and during adulthood (Thompson et al. 2007), giving them the chance to receive the numerous social and physical health benefits the reserve can provide. Life for many children on the Cape Flats is extremely challenging. Respondents confirmed to me what local news often reports; that children are regularly targeted for recruitment by gangs (Dziewanski 2014). Even going to school has become extremely precarious for many children as one mother told me her experience of her son's failed recruitment. This has led to some schools installing electric fencing to keep out gangsters and one survey at a school in Manenberg reported that:

“Ninety-seven per cent [of children surveyed] reported hearing gunshots, nearly half had seen the dead body of a stranger and nearly as many the dead body of a relative, or somebody they knew, who had died from unnatural causes” (Standing 2003).

Studies show that it is vital that children are given the space to escape stress in their environments, especially in such trying living conditions. It is possible that by offering a different and natural space the reserve may well be helping, or at least certainly has the potential to mitigate such stress (Sebba 1991; Bingley and Milligan 2004).

4.4 The challenge of green space on the Cape Flats

The added stress of life on the Cape Flats is not restricted to children and perhaps False Bay Nature Reserve's most important affordance is in providing a recreational space of relative safety. Many of the visitors spoke to me of the violent crime that is so pervasive in their neighbourhoods (Lancaster 2013; Achmat 2014). Visitors from Mitchell's Plain, deemed the most dangerous area in the country (Gebhart 2013), were particularly vocal about the issues of safety and security. Visitors were also quick to point out that outdoor recreational opportunities were limited in their neighbourhoods and were often not safe. One could consider this an instance of environmental injustice whereby a large number of people are reporting inadequate access to functional parks (Boone et al. 2009). It should be considered that despite the importance of green space to residents, the city does have an urgent backlog of housing, which was 220 000 households in 2001 and increasing rapidly (Turok 2001). Thus there is a serious on-going trade-off in the city to try and balance its commitments to social development with meeting its biodiversity conservation targets (Ernstson 2013). Unfortunately housing projects have generally been built on greenfield sites (unused green areas) as opposed to brownfield sites due to the urgency of addressing the housing backlog and the relative lack of complications associated with building on greenfield sites (Turok 2011). However, it is not enough to simply designate land for recreation. It is well known that green space and parks are by no means beneficial to their users without proper management (Madge 1997; Boone et al. 2009). Such management would be even more crucial to any green space on the Cape Flats which will ultimately be more vulnerable to becoming a landscape of fear and a centre of crime (Madge 1997; Boone et al. 2009). In this regard it is impressive that management, through some key upgrades, managed to restore faith and pride in the reserve over such a short period of time. Another point to consider is that much of what makes green spaces or parks beneficial to their users is often a result of a rich history of enjoyment. Many park-users value parks due to their histories with them, often making these parks places fixed in their childhood memory (Burgess et al. 1988; Thompsen et al. 2007). Finally, city planners have to also take into account their ambitious commitments to protecting biodiversity (Rebelo et al. 2011). Land claimed for this purpose may not be ideally suited for recreational activities and areas of high biodiversity may not be near residents in need of green space or parks.

It is no doubt challenging to create valued recreational green space in Cape Town, especially in a low-income area such as the Cape Flats where organised violent crime, described as a crisis, makes it especially vulnerable to social ills (Standing 2003). Thus False Bay Nature Reserve as an existing, functional, and by most visitors' perspective, relatively safe space on the Cape Flats gives it immeasurable potential and importance. This study has shown that it remains a place of childhood

memory, where parents bring their children to enjoy the reserve as they did when they were young. Visitors who frequented the reserve as children were quick to reflect on how much they enjoyed it, continuously pointing out to me how much better the water quality used to be. The referral to improved water quality was also brought up in another study in the area (Ernstson 2013). This served to highlight past visitors' concern with the state of the reserve and their desire to see it return to resemble the place so fondly regarded in their childhood memories. The reserve also contains multiple nature reserves with critically endangered vegetation types and is an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA), an important site for conservation (Wright 2014). All these factors should create a large incentive to properly manage and protect False Bay Nature Reserve, and maintain its functioning as a popular recreational site and a crucial space for conservation. As this study has revealed however, the reserve has gone through a period when management was challenging and in the eyes of many visitors was by no means a place of safety.

