**Rogue Urban Connections:**

# An Ethnography of Trust and Social Relations in Observatory, Cape Town

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## Abstract

It is important for present and future urban research to take into account the subtle dynamics and social relations at work in the city. There are alternative and beneficial forms of living together in the supposedly ‘disordered’ urban space, which are mobilised in order to function in a difficult, changing, and hopeful environment. It is especially pertinent to uncover the complex dynamics at work in everyday life in African cities, as they continue to undergo transformations. In the context of segregation, separation and uncertain futures people create and mobilise intricate ways of connecting to people and spaces in the city. In order to study the intricacies in a South African urban environment, this study examines how people use trust and distrust in a ‘disorderly’ urban space. I argue that beneficial social relations that are based on trust and distrust manifest in a liminal space, as is especially exemplified by ‘strangers’ in and of the environment (Simmel, [1908] 1971). Furthermore, I posit that there is a need to trust *liminally* and *spatially* in order to be able to function in an ‘unruly’, ‘rogue’ environment, specifically Observatory, Cape Town. This analysis focuses on five types of trust: personal, social, institutional, liminal, and spatial trust, and how they are mobilised in the suburb of Observatory, Cape Town. These forms of trust are paramount to functioning in a city, in which many people are unknown others with whom one needs to live alongside. In order to study this abstract concept, an endogenous anthropological methodology was used to observe how and why people use ‘trust’ in the ‘unruly’, liminal urban environment of Observatory. Ethnographic qualitative data-collection was vital to this project: namely participant-observation, interviews, open-ended discussions, and examination of what is said in popular media and discussion on the suburb. ‘Walking’ in the suburb provided a way to examine ethnographically how trust and distrust function on the everyday city streets. Furthermore, my positionality as a ‘stranger’ (Simmel, [1908] 1971) contributed positively in my study of liminality in Observatory, especially as an anthropological researcher. I conclude that there are beneficial forms and methods of trusting to be found in the liminal people, spaces, and situations in a city. Subtle and important forms of collectivity, agency, and autonomy are to be found in the ‘disorder’ of African cities.

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# Chapter 1 – Introduction

## 1.0. Abstract

In order to provide an ethnographic account of the 'lived urbanisms' in a South African city, I examine the nature of trust in the urban environment of Observatory in Cape Town. I believe that there are intricate social relations which are formed in a somewhat 'rogue' space that rely on trust and distrust in order to manifest. I posit that these relations are particularly highlighted by 'strangers' (Simmel, [1908] 1971) in the area. 'Spatial' and 'liminal' trust are especially useful in the supposed 'rogue' environment. My analysis focuses on these two types of trust, as well as personal, social, and institutional trust, and how they are mobilised in the suburb of Observatory. I hope to contribute to the wide and complex body of literature on 'African' urbanities through my discussion on how trust undermines *and* entrenches social boundaries, while producing beneficial social relations simultaneously (Banks, 2011; Besteman, 2008; Chabal, 2009; Chabal and Daloz, 1999; Cross 1999 and 2001; Hentschel, 2007 and 2013; Hentschel and Berg, 2010; Lemanski, 2004; Locatelli and Nugent, 2009; Mbaye, 2013; Mbembe and Nuttall (eds.), 2008; Oldfield, 2005; Pieterse and Simone (eds.), 2013; Robins 2002a and 2005c; Ross (eds.), 2010; Salo, 2003). I wished to study the everyday life of people in a 'liminal' space to demonstrate how people experience the dynamism of the urban environment, especially their capacity to continue living and functioning in a 'rogue' urban space. In order to understand ordinary and important formations of trust I frame my research around the 'stranger', the various types of trust, and the 'liminal' and 'rogue', as I will elaborate on in the following introduction.

## 1.1 Research Question

South African urban environments are often marked by a history of segregation; present boundaries between races, classes, income groups, social groups and nationality; and a supposed 'disorderly' environment. However, there are many subtle forms of living in a space that is said to have a certain amount of disorder and impermanence. There are intricate ways in which people manage to live their everyday lives, and to keep living in an environment which people fear. Through ethnographic examination of Observatory, Cape Town, I hope to find out how people survive in a 'disordered', and 'feared' space. Furthermore, I wish to analyse how people overcome social boundaries that are often written onto the urban environment. In order to do this,

I research people who are ‘strangers’ in the suburb, the aspects of the suburb that make it ‘rogue’ and ‘liminal’, and the mobilisation of (dis)trust as a tool for survival in the city.

### 1.2. Observatory, Cape Town

Observatory, Cape Town, is somewhat overshadowed by Devil’s Peak, Groote Schuur Hospital, and the strip of Main Road that runs through the top third of the suburb. Observatory stretches from the foot of the mountain to the Liesbeek River. The N2 highway going out of Cape Town to the east marks the southern border of Observatory, dividing it from Mowbray. On one side of Main Road, Observatory, there are smaller convenience stores and blocks of flats, but there are only fast food restaurants and corner shops on the other; and industrial and abandoned buildings border the road. The large hospital complex dominates Main Road. Three graveyards in which homeless people sleep appear next to the road. This strip of Cape Town’s long Main Road does not suggest that Observatory is a lively residential suburb; it overshadows Observatory and contributes to the tension surrounding and permeating through the suburb. There are many people on Main Road, each of whom offers glimpses into Observatory. Most people have something to say about the suburb, even if they are only passing through it, or merely walking or driving down Main Road. There are a number of people who live on Main Road: people in the flats above Adult World and the never-open dress shop, somewhat seasonal homeless people who base themselves – and live – in the graveyards, and students from ‘Obz Square’, among others. Although many people leave Main Road at night, there is always at least one silhouette of a beggar at the traffic lights near the hospital and at the last road in Observatory, before Salt River; ambulances and cars visit the petrol stations; the Pick ‘n Pay is open until ten o’clock at night; and, until after midnight, people and cars queue for food at the McDonald’s and KFC at the intersection of Main and Lower Main, the main road of Observatory. This intersection is one of the many places in Observatory that demonstrates Observatory’s unruly character. Traffic laws are infrequently obeyed here, as is the case on Observatory’s narrow, populated maze of roads. People use the lane that faces on-coming traffic at the lights, as though Lower Main Road is a one-way; pedestrians cross the road in a haphazard manner; and people often turn into traffic moving straight. Although there is much movement in and out of the suburb, Observatory does not have a huge population, although it is relatively densely populated. I believe that the numbers of people who are visible, and more importantly the regularity of human occupancy, are representative of the ‘liminal space’ of and in Observatory.

Observatory is a suburb in Cape Town, between Salt River and Woodstock to the north, and Mowbray to the south (see Map). Groote Schuur Hospital lies on the western border and to the east is Valkenberg Psychiatric Hospital. The suburb began to grow in 1893, 66 years after the South African Astronomical Observatory was built on Valkenberg Farm in 1827. Robinson (2011) discusses that Observatory was never part of the greater 'villages' in Cape Town and occupied a space between two of the municipalities of the Cape at the turn of the century. Furthermore, Observatory was a 'grey' area under the apartheid Urban Areas Act and other such racial laws, which I will discuss in the following essay.

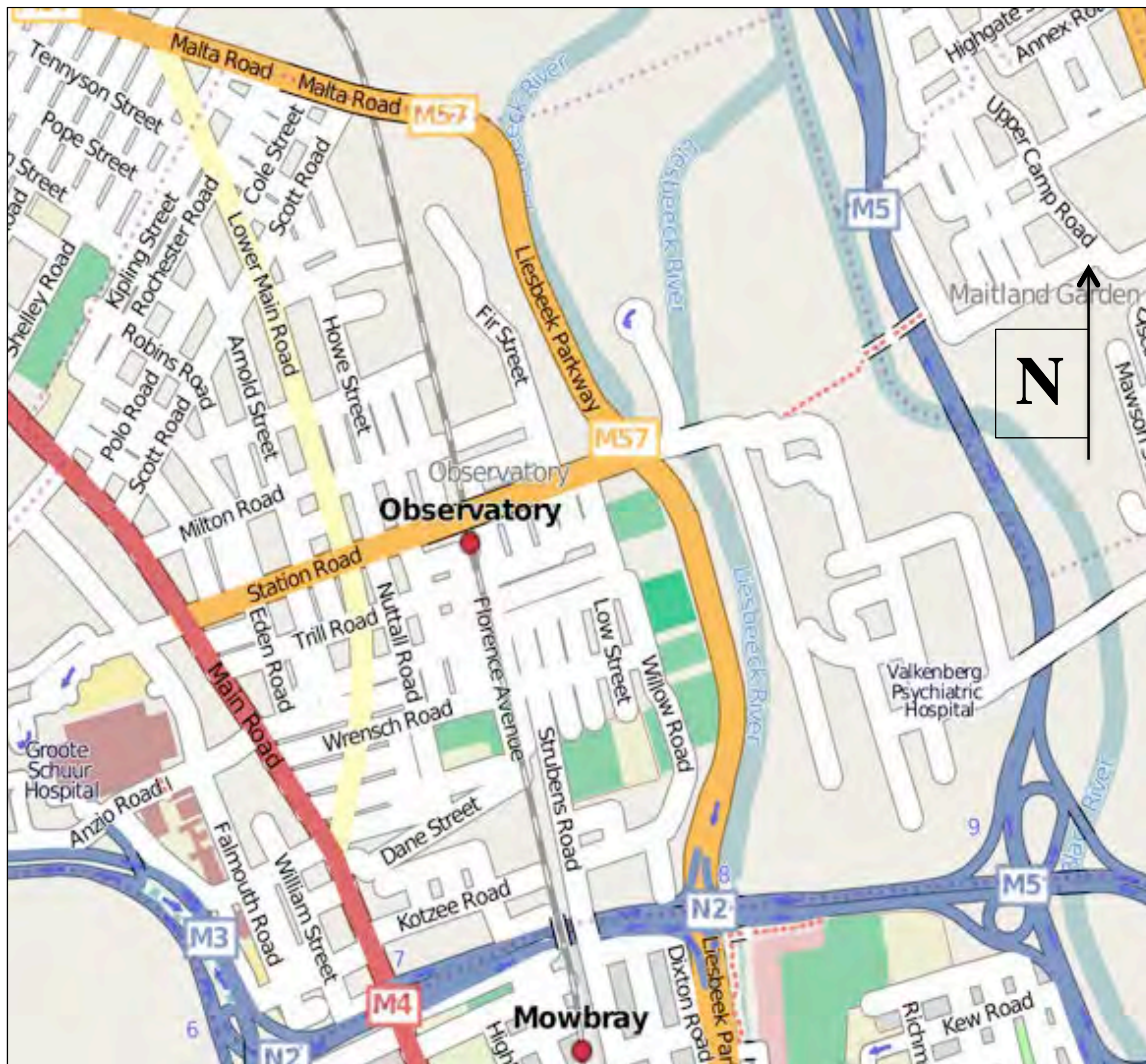


Figure 1: Map of Observatory[1]

Throughout my examination, I will consider how the division and categorisation of the South African cityscape (see Judin and Vladislavic, 1998; Mbembe and Nuttall, 2008) causes

[1] Map from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Observatory,_Cape_Town#mediaviewer/File:Observatory_OSM_map.svg.

societal demarcations and invocations of trust and distrust according to the meanings of power written, over and in time, on the urban environment. These structures of power operating in the urban environment will also lead me to consideration of South Africa's history of power dynamics, as well as those in play at present, within a context of globalisation and neoliberalism. I continue a discussion of Observatory's history – geographical, social, and political – throughout the course of my essay, especially with regard to how the space is liminal and how its history has affected people's experiences of trust and their experiences in and with the space. This is especially important when considering the state of the post-apartheid city, and thus I am discussing my arguments on trust with reference to Cape Town's history, too. The history of Cape Town, and South Africa, and its inhabitants has affected and enriched my research in many ways, on which I will elaborate throughout this essay. I believe that people's connection-making is particular to a nexus of history, politics, society, and place; and that this is especially visible in a place whose inhabitants are aware of its, and by extension their, liminality.

Victor Turner made famous the term 'liminality' in 1967, basing his arguments on Van Gennep's *Rites de Passage* (1909). Turner argued that 'liminality' occurs in the temporal and spatial context "betwixt and between" situations. Thomassen (2009: 40) describes liminality as "the experience of finding oneself at a boundary or in an in-between position, either spatially or temporally". For example, a ritual from childhood to adulthood, a graduation ceremony, or an event that unsteadies boundaries and hierarchies would be liminal moments and periods; an "epoch" state of liminality includes lengthy wars, political and social unpredictability, and "immigrant group membership (betwixt and between old and new culture)" (Thomassen, 2009: 49). A time of carnival, in which normative structures are destabilised, is a moment of liminality; a point on which I elaborate in Chapter 3. Even though 'liminality' is a term that is often used in anthropology, and has become a convenient and superficial way to explain phenomena that are unclear or ritualistically "betwixt and between", I think that the somewhat 'easy' idea allows for deep investigation into my fieldsite. Even though a key feature of liminality is transition and transformation from one state to another, the state of liminality itself can be become permanent in a variety of contexts. Szakolczai (2015: 156) argues that "a real-life situation of transition… starts by weakening and eventual suspension of the ordinary, taken-for-granted structures of life", but this suspension can become the state in which people live their ordinary lives. Honwana (2014: 19), for example, proposes that "most young Africans today are living in a period of suspension between childhood and adulthood", which she terms "waithood". Fuh (2012) and Simone (2005) discuss cases of African youth who are finding ways in live and counteract marginality in an urban environment that is inherently unstable for them: forms of limbo become

permanent. After undertaking my research I decided that the use of the term to describe my fieldsite was paramount, and I hope to add to the ideas on the 'liminal' by applying it to my research, as much that is geographically, politically, and socially liminal became clear. There is a concretisation of liminality through urban dynamics in my fieldsite. Furthermore, I attempt to address the argument that liminality can "push social theory in new directions… for it serves to conceptualise moments when the relationship between structure and agency is not easily resolved" (Thomassen, 2009: 42).

I believe that the liminality in and of Observatory is representative of the 'precarity' and ruggedness of 'African cities' (see Locatelli and Nugent, 2009; Simone, 2009; Pieterse and Simone, 2013; Farvacque-Vitkovic and Godin, 1998). My proposition that Observatory is a liminal space underscores my arguments on Observatory, too, as a 'rogue', 'disorderly' space (see Chabal and Daloz, 1999). Observatory is often represented as an ambivalent place of certainties and uncertainties, and frequently seen as chaotic, dynamic, and drunken. People live in suspense in the area, as well as in the suspended reality of the liminal space. An understanding of why this space attracts, distracts and frightens through what is often referred to as its 'ruggedness', and the ways in which it both conforms to and differs from the above perceptions, elicits an understanding of lived experiences in 'African cities'. The liminality and rogueness contribute to an environment in which currents of (dis)trust become visible. I argue that these currents of trust open, close, and form public spaces in the city, and the actors of this trust use it in their social relations, both to others in a space and to the space itself. I posit that trust is developed and fermented through different relations which emerge in public city spaces in communities where individuals need to experience daily life, and that this trust is important and relevant in the city.