4.5 Preventing the slippery slope to a landscape of fear

4.5.1 Some are more vulnerable than others

The most concerning theme that emerged through this study was how rapidly the Eastern Shore degenerated into essentially a landscape of crime. Following a trend for parks around the world (Burgess et al. 1988; Madge 1997), False Bay Nature Reserve had its budget slashed and lost the majority of its staff including law enforcement officers. Although it came about for very different reasons, a crucial formal social control mechanism, that of law enforcement for safety purposes, was suddenly lost from the reserve and a situation not much unlike that in Cobbs Creek Park unfolded (Brownlow 2006). This situation in False Bay Nature Reserve arose due to complicated circumstances with large restructuring of the City of Cape Town's bureaucracy and despite the now well-received response of upgrades; they came too late. Due to politics unrelated to the reserve, the services and benefits of the reserve were hindered and this situation is not uncommon (Burgess et al. 1988). A textbook pattern unfolded where regardless of effort from the side of management, much of the reserve became neglected and it became perceived as an increasingly dangerous place (Madge 1997). Despite a general feeling of safety, currently some visitors still have concerns and believe many previous visitors do not come back because of this period. However, I encountered many visitors who had returned since hearing about the upgrades. The rapid rate at which the reserve's safety and visitor perceptions deteriorated is particularly alarming, but should not be surprising given the relatively amplified reality of violent crime in the reserve's surroundings. Given the results from other studies (Valentine 1989; Burgess 1996; Madge 1997), it was not surprising that female visitors were particularly vocal about this period and were by many accounts particularly vulnerable.

South African women are especially exposed to sexual assault. In 2014, 46 253 incidents of rape were reported to police; however, the South African Medical Research Council estimated that only one in nine rapes are reported (Institute for Security Studies and Africa Check 2014). A prominent NGO has declared child rape crisis in the Western Cape (Knoetzee 2014). This general fear permeated into the visitors of the reserve, where one visitor specifically talked about a general perception of visitors that women and children were being assaulted in the reserve (Knoetze 2014). Finally a group of three elderly fishermen were certainly the most concerned about the current safety situation of the reserve. They said they felt constantly vulnerable to attack or to being mugged, a common fear the elderly associated with public spaces (Madge 1997).

4.5.2 A fear of the bush

One of the largest contributions to the fear of the reserve was the overgrowth of alien vegetation referred to by visitors as the “bush”. Unchecked overgrowth of vegetation has led to an increase in crimes against women before (Whitzman 2002) and there are a number of studies that have investigated the relationship between fear, crime and vegetation. Studies have shown that most people feel safest in open, mowed areas and least safe in densely forested ones which they perceive could be hiding criminals (Schroeder and Anderson 1984; Talbot and Kaplan 1984). One’s sense of safety is particularly compromised when viewing distances are severely decreased by thick bush in inner-city landscapes and peri-urban nature areas such as False Bay Nature Reserve (Kuo et al. 1998). This was expressed by one fisherman who felt someone could always be creeping up on him in the surrounding overgrowth. Another study by Michael and Hull (1994) interviewed police and park managers who stated that dense vegetation is indeed regularly used by criminals. The same authors published another study going even further and confirming that criminals themselves, particularly hijackers, lent support to this notion explaining that the vegetation assists in: concealing their selection of a target and their escape from the scene; shielding their examination of stolen goods; and in the disposal of unwanted goods (Michael et al. 1999). This corresponds to the activity Asieff spoke about where cars were often stolen outside the reserve and stripped inside where there was cover and easy escape routes.

Just 15 km away from the Eastern Shore is Wolfgat Nature Reserve sandwiched between the coast of False Bay and the townships of Mitchell’s Plain and Khayelitsha. In his study Wolpe (2005) conducted a comprehensive investigation into its perceived non-use for surrounding residents. Through 601 interviews, he found that residents did not want to utilise the reserve in its current state and that two of the three main barriers identified in the study were crime and the thick bush comprised primarily of alien plants. Furthermore this fear of “bushiness” was considerably more

prevalent among female participants (78%) while the majority of primary school students ranked the thick bush as their primary concern for not using the reserve. The impact and threat of invading alien plants on the indigenous vegetation has for a long time been considered as severe in South Africa (Moran et al. 2013) and its facilitation of crime makes the need to curb infestations all the more important. In Wolpe's (2005) study people living inside Mitchell's Plain felt more threatened by "thick bush" than those living outside of it. Wolpe's (2005) study reinforces my own study in suggesting that this fear is noticeably widespread in suburbs whose residents are a core group of False Bay Nature Reserve's visitors.