### 1.3. Trust

Kerstin Bauer, Gregor Dobler and Till Förster (2007) describe trust as a "societal resource that permeates all spheres of everyday life and enables individuals to interact with others and institutions" (see also Graeber (2004) on trust and social relations). Russell Hardin (2002: 9) argues that, "trust is generally a three-part relation: A trusts B to do X" (see Dasgupta, 2000; McLeod, 2011; and O'Neill, 2002). Trust, as expressed in Georg Simmel's relevant work (1858-1918), "combines good reasons with faith" (Möllering, 2001: 411). I hope to examine trust not only as a "societal resource that permeates" everyday life, but as one that creates and adjusts everyday narratives, and relies on an intricate form of 'faith'. Bauer, Dobler and Förster (2007)

posit, in their study of post-conflict societies, that there are four types of trust. What they term basic social trust is the trust that makes social life possible: "social life would be inexistent without the general assumption that unknown others one meets in everyday life will not be hostile to us or at least will not harm or kill us" (Bauer, Dobler and Förster, 2007: 2). The second form of trust they mobilise is interpersonal trust, which is the "trust in already existing relationships" (ibid). Institutional trust "combines two aspects, one that focuses on persons and another that concentrates on their position within society" (see also Robins (2005c) on trust in public institutions in South Africa). Finally, normative trust is the trust of norms, when one "assumes that a norm is valid for all cases of a kind if it has proved its validity in one such case". They argue that interpersonal trust and institutional trust are individually experienced, whereas basic social trust and normative trust are collectively managed. These four types of trust are pivotal in managing everyday life in an urban environment, however I believe that there are two more types of trust that are relevant in my study: spatial and liminal trust, both of which are individually and collectively experienced, both of which are composed of elements of experiential and inductive reasoning. I posit that spatial trust is an amalgamation of social, interpersonal, normative, and institutional trust that is shown by people *in* and *of* a particular space. For example, a general lack of trust *of* Observatory is shown, often with no rational reasoning and based on fallacy. There is also a lack of trust when people are presented with certain situations while *in* the suburb; situations that may not be distrusted in a different physical location. Liminal trust is the trust found in a 'permanently' liminal space, and a kind of trust that is difficult to see on a trust/distrust binary – it is 'betwixt and between' (Turner, 1967) binaries. Furthermore, this trust can be directed towards liminal characters. I further this discussion on the four types of trust, and especially my proposed two other forms of trust, through discussion of Georg Simmel's arguments on 'the stranger' ([1908] 1971) and his proposition that there is a "further element… that is required to explain trust and its unique nature" (Bauer, Dobler and Förster, 2007: 2). Möllering (2001: 403) conceptualises trust, through Simmel's work, as a "mental process of three elements": expectation, interpretation and suspension. He argues that expectation in trust is the "state of favourable expectation regarding other people's actions and intentions" (ibid: 404), and interpretation is interpreting the "identifiable bases of trust" and the "recognition of affect besides reason, and system trust besides personal trust". He continues to envision "suspension (leap) as a mediator between interpretation (bases) and expectation (function)" (ibid.) Suspension is the element of the processes of trust and trusting that Möllering argues is Simmel's additional part of trust that needs to be included more in research and knowledge building around trust. He states that "suspension enables the leap of trust" and it is "the mechanism of bracketing the

unknowable, thus making interpretive knowledge momentarily certain" (2001: 403). Suspension, then, enables the leap of trust in the proposed six types of trust. I have already suggested that Observatory is a place of suspension: a place in which suspension is present in the space and the people. The 'rogueness' of the space mirrors the air of suspension. Thus, the suspension in the mental processes of trust mirrors the state and experience of suspension in Observatory, which in turn mirrors the space's liminality

The tension in the space of Observatory makes visible the societal resource of 'trust'. The suspension in the mental processes of trust mirrors the state and experience of suspension in Observatory, which in turn mirrors the space's liminality. Pieterse argues for affective consciousness as "one of the most promising conceptual developments" (2013: 29), and this highlights why it is important to study trust as more than just the response to and mobilisation of norms. Affective consciousness is the "experience of feelings or emotions… [which respond] before any cognitive reaction can be triggered" (ibid: 30). This relates to 'suspension' in trust, too. Trust can be experienced as a 'body' moves in and through space, by that space and others who move in and through the space: "a body's ability to affect or be affected… isn't something fixed" (Massumi, 2002 cited in Pieterse, 2013: 30). Furthermore, the affective conscious response of trust contributes to the inscriptions on space, the knowledge of space, and the meaning attached to space; these, too, are dynamic processes. Throughout this essay I will discuss the various experiences of life in Observatory that demonstrate how and why people trust and distrust, which factors lead to these feelings and the resulting actions – and vice versa – when living in the city, and which of these factors are present in Observatory, especially because of its liminality and rogueness.

In order to function in an urban environment, which many people do, there must be a certain amount of trust – and distrust – in the city, and in the people who inhabit and move in the spaces. Strawson (1962: 3) argues that in each of our connections to others we " [attach a] kind of importance… to the attitudes and intentions towards us of those who stand in these relationships to us, and of the kinds of reactive attitudes and feelings to which we ourselves are prone" (emphasis in the original). It is due to this attached importance that I believe that studying trust seems integral to a study of an urban environment. It is through trust that forms of reciprocity and belonging are negotiated, especially in particular urban spaces. The assemblage of social connections that become visible when discussing trust, reciprocity and belonging are integral to forming an understanding of life in an urban environment. Sassen posits that 'cityness' is found in the "intersection of differences that actually produces something new" (2010: 14) and, consequently, those public spaces that are not designed or demarcated as such, "can seem

chaotic" and by "looking at such chaos opens up to the possibility for interventions that have to do with making public space" (ibid: 15). The chaos of Observatory provides an arena in which trust becomes visible, but dynamic social interactions become visible *because* Observatory is chaotic, and the forms and ways of (dis)trust are themselves chaotic and create a particular space. This is important for understanding cities and urbanity, as it speaks to notions of people's understanding of the urbanity in which they live, how society functions in a specific space, and how certain factors intensify or inhibit trust. This is of utmost importance to questions around urban development, urban management, poverty, inequality, equality, urban migration and mobility, and urban resources.

### 1.4. Rogueness

I wish to develop an understanding of the moments in which Observatory builds and encourages or inhibits feelings of trust, and what happens in order to enable this (dis)trust. There is little to suggest Observatory's true 'convivial' (see Nyamnjoh, 2007; Overing and Passes, 2000; and Shaftoe, 2008) nature on the stretch of Main Road that runs through it. However, the Adult World, the taxis and the drunken crowds at the fast food restaurants late at night hint at what happens in the suburb on a regular basis. From about midnight, it differs daily, the doors to McDonald's and KFC shut, but the drive-through still operates. People walk through the drive-through, interspersed with myriad taxis and a few cars, usually with a designated driver. There are quite often people getting food who have been up working all night at one of the bars or restaurants in Observatory, or studying throughout the evening. The people interact with each other in the queue for fast, greasy, easy food. They move between cars to talk to people they know. The taxi drivers chat as if they know every single taxi driver in Cape Town, which they often seem to do, and by name. A young black man out with a group of his friends, 20-something women and men of all races, danced provocatively against the bonnet of my car when my housemate and I went to get KFC late one evening. We had music on and our windows open, and when he and his friends started to dance, we turned up the contemporary popular rock song and he started to dance jovially for us. The cashiers at KFC laughed and moved their shoulders in time to the music. The man danced all the way through the next song, until he got his food and walked happily away into Observatory.

The disorderliness of these frequent late night experiences, 'shenanigans' and 'adventures' as they are described by a number of people, is congruent to the disorderliness of Observatory, and indeed Cape Town and the city as a whole. However, "under the seeming

disorder of the city… is a marvellous order for maintaining the safety of the street and the freedom of the city" (Jacobs, [1961] 2011: 60). It seems that efforts to 'tame the disorderly city' (Murray, 2008) could lead to unintended consequences for a unique, dynamic way of negotiating experiences in the city, and surviving and flourishing in discordant situations. The rogue city gives up a number of human interactions, both that could be construed as positive and negative, as helpful or harmful (see Sennett in Brook, Mooney and Pile, 1999: 5). The city is further filled with 'rogue intensities', which:

> "Roam the streets of the ordinary. There are all the lived, yet unassimilated, impacts of things, all the fragments of experience left hanging. Everything left unframed by the stories of what makes a life pulse at the edges of things, all the excesses and extra effects unwittingly propagated by plans and projects of all kinds surge, experiment, and meander. They pull things in their wake, they incite truth claims, confusion, acceptance, endurance, tall tales, circuits of deadness and desire, dull and risky moves and the most ordinary forms of watchfulness" (Stewart in Pieterse, 2013: 12).

The 'rogue intensity', the rogue lived experience in an urban environment, is integral to Observatory. 'Rogueness' is a state between dangerous and safe, harmful and harmless, and 'normal' and 'abnormal'. I tease out this term to describe that which would often be seen as strange, slightly off-kilter. I believe that trust becomes visible in the 'rogue' spaces, people, and situations in Observatory. The 'rogue' is not that which is normatively alternative, overtly brave, or blatantly marginal. Rather, I mobilise 'rogue' and 'rogueness' as ways to describe a wide range of 'strangeness' that is apparent in the disordered, liminal space of Observatory; specifically to that which advances (dis)trust in the urban. Owing to its status as a liminal space, Observatory is 'unassimilated'; it is 'left hanging'. Although Observatory has unique and specific dynamics, every 'section' of a city has these rogue intensities. Every city, too, has its own lived urbanisms, its own rogue intensities. I aim to examine how the specific rogue intensities in Observatory operate, and how these intensities manifest in how trust flows through the suburb in the midst of a city's 'disorder'.

### 1.5. Research Participants

The nature and content of my research called for interaction with a great many people. However, there are a number of participants who feature often in this ethnography, and should be introduced briefly. Paul is a white Capetonian who grew up in Observatory. He is in his sixties and is a city official. He provided a historical commentary on Observatory, showed me many

points of interest in the suburb, and offered insights into certain arenas in the urban space. Adrienne, my neighbour, was also a pivotal participant who came from a similar social location as Paul. Another person with whom I interacted a lot is Moegamat, a low-income coloured man from the Cape Flats, the sandy area that is made up of zones that were demarcated as 'coloured' during apartheid. Many of the employees in the small shops in Observatory are from similar areas. Thierry is a man from Côte d'Ivoire who works at the petrol station on Main Road and lives in a block of flats in the Pick and Pay shopping centre. He was one of the many people who had come from elsewhere in the world, particularly North Africa, to find stable work and have settled down in Observatory. Thierry helped me in my understanding of the subtle dynamics of the suburb and proved one of the friendliest people I met in Observatory, and especially showed a keen interest in my research and people's general functioning in an urban environment. Finally, Veronica, a coloured homeless, *bergie* – I will discuss this term at length in Chapter 3 – woman was integral to my research. She provided an illuminating, unconventional, and unexpected narrative on the suburb. The editor of *Obslife* also provided me with much information on Observatory.

Furthermore, the people who informed this research frequently identified themselves as part of one social group over another, in terms of their positionality in Observatory. Some of the 'groups' that were mentioned were: young professionals, young 'creatives', undergraduate students, postgraduates, international students, domestic workers, young white residents, young black residents, young coloured residents, young families, long-term residents of Observatory, older white 'hippies', drug dealers, *bergies*, homeless people, an LGBTI community, and local restaurant and bar owners, foreign small businessmen. Of course, it is problematic to identify 'groups' in an environment, but these supposed groups are often apparent in the suburb and show social layout in the urban space, and can be somewhat mapped onto Observatory. Indeed, one of the first things I asked many of my interlocutors to do was to draw a map of or tell me about the physical social geography in the area. Appendix 1 is a map that I drew based on my participants' maps, thoughts and knowledge of the area, as well as one that highlights the attributes of Observatory that I discuss in my research. Along with the maps and ethnographic fieldwork, I drew on a variety of sources to inform my research. I was shown poetry, photographs, written stories and memorabilia of Observatory by my participants, and I used the physical environment, such as architecture, graffiti and streets, to enhance my research. The participants and data in this research, then, come from a variety of backgrounds and contexts, as will be discussed throughout this dissertation.

## 1.6. Chapter Outline

In order to argue that trust is an integral part to life in an urban environment, especially a seemingly 'rogue' environment, I am framing my dissertation around Simmel's 'stranger', liminality, and trust.

I begin my dissertation with a discussion of the methodology in terms of the 'stranger'. A very careful anthropological approach was employed to examine the dynamism of trust and the city; particularly as the over-ordering of it could be detrimental to the disordered, yet beneficial, forms of trust and everyday life in the city. My methodology was important to my research as it informed how I understood the space I researched, moved through, and inhabited. The second section of my first chapter is centred on some of the 'strangers' that are found in Observatory. I discuss the historical background of Observatory that relates directly to 'strangers' in the area, as well as its position of liminality. This includes mention of the physical and social structures in the area, which are still rather historically bound. I continue my discussion on the 'strangers' in Observatory throughout my paper, although my initial ethnographic information on this topic is presented in this section. I continue to a discussion of 'strangers' in the city, as well as the typical areas of the city in which pertinent forms of living become visible, in section 2.3. I use Jane Jacobs's ideas on streets and sidewalks ([1961] 2011) to start an examination of those in Observatory. 'Strangers' become particularly visible, and participate, in these public spaces. I propose that strangers problematise and adjust the binary[2] between 'insiders' and 'outsiders', especially due to their characteristic liminality. The social relations which are mobilised through trust that become visible through the stranger show beneficial and unexpected ways to respond to the urban environment. Instead of seeking assimilation and integration the strangers in Observatory create a novel arena in which to participate in an unruly, hierarchical suburb. It is especially important for future city developments to include understanding of the hugely variable forms of collectivity in urban spaces, in order to promote socially productive and equal city spaces and undo the negative spatial politics of the past. Even though I discuss the 'stranger' in the city, often used in terms of the in/out binary, I wish to focus on collectivity in the urban environment. Thus, this is not a discussion of assimilation into Observatory, but of people who challenge the need to assimilate, and use other methods to integrate positively. Jacobs's thoughts on the "safety of the street" lead to the final section in this chapter, in which I present arguments on the fear and trust binary, and how fear and trust are mobilised in Observatory. I discuss the

[2] See Levi-Strauss (1983) on binaries.

theory behind the trust/fear dichotomy and how this is presented in Observatory, with specific reference to the most discussed topics that cause fear in the suburb. This initial chapter, Chapter 2, thus discusses the methodological and theoretical framework of the 'stranger', using ethnographic examples.

In Chapter 3 I continue my arguments around the 'stranger' and the liminal figure ethnographically. In order to do so, I first present spatial and liminal trust. In this section, I discuss the attributes of Observatory that make it unruly and rogue, as well as 'liminal', and how this results in a mobilisation of liminal and spatial trust. It is the 'rogueness' and liminality of Observatory that make trust particularly visible in the suburb. I include mention of the 'carnivalesque' in Observatory and how the instances of it found in the suburb contribute to an understanding of the urban environment. In the second section of this chapter I present an ethnographic narrative of the marginal people found in the suburb. Some of the marginal figures occupy a liminal space, too. I discuss the disposability of people with reference to Judith Butler (2013), before discussing those who are traditionally seen as completely unable to contribute to a productive neo-liberal environment, and thus are 'disposable' and 'non-human' (Biehl, 2004): the mentally-ill, with especial reference to the white homeless man in Observatory, who known as 'Crazy Colin'. I follow this with an ethnographic presentation of the homeless population of Observatory, and the people who are seen as marginal. In Section 3.3, I discuss the ways in which sexuality and sexual practices, drugs, and alcohol make visible the 'rogueness' in the suburb. The ways people speak about, the ways people act towards, and the constant presence of sex, drugs, and alcohol in Observatory are pivotal in understanding what makes the suburb rogue. Although these three activities are rather normatively considered to be 'unruly', I believe that it is instead the problematizing of social order that these activities bring that makes these activities 'rogue' in the way that it is defined in this paper. Furthermore, sex, drugs and alcohol make visible trust and distrust in Observatory.

My final chapter moves onto the academic theories of trust and their manifestations in Observatory, many of which I discuss in my first two ethnographic chapters. I also make mention of the distrust that is caused by the two public hospitals that border the suburb, which is contradictory to how the act of 'caring' should cause trust. The hospitals also induce a certain intermingling of the private and the public in Observatory. Section 4.2 discusses institutional trust in my fieldsite, with specific reference to the Observatory Improvement District (OBSID). Finally, I present an ethnographic section on the personal and social trust found in Observatory. I discuss the routine activities that contribute to trust in the suburb and the people who show interpersonal trust and how it is mobilised. This chapter comments on the ways in which

(dis)trust manifests in everyday life, and the ways people navigate their social actions on the basis of (dis)trust.

# Chapter 2 – The Stranger and the Sidewalk: Trust in the City

## 2.0. Abstract

In this chapter, I frame my research with the concept of the 'stranger'. I use this concept as a methodological tool, as well as a way in which to enter a discussion on 'strangers' and the concurrent trust that is mobilised in the urban environment. Georg Simmel's discussions have been used in much literature on the urban environment (see Bauman 1998; Bremner 2010; Felton 2012; and Marotta 2010), especially in relation to integration and assimilation into an unfamiliar space. I believe that many important forms of social interaction are to be seen in the liminality of the stranger, as there are many strangers who are never assimilated, nor wish to be. As mentioned above, I move away from this understanding to discuss the circles of association that 'strangers' form as liminal characters. Simmel's propositions provide a theoretical springboard off which to study the liminality found in Observatory. Simmel's concept, and congruent papers on the anthropologist as a 'stranger' (for example, see Powdermaker, 1967), afforded a methodological framework. My use of Simmel's concept to describe my own positionality as a researcher in Observatory also speaks to topics regularly discussed in contemporary anthropological theory: namely that of the debate of the status and method of anthropology.

In the second section of this chapter I discuss 'strangers' in Observatory. I present a historical background of Observatory, and discuss the present manifestations of the 'stranger' in the suburb. There is much mobilisation of trust in social interactions that concern the stranger (see Bicchieri, Duffy and Tolle: 2004). I will discuss 'strangers' as participants in a performative urban space, with reference to Jane Jacob's propositions on the sidewalk as an integral part of the city ([1961] 2011), with specific reference to how safety is managed in the streets of Observatory in Section 2.3. From this I move to a presentation of the correlation between trust and fear and how distrust and fear are often equated. I mention the aspects of Observatory that incite fear.

## 2.1. Researching trust: the 'stranger' as method

Simmel ([1908] 1971: 143) posits that 'the stranger' appears between the states of detachment and attachment to a space. The stranger is a "potential wanderer" (ibid), and even though he[3] is "within a group whose boundaries are analogous to spatial boundaries… he does not belong in it initially and that he brings qualities into it that are not and cannot be, indigenous to it" (ibid).

[3] I will refer to 'the stranger' with the masculine third person pronoun 'he', based on Simmel's use of this pronoun.

The connotations of the word ‘indigenous’ are varied and some are highly problematic. For the purposes of this essay, I will refer to those that were born and/lived in Observatory for an extended period of time, and those who remark that they are from and of Observatory. There are also some inhabitants of Observatory who are very unlikely to leave, and have little or no social or spatial connections to their prior place of inhabitancy, to whom I will also refer as ‘indigenous’ inhabitants. This is very important, as I will illustrate below, when discussing trust with reference to liminal people, and the differences between marginality and the embodiment of the ‘stranger’. The dynamics found in the suburb suggest that there is an importance attached to one’s geographical history. Paradoxically, many of the figures who appear to many of my participants as indigenous residents based on their activities, ideas, and participatory action. The interest in one’s own and others’ geographical histories and movements is strongly related to the high numbers of ‘wanderers’ in and to the suburb; those who are fully unattached to the space, and will state that they come from elsewhere, and are going to return to this other place. Their participation in the area is important, yet transient nonetheless. The participation and action of the ‘walking’ *stranger* figure as a person who uses the streets and thus negotiates and mobilises social activities was central to my understanding of the dynamics of trust in Observatory. There became clear a difference between those who use the streets as an arena of social action, and those who come into Observatory from elsewhere and who will be leaving. As Simmel’s arguments on the ‘stranger’ rely on the understanding of the wanderer as a figure who is unattached to the particular “point in space” ([1908] 1971: 143), I will use the term in this way. However, the ‘walker’ – not the passive *flâneur* – (Debord, 1998), was relevant to my methodology and initial understanding of the suburb of Observatory.

Observatory, with its truncated and narrow streets, brightly painted Victorian houses, and its air of non-permanence is a “bohemian periphery” (Wark, 2011: vii). In his book on the Situationist International movement, Wark (ibid: 15) quotes Pomerand’s (1950) description of Saint-Germain, Paris, as a “drowned drunk peacefully floating from one bridge to another… it is where American anarchist millionaires cross paths with swells who’s wealth lies in castles built beneath the bridges”. The image invoked by Pomerand describes, somewhat prophetically, Observatory. I will explore these images at length throughout this essay. These images of Saint-Germain were what lead to the Situationist Movement in Paris in the 1950s, of which Guy Debord was a part. Wark (2011: 22) argues that “a situationist ethnography has its own distinct methods” and the situationists “are ethnographers of their own difference, cartographers of an attitude to life… this life did not lie outside the modern, Western one, but inside, in the fissures of its cities”. The situationists wished to discover a different city “via a calculated drifting (*dérive*)

through the old" (ibid: 17). Wark argues, "theirs would be a city of play, love, adventure, made for arousing new passions" (ibid.). I posit that in Observatory there are a wide variety of people who drift, unconsciously discovering, creating or disrupting an apparent 'different' space. I believe that *these* 'drifters' constitute many of Observatory's inhabitants; not merely those who physically wander through the suburb, but some of those who reside, own houses, work, or socialise in the area. I advance that many people who make a connection to or in the space is a 'drifter', who has entered into a liminal space and has adopted a certain way of experiencing life in the space. My discussions on the various forms of trust are deeply entrenched in these ideas of wandering and Simmel's concept of 'the stranger'. Furthermore, the way I approached my research was informed by arguments on 'walking the city', taking on the role of the 'walker' myself, and by understanding the specific forms of liminality of the seemingly unbounded, 'landless' person, of which there are many in Observatory.

De Certeau's explanation of the *Wandersmanner* [wanderer] illustrates the importance to knowledge the practice of walking the city is:

> "The ordinary practitioners of the city live 'down below', below the thresholds at which visibility begins. They walk – an elementary form of this experience of the city…These practitioners make use of spaces that cannot be seen… these practices of space refer to a specific form of operations (ways of operating), to 'another spatiality' (an anthropological, poetic and mythic experience of space), and to an opaque and blind mobility characteristic of the bustling city. A migrational, or metaphorical, city thus slips into the clear text of the planned and readable city" ([1984] 2007: 250 - 251).

The people who take on *this* status in my arguments depict the unbounded figure, the 'stranger'. My research has informed by arguments that there are multiple ways in which a person can seem unbounded, and thus problematise the concept of liminality. The stranger in Observatory illuminates the varying forms and ways of inhabiting and connecting public and private space. The decision to trust is often found at the intersection of the public and private, on which I will elaborate. Ross argues that "sociality relies on movement", "yet, movement is constrained by ideas about properness, about the appropriate distribution of persons in space" (2010: 60). Sociality, then, can be seen at the intersection of public and private, especially in a rogue space in which some "ideas of properness" are defunct, and because they are, different forms of negotiating appropriateness are mobilised, and trust comes to the fore. Ardner (in Ross, 2010: 64) states, "the boundary between the 'public' and the 'private' may, in some contexts and under some conditions, be measured primarily by earshot". This collapsing of public and private, measured by sensory means, is found in the suburb; from the way one's neighbours can be heard, to the private space of the two hospitals' spilling out onto the pavements in Observatory. In my

discussion of the blurring of public and private spaces, then, I am drawing on Ross's 'sense-scape', the way that senses and emotion make space, a point to which I will return throughout this essay as it speaks directly to the mobilisation of trust.

As I have stated, I took on the role of 'walker' in my research. A "situationist ethnography has its own distinct methods" (Wark, 2011: 22) which include being self-reflexive, especially in terms of positioning oneself with*in*, not without. This connects directly to the debate on the position of the postcolonial social scientists in and of Africa (see Olukoshi and Nyamnjoh, 2011), as well as the epistemology of contemporary anthropology. There is a call to describe how African knowledge practices are of global significance and for this knowledge "takes the initiative to assert its independent scholarly authority, and thus redefine the flow of North-South intellectual dependence into one of intercontinental equality" (ibid: 7). Olukoshi and Nyamnjoh (2011) further describe a pursuit of 'endogeneity', knowledge gained from within. This 'endogenous' knowledge denotes one that is unified, homogenous or bounded. The marrying of scientific rigour and creativity in anthropological research is important to a full description and analysis of everyday life. This interdisciplinary prowess benefits endogenous knowledge. It helps to destabilise static knowledge practices and to discuss fully "encounters and the relationships that [result] from [these] encounters" (Mafeje, 1998: 6; see also Marcus and Fischer, 1999). My methodological aim for this research was to subvert the epistemology of alterity and exogenously generated knowledge that has been "passively internalised" (ibid).

The major theoretical framework for this research is predominately western. Nevertheless, in order to describe the nuances involved in an African urban, global setting, I found it useful to use these frameworks. I hoped to "open up to lifeworlds that unfold themselves through the interplay of everyday practices and the manifold interventions, motions and messages of humans, ancestors and non-human agents, or visible and invisible forces" (Olukoshi and Nyamnjoh, 2011: 10) and I focussed "on the knowledge, values or imaginaries that are endogenous to particular cultural sites, as well as on their explanatory tropes, their interpretation and generalisations" (ibid: 14). Observatory provided an ideal urban setting in which to do this: I have visited the space as a 'wanderer', and I have lived in the suburb as a 'stranger' from when this research commenced. I embodied the role of the 'walker' in order to study Observatory ethnographically. I used anthropological sensitivity in order to study the subtleties and nuances of trust in Observatory. As a 'stranger' in the suburb, my walking and the social interactions it mobilised and those that I observed were imperative to my research on trust. Through walking alone in the suburb I had encounters with people who could have become background or silent figures in a study in which I was not a walking 'stranger'. Walking in Observatory animates considerable

numbers of events that can be said to be 'rogue'. Furthermore, I was ideally situated as a 'stranger', not Simmel's unattached 'wanderer' figure. This unique positioning allowed me to interact with many other 'strangers', and it was in this position that I could participate in an active commentary on the suburb; a commentary that was only forcibly mobilised in those who featured as 'strangers' and those who were, predominately marginal, 'indigenous' people.

Rogers (1999: 61) argues that the stranger is "is an individual who is a member of a system but is not strongly attached to that system", and "the stranger does not conform completely to the norms of the system". The stranger's interpersonal relationships with others in the space – social, geographical, or systemic – are characterised by social distance, and that the stranger, who does not have longstanding connections to the social or geographical space can "more easily deviate from the norms of the system" (ibid). Rogers continues that although the stranger's unpredictability can cause suspicion and distrust, "there are unique advantages to the individual and to the system of such distanced perspectives" (ibid). These advantages namely concern the objectivity of the stranger. The stranger is a

> "Purely mobile person [who] comes incidentally into contact with *every* single element but is not bound up organically, through established ties of kinship, locality, or occupation, with any single one" (Simmel, [1908] 1971: 145).

The resulting objectivity does not equate with detachment and nonparticipation, but rather finds itself at the conjunction of "remoteness and nearness, indifference and involvement" (ibid). Simmel further states that "the objective individual is bound by no commitments which could prejudice his perception, understanding, and evaluation of the given" (ibid). My position as a stranger began when I moved to Observatory in March 2013, via the suburb of Rondebosch, from Johannesburg. I had been out at night to Observatory when I was visiting as an undergraduate student, and had stayed with friends in the area the year prior to my move. I was deeply involved in the purchasing of a house in Observatory by the landlords of the house in which I live. I was their liaison with the estate agent and continue to act on their behalf in matters regarding the neighbourhood and greater suburb. This, of course, put me in a unique position as I conducted my research. I have had access to phenomenon one could only experience as a resident in the suburb, including a heated debate over a Rezoning Application for a building behind the house in which I live. My positionality has meant that I have been involved in a lived ethnography of sorts. Undoubtedly this has affected my research, and has made it both easier and harder. I have been able to gain knowledge about the ways in which people are able to access and enter into everyday life of Observatory as a tourist, a possible resident, and a stranger who has 'settled'. I retain the potential to leave, and I have not many social or physical ties to the area itself. However, I am

participatory in a variety of ways and thus am no longer a ‘wanderer’. My position, though, has also resulted in difficulties, such as distancing myself from and distinguishing between my everyday life and others’ everyday lives. However, as Möllering writes, “the Simmelian notion of trust requires *empathy* on the part of the researcher: the starting point is the subjective ‘reality’ (context) as interpreted by the trustor” (2001: 416; emphasis in original) and the “challenge is to grasp what from the point of view of the trustor constitutes ignorance” in order to discover the concept of ‘suspension’ in trust research.

The stranger, according to Simmel ([1908] 1971:145), “often receives the most surprising revelations and confidences.” The things people say and don’t say are pivotal in an ethnographic study. Through surprising instances of revelations, rumours, and gossip, I gleaned much about the suburb and the social interactions within it. Gossip, too, marks out the social space people are thought to occupy: for example, the gossip about the ‘bad’ side of Observatory generates distrust. One of my participants, a white man who was born in the suburb in the early fifties, mentioned all the supposed social hierarchies of the middle to upper-income groups in the suburb: he pointed out who was “old money”, and thus somewhat “feared and not to be messed with”, and who was considered socially important by one group of people. It seems that this is known by a smaller group in Observatory, many of whom are ‘decision-makers’ – officials, community representatives, financiers, etc. – in the suburb. Much of the suburb’s ‘rogueness’ is based on what is known as truth, and what is rumoured. For example, ‘Barmooda’ nightclub was burnt down two years ago and the rumours that followed included a heroine or a homeless man who saved the staff, supposed arson by Russian gangsters, and a column in the *Wall Street Journal* that blamed the junior mafia for the fire (*Obslife*, July 2012: 1-2). The idea that no one knows what happened amplifies the tension and distrust surrounding the happenings in the suburb. The rogueness of the space, and the trust connected to that, can be uncovered through rumour and gossip. My role, then, has helped me to uncover knowledge about an intricate, rogue and ambiguous fieldsite.