4.6 The freedom to not be bothered – A clash with the law

During my time among the visitors of the Eastern Shore there seemed to be a real sense of freedom. Visitors who braai'ed explained to me that there was decent privacy at the reserve as nobody would bother you. For a large contingent of people this referred to the freedom to drink alcohol without being bothered by law enforcement and for many this was the most enjoyable aspect of the reserve. It is important to note that the majority of visitors are from areas with a deep mistrust of the police. Some of this mistrust is an inheritance from when the South African police force previously served as brutal enforcers for a racist government (Lemanski 2006). Another source of mistrust is the perceived collusion between the police and gang bosses on the Cape Flats. In one telephone survey conducted in 1997 only 4% of Cape Flats respondents thought there was no corruption in the police force (Standing 2003).

The visitors' freedom to drink at the reserve is one of the offsets of losing the two permanent law enforcement officers who were so crucial to maintaining security. The reserve now also has no staff with the authority to police alcohol laws or enforce fishermen to acquire permits. However, going by my discussions with management and my own observations this does not seem to be a problem. While I saw the majority of groups, particularly those who were braaing and fishing, drinking alcohol, I only found one person who I would consider inebriated. The culture of drinking at the reserve seemed to just be in line with the widespread cultural tradition in South African, where many people drink alcohol while they braai. The reserve manager also stated that he has yet to have an alcohol-related incident. The activity of braaing is extremely widespread in South Africa, while another study of communities around Zeekoevlei highlighted how important this activity is in building relationships between residents (Ernstson 2013). In this study these braais are described as braai parties by the residents. It is clear that a similar festive atmosphere is utilised by the visitors of the Eastern Shore where birthdays were celebrated with multiple families coming together. By not being bothered by law enforcement, it probably gives visitors a sense of ownership over their space at the reserve. For

them the reserve becomes simply their own garden at home, just with great facilities and beautiful views. The situation with fishing permits could also be tricky for management, as permit enforcement may discourage many fishermen from visiting. Wolpe's (2005) study found that 84% of fishermen, many of whom are from the same suburbs as many of False Bay Nature Reserve's visitors, did not support the need for a permit. Considering the fish in Zeekoevlei are all invasive aliens and are abundant in number, it would probably be more difficult to convince fishermen of the motivation behind permit enforcement. However, Wolpe (2005) also found that fishermen also agreed that only fish large enough (96%), and a certain number (quota) (88%), should be caught.

4.7 Concluding remarks

The core aim of this thesis was to analyse the importance of urban green space in Cape Town focussing on the case of False Bay Nature Reserve. The context of this reserve and the methodology of participant observation allowed for a deeper investigation into this analysis. The reserve is utilised by Capetonians from a wide range of backgrounds, but predominantly by those from a more economically marginalised section of the city, who remain the majority of its residents. A clear conclusion can be made that False Bay Nature Reserve is an invaluable asset to the City of Cape Town and the people who visit it.

This thesis indicates that it is highly likely that if the current period of stability in the reserve is maintained, it will continue to be one of the most utilised nature reserves in Cape Town. Many themes emerged from the findings and perhaps the most important one is that the reserve evidently affords critical space of refuge and recreation for some of Cape Town's most marginalised and vulnerable citizens. Many of the people living around this reserve simply cannot afford to access Cape Town's more exclusive green space (Ernstson 2013). For these people the reserve affords a place of safety in their recreation and in this way goes beyond the generic benefits of most parks (Chiesura 2004); while these are also achieved. As some of the literature suggests, visitors frequently referred to the views and ambiance associated with the nature of the reserve as reasons they value and enjoy it (Manning and Moore 2002). The biodiversity of the reserve, such as its impressive birdlife and abundant fish, continue to attract many people.

However, the other core theme to emerge from this study is that all that is good about the reserve does not change the fact that it is a vulnerable space. It seems that crime on the Cape Flats, while so many live in poverty and unemployment, is unlikely to improve in the near future (Standing 2003; Achmat 2014). Therefore I see no reason why the reserve could not go back to becoming a