## 2.2. Strangers in Observatory: past and present

*“There’s no fucking [sic] proof either way with history… [but]Obs, your history ain’t genteel”.*

*- Paul, district representative, interview, 2014.*

Frank Welsh (2000: 13) writes that “there were considerable disadvantages to the Cape” for the early colonial and trade ships. Nevertheless, “the bay had its uses, for the English in particular, as

a watering place and a post office" (ibid). The visitors and indigenous "inhabitants contrived, on the whole, to profit from their intercourse; as long, that is, as the visitors remained only transient" (ibid). The visitors proved, though, permanent with the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck in 1652, he having been sent by the Dutch East India Company, the *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (VOC), to set up "an inn on the road to the Indies" (Welsh, 2000: 21). The Cape settlement was to be "staffed by whoever might be persuaded to go there" (ibid: 24). Furthermore, "each community should keep itself to itself, and cattle must be obtained by friendly barter" (ibid: 25). In 1655, the Dutch decided to expand the station, and "nine Company employees were discharged in February 1657 to become 'free burghers' [*vrijburgheren*]" (ibid: 31). John Hislop (2014: 6) states that:

> "The group of free burghers who farmed in what was to become the Observatory area were a motley crew of farm labourers, artisans and the like, not to mentioned the occasional rogue who did the odd bit of illegal bartering with the Khoi or smuggling of alcohol to ships in Table Bay. Just by surviving the gruelling and sometimes fatal months-long ship journey from their native country… these early Cape farmers had to be extremely tough. The free burghers lived a precarious existence".

There was originally much trade with the Khoi, primarily in *dagga* [marijuana] – which was used for rope as well as recreationally – and cows, but the Company set up small outposts on the river to control this trade; the free burghers "battled under the strict Company policy, and many were soon poverty stricken" (Hislop, 2014: 7).

In the 1860s, the houses on the riverside of the railway were predominately inhabited by middle-income people, whereas lower income groups occupied the smaller houses in between the railway and Main Road. This is a phenomenon that was, and indeed is, only found in Observatory; the areas above the railway line in all the other southern suburbs of Cape Town are generally those that were, and are, resided in by middle to upper income groups. In 1885 the Observatory area was substantially divided into small farms – including Bellevliet, Cranko, Westoe and Wrensch – and housing for low to middle-income groups, in order to produce more crops, allow for small business, and to sell alcohol. Hislop (2014) discusses the old homesteads and farms of Observatory in *Wheatfields and Windmills* in great detail. The fate of the old homesteads and houses displays the different type of activities and income groups found in the area at present. The 1783 Varsche Drift homestead's foundations are in the central courtyard of Adidas Shoe Company's offices in the Black River Business Park. A district representative and enthusiastic amateur historian of Observatory, Paul, argued against the company's desire to build on top of the foundations. Paul's efforts led to their excavation and preservation. There are six old homesteads still in existence in Observatory. Institutions use three: Coornhoop, Valkenberg

and Bellevliet. The three other homesteads are still residential and have been restored at great expense. Rumour has it that Prince Harry stays in Wrensch House when he visits South Africa. The gossip continues to say that the mistresses of Thabo Mbeki and Johnny de Lange have stayed here, too.

Between 1880 and 1900 most of the old farmland around the Liesbeek River had been converted to housing, while along the railway line factories and warehouses were being built. This tradition continues today: the Snowflake factory lies on the Salt River side of Observatory, and much of the area to the north of Station Road is made up of industrial warehouses, some of which used to be railway sheds. The area between these fields and the Snowflake factory has been developed into the Black River Office Park. This office park includes the headquarters of Adidas Shoe Company in Cape Town, on which the foundations of Varsche Drift are preserved, which generates its own solar power that provides the whole office park with energy. Their solar energy project, the largest in the solar hemisphere, which is mapped daily outside the Adidas offices, produces enough excess power to supply the Snowflake Factory, which operates twenty-four hours a day. However, Eskom requires the power to be directed through them. This fact has "irritated a lot of the company, and so many residents and office people in Observatory"[4]: "the monopoly and bureaucracy of Eskom has messed up a chance for Obs to… be self-sufficient… for environmental friendliness to actually make a difference".

There are many 'strangers' in Observatory according to the abovementioned definition of 'indigenous inhabitants' (Simmel, [1908] 1971). Many people who are property-owners in Observatory have come from elsewhere: only four children and one adult living in a street of approximately eighty people identify as having been 'born and bred' in Observatory. Many of these people have lived in the area for some time, and have had friends and relatives who have resided in the suburb, too. There is a correlation between the lengths of time a resident has lived in the area, the feelings they have towards the area, and how long they plan on living in the area. These attributes of people who are 'long-term inhabitants' of the area diminish many of their appearances of strangers. However, they all recognise a relatively long period of feeling like a stranger in Observatory. Many of them expressed the belief that one has to be a stranger in the suburb in order to function in it, as it requires "very unique ways of living"[5]. One of the participants in this research who expressed this view came to Cape Town from Zimbabwe in the 1950s, as a tourist in his twenties, and spuriously decided to move permanently to Observatory. He "just stayed and stayed… and stayed… and just [hasn't] gone back" even though most of his

[4] Interview, Paul, district representative, 2014.
[5] Informal personal communication, coloured, middle-aged female resident, living in the supposed 'middle-income' side of Observatory.

family still lives there. Vernon, an upper-middle income white man, bought a house in the area twenty years after he moved here, and stated that "if [he] couldn't have bought the house in Observatory, [he] would have moved back to Zimbabwe". The potential of Vernon to move back to from where he was originally marked him as a stranger, which, he argues, was "essential to living [in Observatory]". The stranger, then, is linked intrinsically to mobility, and the assimilation of 'strangers' is concomitant with the financial ability to become a landowner. This does not apply in all cases in my research: there are many people who do not own property in Observatory, who are not strangers, and there are many people who are landowners, who embody and enjoy the stranger figure. There are many people who only own property in the area, and do not live there or inhabit the space at all. Although Simmel ([1908] 1971) argues, "the stranger is by his very nature no owner of land", I believe that because of certain factors in Observatory namely relating to its state as a frequently visited liminal space, the stranger can indeed be a landowner, if there is no individual state of attachment to the space expressed. The stranger, then, is not necessarily a marginal figure, nor wholly static or unfixed, but one who has the means and will to possibly go somewhere else, and who has come from a different point in space; "the position of the stranger stands out more sharply if, instead of leaving the place of his activity, he settles down there" (Simmel, [1908] 1971: 144). I believe, too, that much of a person's status as a stranger is based on their individual identification as such.

Simmel ([1908] 1971: 144) argues that, in economic activity, "the stranger makes his appearance everywhere as a trader". I believe that this aspect of Simmel's argument needs extension in order to take into account the types of strangers found in Observatory. Contemporary economic activity is different to that about which Simmel was writing. One can still find the people who produce for their own needs and exchange in small groups of people, though. The stranger is highly mobile and acts as "supernumerary", where he goes into a group where many economic positions are already occupied. Some of the most prominent trader-strangers in Observatory are the informal stall owners in Station Road, whom I mention in the following paragraph (see Figures 2 and 3). There are also many 'strangers' who work in service positions in Observatory; many of them come from elsewhere and are in Observatory for an indefinite amount of time. There is also a steady flux of students who occupy service positions for no longer than two months. Furthermore, many of the domestic workers who work in Observatory do not stay on the properties at which they work – unlike in many other places in cities in South Africa; many of who are well-known by the inhabitants of Observatory. The flow of people to and from Observatory from elsewhere problematizes the way of thinking of 'the stranger' as only a marginal figure.

Marková et al (2008) and Zak and Knack (2001) write that social trust is often concerned with economics. Sitkin and Roth (1993: 297) elaborate by questioning why “organisations frequently adopt formal rules, contracts, or other legalistic mechanisms when interpersonal trust is lacking”. This is interesting when considering the different ‘strangers’ who trade in Observatory. There is much economic practice based on trust in survivalist, precarious jobs: for example, the convenience store traders will often lend cigarette lighters to customers and passers-by to take outside; and laybys are accepted at many of these shops and the informal stands on Station Road, which sell fruit, cellphone cases, street food, cigarettes, sunglasses, and books. The man who sells books, and can recommend them based on plot and genre, will also allow some people to read them on the benches across the road without buying them, and trusts that they will return them. Molm, Takahashi and Peterson (2000: 1396) argue that “the classical exchange theorists proposed that trust is more likely to develop between partners when exchange occurs without explicit negotiations or binding agreements”.

Figures 2 and 3: Informal Traders on Station Road[6]

## 2.3. The city and strangers: safety and the sidewalk

*“Cities differ from towns and suburbs in basic ways, and one of these is that cities are, by definition, full of strangers.”*

*- Jane Jacobs (1961) 2011: 106.*

[6] All photographs taken by author.

The revolutionary author on urban society, Jane Jacobs, wrote on the importance of streets and sidewalks, in her seminal *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* ([1961] 2011). Jacobs wrote, "streets and their sidewalks, the main public places of a city, are its most vital organs" ([1961] 2011; see also Duneier, 1999). The streets and sidewalks of Observatory are certainly a major part of the suburb: they are the integral space for the amalgamation of the stranger, the walker, the wanderer, the resident, and the visitor. On the streets and pavements negotiations of trust and distrust become visible. The ways in which one utilises the streets and pavements make sure that certain forms of knowledge and certain social relations are mobilised. I could only have learnt about important aspects of Observatory's history by walking through the suburb and speaking to people in the suburb, especially on the streets; by navigating the streets of the suburb, history was experientially narrated. Furthermore, rumour and gossip move through the streets: many conversations are not in the private space of the home, but rather on the pavements of the suburb. Of course, these conversations are often between people who have prior knowledge of each other – either directly or through another party – and a kind of privacy is mobilised on the public street. Rumour and gossip, then, seem to inhabit a liminal space on the street, and in the suburb, as I have mentioned above. The streets and sidewalks are also the primary arena in which conviviality is mobilised and the 'rogueness' of a space becomes apparent (see Shaftoe, 2008).

Jacobs posits that there are "controls on acceptable behaviour…through a web of reputation, gossip, approval, disapproval and sanctions" ([1961] 2011: 108). Jacobs reiterates that a city's streets must regulate the behaviour "of visitors… who want to have a big time away from the gossip and sanctions at home, [and thus its people] have to operate by more direct, straightforward methods" (ibid: 108; see also Peebles, 2008). This is especially relevant in Observatory where many international tourists visit, especially to eat, drink, and stay cheaply. There are as many backpacker hostels in Observatory as there are in the City Bowl: all of which claim to be 'quintessentially' Observatory: 'international, creative and bohemian'[7]. There is even a bar named 'Forex' in Observatory. The international tourists' appearances in Observatory amalgamate in December and early January, in summer. They are mainly between twenty and forty years old, although a number of older couples stay at the backpackers on Lower Main Road (see Figure 4), and the majority are from The United States of America, the European Union, the United Kingdom, and China. Only the residents of Observatory remain in January, after the area empties of international tourists and before students start to rent houses in February. The

[7] See http://www.bohemianlofts.com/index.php, www.greenelephant.co.za, and http://observatorybackpackers.com/.

dynamics in the area shift slightly: the "summer locals"[8] – even if they newly inhabit the space – become clear on the streets and many more greetings occur, including in the restaurants and the pubs, which become more frequented by South Africans, especially those who live in the area. Residents in the area often play musical instruments, and it seems that nearly everyone stops each other to comment on the sunset. At this time of year, "the activity generated by people on errands, or people aiming for food or drink, [which] is itself an attraction to still other people" (Jacobs, [1961] 2011: 108) becomes clear. However, the section of Lower Main Road occupied by tourists and students of all races and middle to upper income residents and visitors (who are predominately white) stands in stark contrast to the 'Trump Towers' section of Lower Main that I mention below, and thus problematises beneficial social connections mobilised on the street.

Figure 4: Backpackers' accommodation on the 'tourist' side of Lower Main Road, 2015.

Jacobs argues that even though city planners "operate on the premise that city people seek the sight of emptiness, obvious order and quiet… people's love of watching activity and other people is constantly evident in cities everywhere" (ibid). Our "mental space may also be controlled through our fears and perceptions of activities in places" (Marková et al, 2008: 163). If there appears to be fewer exclusionary barriers in a space, then the space seems to be more trusted. The appearance of many different people on the streets of Observatory may cause distrust in some contexts, especially in terms of interpersonal trust; however, the range of people who manifest in the street and the activities in which they are involved creates a certain trust that the space and some of the people within could be more welcoming of difference. In order to trust

[8] Personal communication with resident.

fruitfully in a city street one must rethink cultural politics, and go against neoliberal common sense, to create "public spaces where individuals have access to a language for developing democratic identities and nonmarket values such as trust, fidelity, love, compassion, respect, decency, courage, and civility" (Marková et al, 2008: 163), instead of cultivating "the essentially intellectualistic character of the mental life of the metropolis" (Simmel, [1903] 2002: 103), that is "against that of the small town which rests more on feelings and emotional relationships" (ibid: 104), that Simmel argues is part of the 'mental life of the metropolis' (ibid).

Jacobs stated that "when people say that a city, or a part of it, is dangerous or is a jungle what they mean primarily is that they do not feel safe on the sidewalks" and that "sidewalks, their bordering uses, and their users, are active participants in the drama of civilisation versus barbarism in cities" ([1961] 2011: 106). A working, trusting, and happy neighbourhood is marked by feeling of personal safety and security on the city streets among all the strangers that make a city a city (ibid). Jacobs posits that "it does not take many incidents of violence on a city street… to make people fear the streets… and as they fear them, they use them less, which makes the street still more unsafe" (ibid: 107). As I have mentioned, there is much media and social attention on Observatory's dangers, both from outside and in, and some of this seems to be dramatized in ways that cause distrust and fear. Rumour and gossip further sensationalise some aspects of Observatory, and give some people "hobgoblins in their heads" (ibid.). As is found in the area, other people show "common sense in refusing to venture after dark – or in a few places, by day – into streets where they may well be assaulted, unseen or unrescued until too late" (ibid.). Jacobs continues, "some of the safest sidewalks… at any time of day or night, are those along which poor people or minority groups live" (ibid.). This is true especially in Observatory. The group of three homeless people who sit outside an empty shop on the main road through the inner suburb, Lower Main Road, watch the happenings in the street for many hours of the day and night (see Figure 5). Furthermore, the drug dealers and shop owners who are plying their trade on the "Nigerian"[9], "biker bar", or "dodgy" side of Observatory (see Figures 6 and 7) have been known to chase after muggers. The different ways one feels safe on the street differ with each individual. A number of my young female participants, of varied races and income groups; female friends who are predominately in their late twenties, and I have been solicited by some of these men, both in passing and in other areas of Observatory, when, on recognition, gifts and marriage are offered. A fifty-year-old man from Cote d'Ivoire, Thierry, who works at the petrol station on Main Road with whom I speak regularly said, "you must be careful on *that* side of Obs. They'll all want you as a wife".

[9] Interview with Nigerian drug dealer.

Figure 5: Lower Main Road, 2015

Thus the navigation of the street is intrinsically linked to gender dynamics, as well as perceived racial, ethnic, and income groups (see Salo, 2003). It can be seen, too, that the safety of the streets is not maintained only by police – nor the security companies that I shall discuss below – rather,“ [the peace] is kept primarily by an intricate, almost unconscious, network of voluntary controls and standards among the people themselves, and enforced by the people themselves” (Jacobs, [1961] 2011: 107). Furthermore, “the safety of the street works best, most casually, and with least frequent taint of hostility or suspicion precisely where people are using and most enjoying the city streets voluntarily and are least conscious, normally, that they are policing” (ibid: X). It is of great import to the unexpected mobilisations of trust found in the suburb that some of the regulators of the safety in the street are those from felonious and marginal groups. The ‘stranger’, too, makes an appearance in these instances as the trader and the ‘near’ and ‘remote’ figure. Jacobs states, “no amount of police can enforce civilisation where the normal, casual enforcement of it has broken down” (ibid; see Hentschel and Berg, 2010). I posit that in Observatory the trust in the “casual enforcement” of safety seems to be more than that shown towards the police. This more community-based *safety* enforcement operates somewhat on the basis that the police will not come into the area straight away, as the regulators of the peace are often distrusting of the police, or are engaged in unlawful activities themselves. I have noticed a rather prominent police presence in the suburb in comparison to the southern suburbs and other

areas in Cape Town, and the police often interact with the people who are often on Lower Main Road. The traders in the street are the first to call the police if there are any incidents.

Figures 6 and 7: "Biker bar" and "Nigerian" side of Lower Main Road, 2015

## 2.4. Trust and Fear

Marková, Linell, and Gillespie (2008: 3) write that discussions on trust and distrust in the 1980s and 90s "referred to the growth of crime and violence, to litigations and lawsuits against professionals, and viewed these incidents as signs of danger threatening democracy". This means that much of the literature on trust discusses trust as found in economic, political, and social *structures*. However, "others [authors] thought… that social, political, and economic relations have come too complex" (ibid.) and that discussions on trust versus risk, especially in democracy, management, and "maintaining the proper governance" (ibid: 4), have become too limited (see Cvetkovich and Lofstedt, 1999; Earle and Cvetkovich, 1995; eds. Braithwaite and Levi, 1998; and Lewis and Weigert, 1985). Furthermore, "measures of professional, political, as well as generalised trust/distrust have been based on the idea of unidimensionality, ranging from high via low levels of trust then to distrust", and used to "compare nations, groups, and cultures" (Marková, Linell, and Gillespie, 2008: 4). These sociological, and often business management orientated, measurements "show that some independent variables – for example, the standard of living, economic growth, or religion – have a significant influence on the level of trust and distrust" (ibid.), but this quantitative approach to the multifaceted topic ignores the contextual and personal meanings of trust and distrust, differing ways of living, and different understandings

of standards of living. It was argued, too, that this literature did not reflect the changes in the meaning of the dichotomy trust/distrust (ibid: 5) in various knowledge arenas; trust and fear proved a predominant understanding of the phenomenon, especially with a rise of media in which social events were dramatized (ibid). The amalgamation of 'fear' into the trust/distrust dichotomy is still prominent in contemporary understandings of trust as I found in my research. As well as this, media still entrenches this understanding of what trust is, by honing in on situations in which fear is invoked. Crime and violence, and threats to one's freedom, personal safety, wellbeing, and standard of living, undermine trust in contemporary society (ibid). I believe, too, that the structural violence that minority, vulnerable, and marginalised groups have been subjected to has led to an even greater sense of fearful distrust.

Marková, Linell and Gillespie (ibid) further argue that certain regimes that induce states of uncertainty have led to fearful distrust, and the widespread trust/fear binary. The forms of discipline and punishment Foucault (1977) describes, for example, rely on fear and control to ensure that people self-discipline. The Panopticon-like social control altered the 'top-down' form of power and instead created a balance of power amongst people. He states that "rather than the massive, binary division between one set of people and another, [the disciplinary project] called for multiple separations, individualizing distributions, and organization in death of surveillance and control" (ibid: 198). He mentions that there was "binary division" on a more individual level; labelling people instead of groups so that they can be placed under certain surveillance. Under this surveillance, Foucault argued that people become self-regulating. Even after this surveillance is taken away, if the 'origin' is removed, we still behave as though we are being watched and controlled. Foucault argued that discipline and power then come from details in practise rather than from an 'origin'. This lack of 'origin', as I will illustrate below, is one of the major fears expressed by people in Observatory, in all manner of arenas. Many of the actions that induce or compromise trust in the area are linked to understanding who is in power, what control means, and where the origins of an individual or an event are situated. Lack of knowledge of an 'origin' leads to distrust. An 'origin', it seems, needs to be part of the disorder and rogueness of Observatory.

Marková, Linell and Gillespie (2008: 5) further argue that "socialization into fear involves suspicion and inauthentic and insincere communication; it is related to other feelings and sociocognitive processes, as well as to actions and interactions." The authors, though, make it clear that distrust is not to be equated with conspiracy, paranoia, anxiety, and confusion, although these conditions are often co-morbid with distrust. The most amount of distrust shown about and in Observatory is namely towards the crime present in the suburb. There is uncertainty about who

will be the target of this crime, and who will commit these crimes. The rogueness of Observatory adds to this unease, and lessens one's ability to make judgments about safety based on location, situation, or context. The instances of rogueness happen everywhere, randomly, and by everyone. There is little trust shown towards the suburb by people who have heard rumours of its crime; conspiracy and paranoia contribute to these feelings.

The general themes in the *Obslife* newspaper are: drugs, alcohol, crime, homelessness, con artists, property battles, the 'pros' of densification, the cons of over-crowding, community projects, and the Observatory Improvement District. The latter two themes are positive and give hope to Observatory residents. The former subjects epitomise the aspects of Observatory that lead to distrust. One becomes accustomed to seeing these topics in the newspaper; as well as hearing about criminal activity in the suburb. A tourist was mugged at the ATM on a Thursday morning, where the criminals took her bag. The shop owners in the street took action and the police came to the scene and caught the robbers. Everyone at the restaurants got up to see if help was needed but soon settled back down and went on with their breakfasts. The blasé attitude of many of the people in the area to this crime was telling: people grow accustomed to the rogueness in the suburb in order to carry on using the space. Many of the people who witnessed this event only noted the positive fact that the police caught the criminals. There is a hesitant acceptance that these criminal actions may happen anytime, anywhere, as well as more dangerous ones. One of my interlocutors was in a bar on Lower Main Road at which a group of men were discussing an arms deal. Many people have indeed moved away from Observatory because of the crime. There is also a rogue aspect to crime prevention in Observatory. A large white man of roughly forty years is the suburb's "self-appointed Rambo"[10]. At two o'clock in the morning he dons his uniform and roams Observatory enforcing law and order. He was recently stabbed by a drug dealer opposite the Drug Counselling Centre in Observatory, one of the major areas where drugs are bought and sold.

The academics who write on trust and fear (see Hawley, 2002; McLeod, 2011) discuss how the *arbitrariness* of certain actions, regimes, and events leads to fear and distrust. It is the strange, the arbitrary that can lead to distrust, through fear. For example, the somewhat arbitrariness of crime in the city results in the feeling that anyone can be stolen from or injured. The believed disorder of the African city has thus been said to be the root of much fear in the urban environment (see Lemanski, 2004). The disorderliness and arbitrary actions in Observatory are indeed one of the bases of distrust in the suburb, as I will highlight in my next chapter. Nonetheless, there is also sentiment that there is order to the disorder in Observatory, and in

[10] Interview, Paul, district representative, 2014.

African cities in general (see Pieterse and Simone, 2013). There are myriad methods by which people lessen the fear in their everyday lives.

## 2.5. Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed my methodology in terms of a 'situationist ethnography', and the position of the 'stranger'. My role as a 'stranger' in the suburb enabled me to engage in an endogenous anthropology in a post-apartheid urban environment. The method of walking in the suburb was useful when uncovering the subtle dynamics present in Observatory. Sidewalks, especially, are the arenas in which these dynamics are prominent. Furthermore, Simmel's 'stranger' is deeply linked to discerning trust, and Observatory is a space that is marked by 'strangers'. The stranger is distinct from the 'wanderer' and the 'indigenous' population, and inhabits a liminal space between the two. Section 2.2. highlighted that there has been a history of 'strangers' in the suburb. A brief discussion of Cape Town and Observatory's history provides a way to see repetition throughout the city and its historical context. Especially the 'strangers' in Observatory, of whom there are many, mirror the liminality and rogueness of the free burghers and the Khoi in the early Cape at a time when western boundaries were usually harsh and clear. The present 'strangers ' in the suburb do not come from a single social location, but are varied and dynamic. In section 2.3 I discussed the areas of the city in which the 'stranger' appears, with specific mention of Observatory, which followed on to a discussion of safety and the policing of the streets. Section 2.4 continued these arguments with an explanation of the trust and fear binary, especially in relation to what is most feared in Observatory. The immediate understanding of trust in a binary with fear is particularly pertinent to discussions of a rather crime-ridden Observatory. Despite chronic criminal activity and real threats to one's safety, trust manages to prevail. The maintenance of trust in Observatory is primarily managed from the inside, and outside intervention does not often succeed.

The following chapter focuses on the liminality and rogueness of Observatory, as well as how spatial and liminal trust manifest in the suburb. Many forms of the rogueness as well as the 'stranger' in the urban are displayed in the understanding of the more marginal people, places and activities that occur in the suburb. Furthermore, I present ethnographic examples of how trust, distrust, fear, and intricate ways of living appear in a 'rogue' urban environment.

# Chapter 3 – Liminal and Spatial Trust: The Rogue, Marginality, and Inebriation

## 3.0. Abstract

This chapter is written from ethnographic data collected during my fieldwork. I discuss the ways in which (dis)trust is mobilised in a 'rogue' environment, as well as how this environment is essential to the visibility of this (dis)trust. It expands the previous chapter's discussion on trust and fear, as well as the city spaces in which (dis)trust is mobilised, particularly by 'strangers'. There are subtle forms of spatial trust that are clear in this kind of environment. Furthermore, liminal trust is required for survival in an unruly environment.

Section 3.1 discusses what makes Observatory a permanently liminal area and the consequential and unexpected social and spatial trust that is found in a very 'rogue' environment. In the second section, I proceed to a deliberation on how some of the marginal people in Observatory are liminal: namely, the *bergies* who are between the homed and the homeless. I discuss marginality with reference to precarity and disposability. Disposability of people, the unequal distribution of resources and problematic legitimacy to life in certain places are challenged with reference to a man who embodies mental illness and marginality. In the final section in this chapter, I examine the role of inebriation in Observatory, and how liquor and drugs exaggerate (dis)trust. I also present a discussion of sexual practices in the suburb and how these destabilise and entrench normative ideas around sexuality and sexual activity.

## 3.1. Liminality, rogueness and spatial trust

*"Boundaries in Observatory are very, very strange".*

*- Paul, district representative, interview, 2014.*

Liminality (Turner, 1967) is a state of disorientation, transition, and ambiguity between more fixed statuses and binaries. Liminality is highly important in anthropological research, as it is in these spaces that intricate ways of living are visible. Observatory is a place of liminality. For example, it was a politically liminal area in Apartheid, a 'grey area' between the designated 'coloured' suburb of Woodstock and the whites-only southern suburbs, from Mowbray. As well as this, because of its proximity to the hospital and university, Observatory "functions as the university district and thus maintains a transient bohemian student character" (Besteman, 2008: 47).

Observatory was initially included as a whites-only area and evictions were attempted. However, a fair number of coloured families remained in the area closest to Salt River, which meant that it became a 'grey area'. The area of Observatory, between Polo Road and Rochester Road, is particularly liminal, as it is confuses boundaries. The council border between Observatory and Salt River is Kipling Street, but the apartheid border was Rochester Road (see Map). Paul, a white, Capetonian, city official in his sixties, and my unofficial guide who took me on an historical tour while walking energetically through the suburb, lived there during apartheid, specifically during the South African Border War. At the time of conscription,

> "Families would decide: do I want to go to the army? If you didn't want to, you moved across the road to coloured Salt River if you were white, so you find the same families on either side of the road; one half 'coloured', the other 'white'."

Paul stressed that ideologically Observatory was a grey area, and still is, but even though it did not "recognise race", it "did recognise class, and still does". There was, too, an "Observatory they don't talk about", says Paul. The green next to the old church, the KwikSpar and the community centre on Station Road used to be populated by Chinese families who operated a laundry service for the soldiers in the Anglo-Boer War. Their houses were all bulldozed during apartheid, and there are no Chinese families living in Observatory today. The village green stands as a stark reminder that Observatory was not free from apartheid destruction. There is no historical indicator that the green used to be a residential block, although Paul is trying to do something about this, but there is a war memorial close to Station Road (see Figure 8). The memorial was defaced with a racial slur recently (*Obslife*, November 2014). This war memorial, however, does not make any distinction of race, class or rank. It is one of the few like this. Observatory was a place of resistance against apartheid, too. Wrensch House was one of Umkhonto we Sizwe's hideouts[11]. There were also resistance headquarters at Munro's, the antique dealership, and because "he was white and Jewish, they thought that he couldn't be involved in politics". Furthermore, there was a siege at the café on Crown Corner, near to Wrensch House. Interestingly, Pieter Wrensch's house was the site of strife before its use as a headquarters. Wrensch was driven out of Observatory during the First World War and his house was burnt to the ground because he was German.

Observatory is racially liminal, not only because of its position as a mixed area in apartheid. There are obvious steps to be more multiracial, especially with the efforts being made to attract more young people. An urban planner who lives in Observatory argued that with youth comes more liberal attitudes and the youth are more mobile and are not bound by apartheid's spatial limitations. There are indeed many different races of students in the area, but there is little evidence of older people of different races moving into the suburb. Races, then, are indeed mixed but there are

[11] Interview, Paul, district representative, 2014.

pronounced differences in 'class', income group, and ethnicity. Furthermore, there are marked boundaries between other groups of people: undergraduate students, postgraduate students, gay men, lesbian women, medical students, international students, people from Johannesburg, 'creatives', 'hippies' and their children, the people who are deeply involved in the policy making in the suburb, and the pub owners, amongst others. The boundaries of these groups can be traversed, some more easily than others.

Figure 8: War Memorial in Observatory, 2015

During the winter of 2014, 'Fuck Observatory' was untidily written in bold red paint at the bottom of one of the quiet side streets that lures Observatory to many prospective residents. The scrawled inscription on a neatly painted yellow wall was made more jarring by the figure of Crazy Colin wrapped up against the rain sleeping in a foetal position on the pavement below the graffiti. The axiom covered one of the many stickers that read "I [love] Obs" that are pasted around the suburb. Observatory sometimes functions as an ideology in itself. It seems that the uncritical celebration of Observatory portrayed by the sticker offended the person who painted over it. I came to this conclusion based on other people's reactions to both the graffiti and the stickers. Many believe that most people who buy the stickers "do not really see Obs for everything it is… The bad *and* the good"[12]. The cigarette-littered streets, cockroaches, and the piles of soiled clothing that is bundled on pavements exaggerate the grease and grime of Observatory. Horrifyingly, a bundled body of a baby was once found by an OBSID cleaner in a drain, down a side road in Observatory. There are many evenings in Observatory that do much to diminish trust in the area. Drug addicts standing about opposite Spar, near the war memorial, exacerbate the chaos of weekend nights in the

[12] Informal communication with a black, coloured, and white resident, all of whom work and live in Observatory.

suburb, when condoms and needles are regularly blown about by the wind. One young white woman who is a *tik* addict appears often hugging her dealer when he brings her drugs or else putting on the tester make-up at the pharmacy. She has an accent that is similar to those people who are part of upper-income groups in Cape Town. There are, at least once a week, police chases down Lower Main Road late at night. However, for all the disruptive, startling incidents that occur in the suburb there are many that enhance feelings of trust, such as the frequent visibility of children in the streets.

Figure 9: Homeless man on the 'village green', 2015.