landscape of fear once again if safety is once more compromised. Much of the reserve's current operating budget is running off a Government Public Works program whose long-term existence is not guaranteed. I believe the City of Cape Town needs to urgently recognise the value of the reserve and provide management the tools to ensure the reserve and its visitors' safety on a permanent basis. The reserve's managers spoke of the invaluable service of permanent law enforcement officials in the past. Funding must thus be found to restore law enforcement for safety purposes, as well as to protect the reserve's assets currently being vandalised. Increased funding for the reserve will not necessarily solve all the issues facing the reserve, particularly the potential clashes between managers and visitors over alcohol and fishing permits. However, the visitors' generally positive feelings towards the reserve's present mode of operation and the fact that these clashes have yet to happen, is a testament to the current management strategy where visitors do not feel excluded. Management will still have to be creative in managing the alcohol situation in the future considering its prevalence and enjoyment among reserve visitors, although their hands may be tied given the laws of public space in the city. The fishing permit scenario may also present a problem although alternative measures such as quotas and size limits may be more effective. The study reinforces the notion that managers of all parks would do well to properly engage with their park's users so as to understand what aspects of their parks are most valued. In this particular case with respect to law enforcement, many managers might simply rush the process to comply with the law but without consulting their visitors. It is clear that these issues should be handled with care considering the distrust certain visitors expressed towards law enforcement, a distrust that permeates throughout much of the Cape Flats (Standing 2003).

As a final critique management could improve the reserve's receptiveness to the women who visit it. Due to the nature of the patriarchal society we live in, I regret not speaking to more women during this study, as often when I approached a group of visitors the men would speak on their behalf. However, many of the women I did speak to at the reserve were clear in their concerns and the following could be addressed by management:

- a) Many women had young children with them and the provision of a children's play facility, such as a jungle gym, would allow them to relax themselves as many of the men were able to do through their fishing. This would also allow better social interactions that are important for their children.
- b) The toilet facilities were deemed unacceptable by almost every woman I spoke to. One woman's fear of contracting the Ebola virus highlighted what many visitors think of them.

These issues meant that it was pleasing to know that management were aware of these issues when brought up in our interviews. Plans to address them have been set for the future although limited in their haste by the reserve's budget. This kind of adaptive management, where park users' concerns are continually engaged by the reserve's management, can only continue to improve what is already a treasured asset. There are lessons for management of other nature reserves and parks in Cape Town, who could certainly take heed of the importance of safety in the South Africa's most violent city (Achmat 2014). Much of the research to date offers uncritical support for the benefits of urban green space and its associated parks. However, this study challenges this narrative. It shows that parks require specific management strategies that prioritise safety and in doing so promote and ensure inclusivity, particularly in cities with complex pasts and widespread poverty such as Cape Town.

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Appendix A: Survey questionnaire

1. How often do you visit the Park?

- Several times a week Once or more a month
- A couple times a year Once a year
- First time visitor

2. What is your principal reason for visiting the Park?

- Bird watching/hippos Views Picnics/braai Museum/aquarium Fishing
 - Other
-

3. From where have you come from to visit the Park?

4. How did you come to the park?

- Private vehicle Public transport Walked Bicycle
 - Other
-

5. What is your home language?

6. Are you aware that that Rondevlei, Strandfontein and Zeekoevlei are all protected as one park?

7. Do you utilise the other parts of the Park (Besides the one the visitor is in)?

- Rondevlei Strandfontien Zeekoevlei

8. Do you go to these different parts of the park for different reasons and why do you do so?

9. If you could improve the park in any way, what would you do?

Demographic data

Race:

Gender:

Male Female Other _____

Age bracket:

Under 12 12-17 18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65+

Income per month:

No income R1- 1500 R1501 – 4600 R4601- 40000 R40000+ Pensioner

Number in group visiting:

Appendix B: Interview schedule

Opening:

1. Introduce interviewer: My name and position.
2. Introduce study: It's motivation and focus
3. Ask permission to continue with interview
4. Ask initial three questions: how often the visitor frequents the reserve; their principle reasons for visiting; and their home suburb.

Body:

1. Ask participants why they come to the reserve.
 - a. Inquire whether the reserve has specific value to them as opposed to other green/recreational spaces.
 - b. Further investigate their comparisons of the reserve to these other green spaces.
2. If participant is a long-term visitor to the reserve, ask them to describe what changes they've seen over their time coming to the reserve.
 - a. Inquire whether they perceive these changes as positive.
 - b. Inquire when they considered the reserve was at its most convivial.
3. Ask participants what concerns them about the reserve.
 - a. Inquire about concerns surrounding the reserve's internal management.
 - b. Inquire about concerns outside or surrounding the reserve that affect their time in the reserve.
 - c. Inquire about participants safety concerns and the roots of those safety concerns.

Closing:

1. Thank participants for their interviews.
2. Offer participants the opportunity to ask further questions relating to the study and how their interviews will be used.
3. Ask whether participants would like to be referred to by their actual names or pseudonyms in the write up of the study.