There is a breakdown of what is for children and what is for adults in the area at times. Children are predominantly seen in the side roads in the area: skateboarding, walking, and playing. The breakdown of the boundary between what is children's space and that which is usually adult is especially obvious at the events held in the area. For example, during the Open Streets[13] project in Observatory, there was mingling of unlawful drinking on the street and severe inebriation with children's games and activities (see Figure 10). The Open Streets in the Cape Town CBD did not display the same degree of blurring the boundaries between what is – albeit normatively – appropriate for children and for adults. At the Observatory Open Streets event there were characters who disrupted the sentiments of Open Streets and made obvious the social discrepancies still apparent today. There were many international tourists who wore their backpacks on the front of the bodies to protect from pickpockets; there was a woman wandering around in only her underpants, who was asked to put on a bra; and there was a homeless man walking down the middle of the road with a dummy and a cigarette in his mouth, while he picked up coins off the floor, helped by a group of residents' children. There are a number of children, too, who sleep in their parents and/or

[13] See http://openstreets.co.za/.

guardians' cars in the afternoons on Lower Main Road, monitored by many people, while the parents go into the bars to socialise.

Figure 10: Observatory Open Streets: Children, 2013

The regularity of carnivalistic events in Observatory is of interest. Indeed, the old home of the Cape Town Carnival is Hartleyvale Stadium in Observatory. The South African National Circus is based next to the stadium; the huge floodlights illuminate its red and white striped tent. Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1992: 480) states that the carnival "is a spontaneous explosion of the collective social body, a festival of license, liminality, and laughter" (see Bakhtin, 1941; see Figure 11). The past is recreated in "positive, rather than negative, terms" (Parker, 1991: 138) and "the past that is recreated in the carnivalesque present is at once social and individual: the hidden tradition of an unruly and sensual historical past and the repressed freedom of childhood" (ibid: 143). This idea of the freedom of childhood is key to the Brazilian *carnaval*. This, Parker (ibid) argues, is especially shown through the language used to describe the *carnaval*. He argues that the language of normal life – for example, *luta* 'struggle', *trabalho* 'work', and *sofrimento* 'suffering' – are in stark contrast to the words used in the carnivalistic context – *risos* 'laughter' and *brincar* 'play'. *Brincar* has sexual connotations which are highlighted in the context of the festival and "through the notion of play, then, the experience of *carnaval* is linked, simultaneously, to the innocent and carefree play of children and to the sexual play of adults" (ibid: 143). Carnivalistic traditions create a liminal space (Turner, 1967). They introduce a different social order. The carnivalistic space of Observatory helps to build a sense of belonging and collectivity in a liminal space and time. But, just as Scheper-Hughes (1992) argues about the *carnaval* in Bom Jesus, hardship and class divisions are remembered and highlighted in periods of carnival.

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Figure 11: Observatory Open Streets: Carnival, 2013

### 3.2. Between the homed and the homeless[14]

Judith Butler, in *For and Against Precarity* (2013: 1), writes that:

> "In this time, neo-liberal economics increasingly structures public institutions, including schools and universities, as well as public services, in a time in which people are losing their homes, their pensions, and their prospects for work in increasing numbers, we are faced with the idea that some populations are considered disposable."

Butler's proposition that because of the institutional structures in place, there are those people that do not afford the same benefits of neo-liberal policy as others. This "neo-liberal morality… demands self-sufficiency as a moral ideal" (ibid) and those that are not or cannot be self-sufficient diminish as a moral human being, and become, as João Biehl (2004) describes, a "non-human". These non-humans' lack of moral self-sufficiency makes them disposable and this distancing disposability enforces the neo-liberal notions of productivity, agency, and self-sufficiency as morally situated. Those who cannot contribute to the economic structure become expendable in order to maintain the illusion of a functioning, 'happy' society (see also Foucault, 1984). These

[14] See April Veness's 'Neither homed nor homeless: contested definitions and the personal worlds of the poor' (1993).

articulations are reminiscent of Povenelli's arguments in the Introduction to her *Economies of Abandonment* (2011). Povenelli draws on the story, "The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas" ([1973] 1993), by Ursula Le Guin in order to question whether the happiness and productivity of society is reliant on misery and suffering. Le Guin's fictional ethical consideration concerns the "experientially unmediated, materially substantive, and morally desirable" happiness that is dependent on suffering. The citizens of Omelas justify the degradation and torment of a child as the foundation of their knowledge of compassion, and the reason why they can live such happy, prosperous lives, even at its expense. This illuminates the principle that Immanuel Kant (see White, 2011) expressed that a rational being should never be used as merely an unconsenting means to an end, even if it benefits others. The neo-liberal structure under which we live intrinsically links rationality and morality under a certain ideology that requires self-sufficiency. Butler (2013) argues that under this structure a process called "precaritization" occurs: "usually induced and reproduced by governmental and economic institutions that acclimatize populations over time to insecurity and hopelessness". As I have discussed with reference to trust and fear, and as I will illustrate below, the governmental and economic institutions, as well as the communal organisations in Observatory can indeed produce feelings of distrust with overemphasis on insecurity. They reinforce notions of 'precarity', which, according to Butler, is "a structure of affect… and [is] a heightened sense of expendability or disposability that is differentially distributed throughout society" (ibid; see also Butler, 2009).

David Snow, Susan Baker, Leon Anderson, and Michaei Martin (1986) write that there is a prevailing myth that many homeless people have mental illnesses and the streets serve as asylums. They argue that this belief stems from the medicalised discourse around homelessness, an emphasis on the "causal role of deinstitutionalisation", and the "heightened visibility of homeless individuals who are mentally ill" (ibid: 407). Furthermore, there are "conceptual and methodological shortcomings" and biases in the assessing of indigents' mental status. This idea reinforces the abovementioned proposition that those who cannot contribute to neoliberal production are disposable and expendable (see Foucault, 1984). In *Saints, Scholars, and Schizophrenics: Mental Illness in Rural Ireland*, Scheper-Hughes (1979: 13) examines "indigenous outsiders… the social outcasts or social critics… and… the rituals of definition, inclusion, and exclusion that surround them." Scheper-Hughes continues, "a most striking fact about small villages… is the haunting presence of the 'village idiot' or village 'madman" (ibid: 77). She states that in ancient Irish law there was a differentiation between the "madman ('lunatic')" and the "imbecile ('fool')", in which "the fool was considered capable of participation within the community" and "the 'lunatic' was severed from the community and either imprisoned or set free to wander aimlessly about the

countryside" (ibid: 78). There are similar distinctions to be found in Observatory, made by both 'insiders' and 'outsiders'.

A figure who occupies the role of both 'lunatic' and 'fool' is 'Crazy Colin': the "wit *bergie* [tramp]", the "white homeless guy", or the "crazy man". No other figure is mentioned as prominently as Colin is; referred to in all his different personas. Most of my interlocutors' first question was whether I'd 'interviewed' Colin yet, said with an ashamed smirk, for Colin is schizophrenic and remains mostly mute. He does, however, mumble to himself, swears uncontrollably at times, and asks basic questions. Research participants also suggested I write a large section on him if I were going to discuss anything about trust and homelessness, let alone in Observatory. Colin is an *iconised* figure of the suburb: there is even a portrait of him in the local art gallery (see Figure 12). My first experiences of him were few and far between as he was regularly hospitalised in Valkenberg Hospital at this time. When he was not in the mental institution, Colin showed preference to the Arnold Road section of Observatory. He soon migrated to the area near the McDonald's and university residence side of the suburb. His movements are cyclical as residents, business owners and OBSID nudge him out of one part to another. Colin makes irregular trips to Valkenberg; his most recent inhabitation of the Wrensch Road area of Observatory has lasted several months. Residents and shop owners generally call OBSID if they want him to move; I have not seen many people confront him directly. Many shop owners and residents greet him if he appears to be aware of people. Sometimes he sits at the café's pavement tables, with his legs crossed, neatly drinking an espresso. When the OBSID guards ask him to move they often point him in the direction of a wide stretch of less trafficked, out-of-the-way shady pavement somewhere close to where he has been sleeping. Colin quite often sleeps or sits quite close to Lower Main Road, but, unlike the other white homeless men, never sleeps directly outside McDonald's or shop fronts. He prefers to live next to the fences of the multiple enclosed alleys in the neighbourhood, on which he hangs the rags he uses for lavatory paper. Colin does occasionally try to enter shops, which he did when I was once in bolo'bolo, the anarchist bookstore on Lower Main Road. I was having a conversation with the store attendant about anarchism and direct action, when there issued a fiercely spat stream of muttered swear words at the gate. The shop attendant, Thabo, asked whether he was there *again* and did not open the gate for him. I had never heard Colin speak before so the encounter was slightly intimidating for me. Thabo said that they had many social workers' contact details, but that Colin refuses their help. Thabo said, rather bitterly and dismissively, that he believes Colin has mental issues. The irony of the entire situation did not escape me. Colin manifested physically into a discussion on anarchism, the eradication of poverty and neoliberal ideals, and the mobilisation of communal direct action. The confrontation with the real, irrational, and rogue figure of the marginal Colin caused apprehension, bitterness, and dismissiveness. The

mad homeless man on the doorstep was barred from entry into a space that promotes anarchism as an ideal rather than practice.

My anxiety when confronted with Colin did not lead to any immediate distrust. I still do not distrust Colin, as I distrust the con artists that I mention below and many of the inebriated people in the suburb. I distrust them in that I do not believe they have good intentions towards me; it has been deduced from prior experience that they are not reliable, untrustworthy in that context, and they act in distrustful ways. This does not imply that these people are not moral, ethical, and trustworthy people; merely in the context of inebriation in Observatory in particular drunkenness itself is distrusted. Indeed, I would not trust my actions – *not* my personality and beliefs – inebriated, especially if I were in Observatory. At the same time as behaving the drunken people trust the space irrationally, or *need* to trust the space more as they are prone to hazy judgment. I will elaborate on the role of alcohol and drunkenness in Observatory in the following section. In the same way that the inebriated rely on the space when they cannot rely on or trust themselves, people like Colin need support from the social space. As Butler (2013) asserts, there is an imbalance of trust in precarious people (see Marková and Gillespie, 2008). This proposition is exemplified in the homeless population in Observatory, especially in the case of Colin.

Figure 12: 'Colin' by Cathy McShannon, 2013.

Colin's life history is patchy. There is much rumour in it. Whether or not they are rumours, gossips or myths – these beliefs are important in describing people's beliefs about him which is central to the discussion on imbalances of trust. There are parts of his history that are near certain,

however improbable or embellished they may seem. As Colin cannot speak for himself outside the medicated environment of Valkenberg Hospital, the rumours of him remind one of his importance as an active figure in the suburb; a suburb to which he is deeply attached. Colin, a South African, was a young science or mathematics lecturer at the University of Cape Town in the late seventies, during which time he lived in Observatory. He lived with a prominent member of the Observatory community, in whose basement he cooked methamphetamines. They were both anti-apartheid activists in the seventies. Colin's schizophrenia appeared around this time and he has been in and out of Valkenberg since; and is now apparently one of the few adult 'wards' of the state. He is in his late-fifties, even though he looks like a very old, shrunken, hunched, grey-bearded man. Colin's history problematizes the insider and outsider binary, and who has 'rights' to the city.

One very hot day in summer I wandered to the Somali-owned corner store on Lower Main Road and, as is so often the case when walking in the suburb, I encountered one of the many interesting characters known around Observatory. An old coloured woman, wearing clean, although old, clothes, who has only one eye, asked me for an ice cream when I was in the store. As I was paying, she told me that when I am around Observatory I must look out for the "sexy one-eyed *bergie* lady", or "his girlfriend", she said grinning and pointing at the storeowner. The storekeeper pointedly ignored her, and she continued, conspiratorially, "even though he sometimes chases me out of his shop, *hy hou van my* [he likes me]". We walked out of the shop, the woman holding my arm intimately, a white hospital bracelet around her wrist: "you must come visit me under the bridge on Station Road, it's my home, I'm not one of those homeless… ask for Veronica, the one-eyed *bergie* lady". I have since spoken to her often, in mixed English and Afrikaans, when she and her two male companions and one of the men's dogs are sitting in a row on the window-ledge of an empty shop at the corner of Trill and Lower Main Roads, outside the bottle store's back entrance (see Figure 13), or passing around the suburb. The two men and Veronica have often told me about the hierarchies among the beggars and homeless people present in the suburbs: "you don't trust those men [she pointed at a beggar on Station Road]. They're no good, no good at all… they don't need it, they just pretend". The people to which they referred here seem to be the 'con artists' who walk around the suburb generally asking for money for the homeless shelter for their family, although they have no family nor do they live in the area. These are the "confidence tricksters", people "trying to manipulate you" (Baier, 1986 in McLeod, 2011). It is often one middle-aged coloured man, who is seen getting on and off taxis on Main Road every morning and evening, and has never been into any of the shelters in and around Observatory, and throws away night shelter vouchers, which can be bought in Spar Supermarkets all around Cape Town. The many con artists in Observatory make trusting in Observatory difficult. The fact that one could be deceived when one does a 'good deed' makes one highly distrustful of those who ask for money. This is one of the

major reasons why walking in Observatory heightens one's distrust of the suburb and the people in it.

Figure 13: One of the *bergies'* habitual locations, 2015

Next up on the social hierarchy, according to Veronica, are the 'beggars': "that black beggar *man* on crutches, he's good, he can't work, he needs money for medicine", but many beggars ask for money 'too much'. At the same level as the beggars are the 'homeless'. It seems that the 'homeless' are people, like the *bergies*, who do not have property. The 'homeless' are people who do not inhabit a space fully. The *bergies*, in Veronica's opinion, are people who fill the space, who use the space as any resident would; whereas a 'homeless' does not know the people of the suburb and does not *talk* to, interact with, "all of Obs". Homeless people also fight with the *bergies*, "*maak kak hier* [make trouble here]", litter in the suburb, and often leave the area and return unexpectedly. The exact delineations of who is a 'homeless' and who is a *bergie* are not clear, though: not all *bergies* are "*vriende* [friends]", not all the *bergies* live in the same space, not all of them talk to people as much as Veronica does, and some do ask for money, food or cigarettes sometimes – but, Veronica and her friends always make sure to "thank you kindly, young Miss". They are also not all the same gender or same race. There are coloured *bergies*, which is the racial category that many of my participants believed was the primary feature of one; however, in Observatory, there is 'Crazy Colin', the "*wit* [white] *bergie*". There is a white *homeless* man in the suburb, too, who once asked one of the property owners in the suburb to buy him McDonald's, and, when the resident responded that he had no money on him, said, "*ag*, use your card, bro". There are finally two or three – of which I know – black *bergies* in the suburb. Veronica recognises the *bergies*' racial categories in her conversations with me as a means to describe them, although she generally uses their names. She never uses any of the other marginal people's names, on the contrary.

Figure 14: Homeless man asleep outside KFC, 2015

People who have passed through or spent little time in Observatory often miss these subtle, fluid hierarchies. Many people who live in the suburb see all the 'landless', unbound people as similar entities. Ross (2010: 18) states that the residents of her fieldsite, an informal settlement in Cape Town, "differentiate *bosslapers* [lit. bush sleepers; homeless people] from *bergies* [lit. mountain people tramps] and both from *plakkers* [squatters]". The categories in Observatory seem fluid and are very difficult to pin down, as many of these marginalised people will not talk to anyone, especially the 'con artists' or 'homeless', or the people who have obvious mental disorders. Through wandering, though, I was able to enter into conversation with most of the *bergies*, and many other liminal characters. I was also never expected to provide monetary or other forms of payment to the *bergies*: it seemed that by taking an interest in their lives was payment enough. I believe, too, that by wandering with no bags or money on me I became a person to whom they felt comfortable talking; I was not in a hurry, nor scared, nor distrustful. There are a substantial number of residents in the area who have also spoken to Veronica and her friends, and they know many of the bergies' stories. There is thus a sense of trust between the *bergies* and the residents; and many of the *bergies'* grievances are aired in *Obslife*.

There are more people in the suburb who are seemingly unbounded: people whom residents sometimes put into the same bracket as 'con-artists'. People who have just come from the hospital – sometimes showing real or fake wounds –, people who are doing collections for charity, fire and flood victims, and men looking for building and painting work ring doorbells often, to the extent that some residents have had their bells disabled. One man, Moegamat, approached me at the very beginning of my stay in Observatory. He had a Curriculum Vitae with a few references from residents around the suburb, and I employed him for some painting work predominantly based on the random feelings of trust I felt towards him. He proved to be an excellent painter and before long

his life story became clear. Moegamat, a coloured Muslim man, lives in Bonteheuwel in the Cape Flats. He grew up in Observatory, but when his father died he moved out of the area, and his mother moved to Salt River. His mother had died three weeks prior to our initial meeting. Before he started painting and doing random construction work, Moegamat worked on a long-line fishing ship, as, when he finished school, his choice was to "get into a gang or get on a ship". He travelled primarily to Singapore during Apartheid, followed by Trinidad and Tobago, Brazil, and Uruguay. He would spend eight months at sea then eight months in South Africa. However, he was suspended for fighting. Moegamat's wife works as a Woolworths cashier, as did his son, Abdul, before he moved to a school linked to a Mosque in Gauteng. Moegamat has another son who is ten years old, and a five-year-old daughter who has Down syndrome and regularly goes to the Red Cross Children's Hospital. Moegamat proved to be a character who problematises the normative trust of supposed 'wanderers' in Observatory. Moegamat actually proved to be a rather 'indigenous' occupant of the suburb. Unfortunately, Moegamat did not appear for work one day and I could not and have not been able to contact him since. The uncertainty of what happened to him adds to distrust of the city and highlights the precarity of many lives and futures.

A major area of contention in Observatory is the creation of homeless shelters to "support Observatory's sizeable homeless population" (*Obslife*, February 2012: 1). A Homeless Assessment Centre was opened in March 2012 in Franklin Street on the Salt River side of Observatory. It was intended as a "first-phase shelter and assessment centre for the homeless". It was originally intended to be in Oude Molen, and has now relocated to Maitland; a move that signified the problems the centre faced when it was in Observatory. Even though Observatory provided an ideal pilot area in which the city could start to "tackle the problem of homelessness" as there is a "high degree of coordination between various NGOs, support organisations, the Observatory Improvement District and drug rehabilitation programmes". This decision highlights the need for development from the inside if city and government interventions were to succeed. The efforts of the institutions in Observatory may not have made a huge impact on the problems in all aspects of the area yet, but their presence invokes a sense of community support for the governmental processes that can be implemented, whether or not people trust these bureaucratic interventions. This homeless assessment centre was moved to Maitland, though, due to protests from residents near to the shelter. The residents were concerned "that the assessment centre would [attract] a constant stream of vagrants to the area" (OBSID in *Obslife,* February 2012: 2). This highlights the major difficulties in implementing strategies to deal with issues in an urban environment such as homelessness. The monetarily and socially invested residents in an area have a right to protect their health, family, and interests, just as every individual has. It is an effect of the context in which we live, and the reproductions of a certain way of thinking about the world, that those who claim to

have the most legitimacy to the city are those who are fiscally invested and productive in the environment. There is a constant negotiation of individual interests and communal efforts in Observatory. The pressing, highly visible issues of poverty and homelessness, amongst many others, confront one in Observatory. The organisations to tackle these issues are predominant in the suburb. However, the implementation of governmental and bureaucratic communal strategies is halting and often fails. The residents of Observatory feel very strongly for their suburb and they are very vocal about their grievances: there are two Facebook groups, myriad email threads, and many meetings and community groups in which residents can air their thoughts. Even though many of the houses are rented, there is a steadfast core of "white liberal aging hippies and their multi-racial kids" and the "postgrads from Joburg"[15].

Observatory, then, seems to operate under the auspices of social welfare but in practice often fails in supporting its large homeless population, and in its levels of alcohol and drug abuse. There are just as many social welfare projects that start up as there are that fail, though. There are regularly small communal projects which are highly beneficial, if very small scale: the vegetable gardens, the shops' support of the homeless, and the resistance against gentrification. OBSID's efforts are constantly reimagined and reviewed to tackle the many faceted issues in the suburb. Their projects – from homeless support to crime reduction – are methodically getting more detailed and knowledgeable, and there have been many, albeit slow, positive consequences. The OBSID field worker for the homeless is Kenneth Roman, who started a 'homeless database'. It has different levels of accessibility and is designed to map homeless people's regular locations, which ones of whom takes drugs, who is especially vulnerable, where the shelters are, and so on. Roman argues that "checking the placement history of the homeless will alert fieldworkers to manipulators of the system" *(Obslife,* February 2012). Roman wants to implement a community project where residents can help "homeless people through the process of applying for ID documents and social grants" (ibid.).

## 3.3. Sex[16], drugs, and alcohol

I once found a hand-stencilled, photocopied note in my mailbox:

> "american white girls go out with black-black men even too much, wrong? A lot of girls-degusting [sic]?"

The headline of the monthly *Obslife* read: "How to buy drugs in Obs". In the same pile of mail I found a pamphlet on the evils of pornography from two separate Christian churches in Observatory,

[15] Personal communication, residents.

[16] For the purposes of this essay, I am using the word 'sex' to describe the act of sexual intercourse and activities around sexual intercourse.

an advertisement for the Narcotics Anonymous meetings in the Observatory Community Centre, a Spar Liquor shop price list, and a letter welcoming me to the neighbourhood from an unknown real estate agent as well as one from an elderly neighbour. In the months to come, the mail each day proved to be a sample of what was happening in Observatory, especially when the monthly *Obslife* newspaper was delivered. This first batch of mail presented sex, religion, race, drugs and alcohol, with a hint of community. The messages were deeply personal and highly impersonal: the handwritten, photocopied note about sex, nationality, and race in comparison to the welcome from an unknown agent. It encapsulated the tension between what is private and what is public in the suburb, and brought to the fore what the 'suburb' discusses. Furthermore, I was struck by an immediate sense of distrust: these notes called attention to what was amiss in the area, and the handwritten note was arbitrary and strange. I experienced no fear, though, merely an instant feeling of wariness. One of my interlocutors, a twenty-year-old coloured bisexual man, stated, "it's very weird, I feel simultaneously unsafe and safe in Obs. I expect to be robbed." His friend, also a student and twenty, a black gay man replied, "I feel safe in some places in the area, though. I've been to two sex parties in Observatory. I wasn't keen at first but then I was invited through a friend." The "gay sex party scene" is in De Waterkant, Sea Point, and Observatory. My participant continued, "I chose to go to the [first] Obs one because it's much closer to where I live, I know Observatory." He did go to one in De Waterkant and he said it was riddled with stimulant drugs and its populace was sleek, tanned and muscled. In Observatory, however, there was no active drug use, apart from a *zol* [marijuana cigarette] passed around the smaller group of people, who were predominantly "chilled, tattooed, creative-types". The first house he went to in Observatory was upper middle-income, owned by a married couple. There was accountability based on the privacy of the event, where one could only access it if a regular member invited one. This participant went to these events as a new gay activist with a wish to understand gay culture and society in Cape Town. He remarked that his interest was 'sociological'. Even though in some ways the people in De Waterkant and Observatory were similar, according to him, those in Observatory mobilised a greater sense of freedom and activism. The parties in Observatory were rogue, indeed, but the participants were aware, agentive, and participatory. These two interlocutors, and another of their friends – a straight white man –, proved remarkable 'strangers' to Observatory, with many connections to other 'strangers' in the area.

'Sex' is, of course, the word used for the biological, medicalised – albeit highly problematic – terms: male and female. I am focusing on how sexual activities – truncated often to 'sex' – in the suburb heighten and destabilise normative and hierarchical distrustful beliefs. The deep implications to sexuality and gender that these beliefs have are not discussed at length in this paper. The negative side of sexual activities in the suburb is deeply linked to sexuality and power; they

cause harm in a variety of ways. Erotic activities are highly embedded in political, religious, and social discourse. They also show the "intricate set of performances through which the sexual is invented and embodied" (Butler, 1990 in Weeks, 2012: 320). Those found in the suburb challenge some of the normative beliefs in morality and immorality. The strange display of solidarity between the councilperson and the brothels, which I explain below, creates a form of collectivity, conviviality, and mutuality in which normative ideals are blurred. A beneficial social development is occurring in a liminal way; the lines between government and citizen are transgressed and the legal/illegal binary is shown to be unstable in intimate social environments. However, the comments that people provide on the topics of sexual acts, sexuality and gender are telling. The following paragraph is one example of the detailed descriptions people give on the 'taboo'. People became explicit very quickly when we discussed Observatory's sex, drugs and alcohol. Furthermore, people expose normative beliefs when speaking about the 'immoral'. The description of the city official in the following paragraph shows normative beliefs, and yet his actions undermine certain other normative ideas. The labelling of certain sexual activities as 'rogue' is somewhat normative on my part; however, 'rogue' is not a judgment on what is 'moral' or 'normal'. I show throughout this chapter, as I have done throughout this essay, that 'rogue' is the liminal, the arenas in which normativity is questioned directly.

On the Liesbeek River side of Observatory the old Westoe homestead's stables have been renovated into a row of small houses. Up until ten years ago these were inhabited by a group of priests, looked after by a nun, who performed unadvertised exorcisms. Down the road from these is a home for retired sex workers. It is "full of Sea and Green Point prostitutes, [because] the rep there put them all here"[17]. According to one of my participants, a white middle-aged man, who is involved with the Observatory Civic Association (OCA), there are many more male sex workers in the suburb. Most of the sex workers work from the two "notorious S&M clubs" in Observatory, in undisclosed locations, although in a fairly non-residential part of Observatory. The male brothel is renowned for its nettle whippings, and the female brothel is alleged to be "vicious", but a client pays at least R1200 per month for private membership. It is rumoured that a high-income, high profile male and female clientele frequent the brothel. My interlocutor stated, "their major atrocious thing they do… their speciality is called 'chicken fleshing', it's really expensive, but it's hot curling tongs placed outside or inside the vagina, and the skin blisters. People pay to do it, have it done, and watch it being done." However, my participant visits these establishments unannounced once a month. He ensures that all the members and sex workers are over-18, not abused, sober, and consenting. The owners of the brothels are also required to test the sex workers for Sexually Transmitted Diseases and pay for their healthcare, maintained another participant. The man from

[17] Personal communication, district representative, 2014.

the OCA stated that "Obs experiments" and as long as it is between consensual adults, he would rather "let it be, but safely [because] people have the right to be open-minded".

It seems to be generally agreed upon that marijuana is grown in many gardens in Observatory, and that it is not the problem drug in the area. A security guard at the Observatory station said, "if only everyone could just be smoking *ganja*. It would make things better. All the *ganja* smokers in Obs are ok, they don't cause trouble, they're too sleepy". Alcohol and drugs, however, are at the root of the moments in Observatory that are rather more than rogue (see Jayne, Valentine and Holloway, 2011). There have been many instances of happening upon a homeless person urinating, defecating and vomiting on pavements, and one instance which further involved masturbation by another party. It was jarring for those who saw it, but the response was to walk away and try to ease the tension with hesitant laughter. The late-night partygoers also urinate along the pavements and sway and fall down drunkenly down the road, often stopping traffic on Lower Main Road. There are many signs of drug abuse, too. There are always signs of people who are on drugs: people on the street carefully swapping money for a little bag or pill – disconcerting, especially, when it is immediately consumed in the street, sometimes while in conversation with unknown others – people who act, look and say that they are high, and people actively taking drugs. Often these events happen at night and in the street or bars, but wafts of marijuana smoke drift over walls during the day, the bars are occupied from late morning, and once in morning traffic in the suburb, the man in the neighbouring car took cocaine off his key. The main hall in the Observatory Community Centre – where there still stands a pottery kiln built for the hippies who lived in Observatory in the eighties – is used for a variety of group meetings, including Alcoholics and Narcotic Anonymous, both of which are well attended. The aforementioned Observatory Civic Association member said that as Observatory needs them, the number of meetings went up from twice to thrice a week. In an interview, I asked him which drugs are most prominent in Observatory, to which he replied:

> "Hah! Take your pick; we've got serious problems. Always had problems. We're home to experimentation: lifestyles, dress, drugs…. Most who come to the meetings are heroin addicts… heroin is cheaper than *tik*. We're a smoking suburb, too. Eighty percent of the suburb smokes dope".

The AA and NA meetings in Observatory mobilise trust in the suburb, as disclosure is an important manifestation of trusting (see McLeod, 2011).

This temporal, spatial, and social arbitrariness of drug taking and drug involved events is one of the ways distrust manifests in everyday life in the suburb. The altered state of mind that drugs and alcohol give is only one of the ways in which fear and distrust is invoked (see Kosfeld, Heinrichs, Zak, Fischbacher, and Fehr, 2005); it is not merely the actions of intoxicated people that people mistrust, it is all actions surrounding alcohol and drugs. The distrust felt over alcohol and

drugs is deeply linked to distrust of the spaces in which these things become visible and any spaces in which they are invisible, beneath the surface; and distrust of the institutions meant to dispel the negative 'side-effects' of alcohol and drugs. The distrust present over drugs in the suburb is not merely to do with the illegality of drugs; many of my participants expressed the idea that some drugs should indeed be legal, but, there is a certain darkness about drug-taking in Observatory, and in Cape Town. As mentioned in my first chapter, alcohol has always been used as a form of control in the Cape, and this has not been forgotten in Observatory. Many people discuss the reliance on alcohol and drugs, often with specific reference to social control. Veronica, the *bergie* women who I mentioned above, is extremely proud of the fact that she is sober, and has been "released from the prison" and now, "they don't own" her, and "even though Mervin was on *tik...* you know, he got sober… before they murdered him… but, he was sober hey". Sobriety is an often-lauded subject in Observatory: a self-proclaimed 'coloured-Christian' alcohol deliveryman said that he believes people should stay sober and think for themselves, and he prayed for people in Observatory every day.

There is a "savage history of drinking in the suburb"[18]. There are eighteen *licensed* bars, fifty-five liquor licenses, eleven places of worship, and five mental institutions – private and public. Some of the major producers of 'cape smoke' and moonshine were based in Observatory. Warehouses are still hired for drug production schemes. Drugs and alcohol are two of the most widely discussed topics in Observatory. They make visible much of the rogueness in the area; and the activities involved in them seem to form a foundation of sorts for Observatory life. They do not only prove to be cornerstones in the distrust in the suburb, but also pivotal attributes in how trust is mobilised in unruly spaces (see Goodman, Lovejoy, and Sherratt, 2007; and Sherratt, 2007). The population of the first farms in Observatory, and the Cape, grew rapidly in 1658, when 478 slaves were brought to the Cape. The slaves who were too young to work were "sent to school… [and were] stimulated to industry by the promise of a tot of brandy and tobacco" (Welsh, 2000: 35). Welsh writes that:

> "The common method of reward to both slaves and Khoi Khoi was alcohol… Offering as it did a temporary escape from the unpleasantness of life and fuelling conviviality, alcohol remained, and remains, a vital instrument of social control" (2000: 60).

The method of using alcohol as payment for labour "became firmly entrenched in the eighteenth century" (Scully, 1992: 56) as the *dop* [tot] system. It created and reproduced a "rural working class" who grew dependent on alcohol. It became "intrinsic to the daily experience of male farm labourers" (ibid: 56).

[18] Paul, district representative, interview, 2014.

There is a story particular to Observatory that highlights the importance of alcohol in everyday life in the early settler period. The *vryburghers* were not allowed to engage in any economic activity apart from the farming required by the VOC. Many of their wives, female employees, and daughters, thus started businesses, namely the provision of alcohol. The wife of the free burgher of the present Mowbray area opened a pub, which is still open next to the Town Hall – as did the wife of one of the burghers in Observatory. In the early 1800s, both couples went to a wedding and got extremely drunk. In an interview, Paul elaborated:

> "So Mrs Observatory says to Mrs Mowbray, sarcastically, 'nice dress', to which Mrs Mowbray replies, 'well, you water your liquor so that's how you can afford nice things'. Mrs Observatory then says, 'well, you take all your patrons upstairs so I'm surprised you can't afford more'. A fight occurs, and it's settled by their husbands, but then, by Obs, the wagons bump, and Miss Obs jumps out and stabs Mr Mowbray in the leg with a hunting knife."

Women had a prominent role in early settler Cape Town. The harsh living conditions resulted in a high death rate: people were especially targets for wild animals and three burghers were killed in Observatory: two by lions, the other by a pregnant hippopotamus. The settlers brought smallpox to the Cape (Hislop, 2014). The population of the Cape in its entirety was small. Women became landowners and continued to do so in the South African wars. Widowed women and men would remarry members of the indigenous population – who were never enslaved under VOC law (Welsh, 2000) – and freed slaves.

Alcohol and its consumption is the "defining feature of everyday life for some people" (Ross, 2010: 28). The use of alcohol in some ritual of everyday life – whether it is using it *or* abstaining from it – cuts across supposed boundaries in societies, 'cultures', races, ethnicities, genders, religions, income groups, etc. The accessibility of the substance is nearly always controlled in some way and its use as a tool for domination occurs across humankind. Observatory, with its "culture of drinking"[19] makes visible many of the ways in which alcohol is used ritualistically in everyday life: a tool for domination, as an escape from harsh realities, for recreational social activities, for religious purposes, and as a rite of passage. It is used as a way to build trust and to lower one's ability to trust – whether an active choice or not. Many revellers in hedonistic late-night Observatory are intoxicated so that they trust other people enough to strike up conversations with unknowns, as potential sexual partners, primarily, or friends. Of course, there is the unintended side effect of lowering one's ability to distinguish who is a friend and who is a prospective enemy. It is important to reiterate here that to distrust someone is to fear that they will bring you physical or mental harm. Distrust includes this, but it is not limited to it. The activities around the acquisition and trade of alcohol also seem to invite rogue actions and distrustful situations. In Observatory, for

[19] Personal communication.

example, there are rumours that one of the very cheap nightclubs in Observatory buys the confiscated liquor from the traffic police; purchases the expired alcohol from the other, more policed bars in the suburb; and, in a drunk gesture to the past, waters down their spirits.

Ross (2010: 29) writes that:

> "Alcohol (and drugs) blurs the edges of ugliness that holds lives in thrall, and allows the emergence of particular forms of sociality-the institution of drinking friendships among them. [However] it renders people unpredictable; it is thought to undo inhibitions and strip aside culture… Drunk people are thought to be at the mercy of their emotions… My observations suggest that alcohol-use deadens the experience of structural violence but enlivens the possibilities of interpersonal violence".

Ross's observations were highlighted in her fieldsite, 'The Park', an informal settlement on the outskirts of Cape Town. The 'possibility of interpersonal violence', although of a different sort as described in the context of The Park, is highly noticeable in Observatory. Interestingly, Ross continues to argue, "many people remained in The Park because they could see no alternatives" (ibid). This sentiment is paralleled in Observatory: although a fair number of people in the area could financially access an alternative resident, there is a social, emotional, and historical investment in the space which can explain why people do not leave in the face of crime, violence, and distrust. Many residents express that living in the space provides a constant reminder of the apartheid legacy and they would find it hard to move into either a former whites-only area, or, as a coloured woman who was nearly evicted from her Observatory residence in apartheid, to "go back [to] where they wanted to put us". Cape Town's vast segregation is starkly obvious in Observatory. Unlike Johannesburg, which was a city built along segregationist urban planning (see Mbembe and Nuttall, 2008 and Oldfield, 2005), the implementation of the Group Areas Act in Cape Town required immense eviction. Besteman (2008: 3) argues that, "cities can… be sites of profoundly parochial neighbourhoods, where fear of the 'other' is more intense because the other is just a few blocks away… in Cape Town, fabulous wealth rubs shoulders with devastating poverty".

Spatial trust and distrust becomes apparent when considering drugs and alcohol in Observatory. The *Obslife* headline in April 2014 - "two shops flee Lower Main Road" – highlighted how distrust of, and indeed due to, the drug related actions and events in Observatory causes economic consequences. An internet cafe, which had been in the suburb for 10 years, a photography shop and a hydroponics trader relocated to Claremont, another suburb in Cape Town, because of the "brazen drug trade and the blatant disregard for neighbouring businesses" at Trump Towers, the apartment block on Lower Main Road renowned for the clubs that are always playing music on its ground floor. Next to Trump Towers is Cozy Bar, a convenience store with an eating area in the back. The plastic tables are often occupied, and they sell hard boiled eggs at the counter, which the owners will hand these out to the regular *bergies* in the street. This sharing of food happens

relatively often in Lower Main Road; but it is very clearly marked by the aforementioned finely-tuned differentiations between homeless people, *bergies*, con artists, and beggars, from in the suburb and 'outsiders'. There is unspoken trust between certain restaurant owners and the people who receive the food; that there will be, however irregularly, food available, and that they will not give food to those who aren't "meant to get". This phenomenon, though, is based on the discretion of the people who are working at the restaurants; many people who give something one day, will not the next. Thus, trust becomes visible in the space where distrust is manifest through drugs and 'anti-social behaviour'. It is also the part of Lower Main Road in which the OBSID trailer is, and even though there is much discontent at the irony of this, it means that its eyes are on the street (see Hentschel, 2007). As I highlighted in my first chapter, many of my participants who walked through Observatory often, felt that this stretch of road felt safer than others. This seems to be a form of social trust, and yet not quite interpersonal trust. This trust was not hindered by stereotype. As mentioned above, this stretch of road is also referred to the Nigerian side of Lower Main: race and nationality are inscribed onto a space. A young black man and his white friend from Johannesburg, however, noted, "The friendliest and trustworthiest people in Obs, in Cape Town, are the north African drug dealers."

Figures 15 and 16:

The "dodgy" (Fig. 14) versus the "fancy" (Fig. 15) sides of Lower Main Road, 2015.

The distrust of spaces in which alcohol is present is not merely found in those areas where drunken people are found. There is much distrust of spaces that provide that alcohol, no matter the present conditions. There has been recent debate over the liquor license renewal of one of the pubs in Observatory, The Wild Goose, at the end of Lower Main Road, next to Gateway to Obs. The pub was closed in December 2014[20] after a resident won a case against the counsellor who granted them the license. This resident, a white, upper-middle income woman in her early fifties, is one who is aggressively involved in discussions around Observatory. She often points an antagonistic finger of blame to another of my participants in email threads of residential issues. An instance that displayed much 'rogueness' happened on Christmas Eve, 2014. A homeless man, whom OBSID had kept moving, had been sleeping up the road from this resident's house. Late that night, the resident called OBSID to get him to move. She stood at her gate shouting at the man, who kept going back to his initial position. Eventually the OBSID guards kindly managed to get him and his belonging bundled up and willing to leave. All the way up the road the homeless man shouted back at the woman, "*jou ma se poes... jou ma se fokkin' poes* [sic]" [lit. your mother's vagina; insult]. Ironically, the woman encouraged discord while trying to domesticate the street. This resident and those in the bar's immediate area were perturbed when the house was bought by the proprietor of another bar in the area, Trenchtown, and "were not convinced by the two entrepreneurs' assurances that the establishment would be maintained as a 'quiet English pub' (*Obslife,* June 2014). The residents do not wish the strip of Lower Main Road near to Obs Gateway to turn into the "problematic" stretch near Trump Towers, and they do not wish to invade the area with drunken people late at night. Obz Square, the University of Cape Town resident on Main Road in Observatory, objected to the pub's creation, too, arguing that they did not want their students in such close proximity to places that sold alcohol. They will not rent the ground floor premises of the residence to liquor stores or bars, for example. Paradoxically, there are very few students who drink at this pub, but who rather travel to the busy, riotous student dance clubs in Claremont. It also closed by midnight on weekends, and as one of its close neighbours, I did not hear any noise from the pub over the noises of drag racing late at night and dogs' barking, Trump Towers, and private *braais* or house parties often present in the residential areas. The eyes on the sidewalk that this pub provided were highly beneficial, though, in a quieter, diurnal block of Lower Main Road, where two small coffee shops mingle with an upmarket African-inspired clothes store and a row of antique stores.

[20] An intricately decorated, welcoming Ethiopian restaurant with masses of pot plants on the veranda has recently opened in the pub's place.

Figure 17: Diurnal section of Lower Main Road, 2015

However, the presence of McDonald's and KFC create unruliness in this part of Lower Main Road. The large plots taken up by the fast-food restaurants are often peppered with sleeping bodies curled up against sun, rain, and wind. The brown paper bags of the food chains blow into the closed-off courtyards of the Victorian houses two blocks down from Lower Main. The convenience store in Obs Gateway is open for long hours and the proximity of a pub in a quiet apartment block meant that this store could be used at convenience, until late in the night. The mixed-income, multiracial, although generally twenty-five to sixty-year-old working people who frequented and owned the pub are friendly and courteous, and small rituals of nodding and smiling occur often. The store's owners, who are brothers from Bangladesh, know the pub's ex-owners, and this resulted in a feeling of spatial, social, and interpersonal trust. The fear and social, personal, and *institution's* distrust of alcohol and spaces of alcohol in the suburb has disturbed an unexpected arena of pronounced trust and community initiative in everyday living, and a subtle, dynamic and beneficial way of mobilising trust in an unruly space.

Figure 18: KFC and Obz Square, 2015.

### 3.4. Conclusion

Observatory's liminality allows for productive and beneficial ways of adjusting divisions and exclusions. But, there are activities, beliefs, and events which only serve to highlight a wide variety of social hierarchies. The 'rogueness' in Observatory underlines its liminal status, and engenders a way of thinking about how the disorder in the city can be reimagined as a convivial space. 'Rogueness' makes visible spatial and liminal trust. The 'indigenous outsider' (Scheper-Hughes, 1979: 13) and the participatory, critical 'stranger' are beneficial to the urban environment because they are the liminal between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' and form constructive social interconnections. There is much distrust apparent in Observatory, though, and it primarily revolves around alcohol, drugs, homelessness, and crime. In this chapter I discussed ethnographically examples of how this distrust is propagated and how these complex matters do indeed have negative social effects. Nevertheless, there are many ways in which these ambiguous elements in the suburb display forms of collectivity that disprove the normative understandings of them.

I examined the makers of Observatory as rogue and liminal, such as its position as a politically liminal space and one that is marked by impermanence; and how its status as such an urban space contributes to manifestations of spatial and liminal trust. I continued to an ethnographic analysis of the marginal people in the suburb, including the people who position themselves between the homed and the homeless, such as the *bergie* Veronica. Finally I posited that the ways in which people discuss and people act towards sex, drugs, and alcohol are pertinent in an examination of how trust is mobilised in Observatory. The next chapter presents the theories of trust and makes reference to the ethnographic research analysed in this chapter. I hoped to diversify the layers of trust and show how we trust certain figures in a space in this chapter, and through examination of the academic discourse around the topic I aim to show the many ways in which we trust.

# Chapter 4 – People, Society, and Institutions: Trust in the Everyday

## 4.0. Abstract

This chapter analyses the major theoretical discussions on trust, and how they relate to my fieldsite. It starts up with a focus on trust as theory. The theoretical propositions of trust predominately argue that trust should neither be merely discussed as an impersonal aspect of personality – a trustworthy person –, nor as the binary of fear, but rather as a subtle social relation and with philosophical thought (see Hawley, 2012). Observatory highlights many of the defining aspects of 'trust'. Bauer, Dobler and Förster's (2007) four types of trust are prominent in the suburb of Observatory. I believe that the mobilisation and manifestations of personal, social and institutional trust are especially important to discuss. I do not examine normative trust as much as I do the others as my research is concerned with the trust found between the norms (see Foddy, Platow, and Yamagishi, 2009, on the place of stereotypes in trust and trusting). The second section discusses the institutional trust and institutions, including OBSID, found in Observatory are presented ethnographically. Finally, I investigate personal and social trust as they are found in the suburb. I make mention of the routine activities and people who enhance feelings of spatial trust in the suburb.

## 4.1. Theories of Trust and their Manifestations in Observatory

Alex Gillespie contends that the "approaches [to trust] that posit trust as buried deep within individuals, or posit trust as guided by the invisible hand of social function, search for trust *behind* on-going interaction" (2008: 121), instead of within it. Importantly, too, are the different meanings behind trust, a point that was particularly vital for me to understand. My own understanding of what trust is expanded as I researched trust in Observatory. Gillespie (2008: 122) argues, "lay representations are historically, socially, and politically constituted" (see Lewis and Weigert, 1985). The way that people understand trust is often related to colonialism, apartheid, nationalism, the consequences of apartheid, poverty, trust in leadership, institutions, interpersonal relations, and violence. Many of the situations in which trust and distrust are found come to the fore when people discuss distrust, as illuminated throughout this essay. Nonetheless, trust is associated with loyalty, democracy, the future, and optimism. Jones (1996 in McLeod, 2011) argues that optimism:

> "Restricts the inferences we will make about the likely actions of another. Trusting thus opens one up to harm, for it gives rise to selective interpretation, which means that one can be fooled, that the truth might lie, as it were, outside one's gaze" (see also McGeer, 2008; and Walker, 2006).

The way that people in Observatory talk about trust is deeply linked to how they experienced history and how they relate to the political context in which we live. This also highlights how trust is on a continuum and that they are many forms of trusting, as well as more or less trustworthy people.

Ivana Marková, Per Linell, and Alex Gillespie (2008: 16) state that Simmel believed in "ontological, a priori generalized trust" and that, for him, "trust is above all a fundamental psychosocial feeling":

> "Without the general trust that people have in each other, society itself would disintegrate, for very few relationships are based entirely upon what is known with certainty about another person, and very few relationships would endure if trust were not as strong as, or stronger than, rational proof or personal observation" (Simmel, 1950 in Marková et al, 2008: 14).

Durkheim "presented the point of view that it is solidarity that is an essential force holding society together" (ibid.), which could lead to reification of the other in terms of societies' being subjected to objectification as groups in the name of 'solidarity', which causes distrust (Marková et al, 2008: 17). The 'solidarity' shown among the Nigerian drug dealers is an example of this. However, they indeed have been reified into a group, and this particular group, no matter how beneficial they are to the social environment, has been marked as generally distrustful. Marková, Linell, and Gillespie (ibid) point out that Simmel further argues that "trust is interdependent with the formation of knowledge" because the ways of knowing the world and concurrent socialisation occurs *within* a knowledge framework and this "determines the degree of trust that people develop with respect to one another" (ibid). Thus, "trust is situated both within the realm of knowledge that individuals form of one another and beyond its boundaries". The heterogenous society in which we live means that one has to use subtle content, context and person specifics in order to trust (ibid). Furthermore, one can trust someone with one thing and not another, in a variety of social situations. For example, one can trust a political party to do one thing and not another, as well as one's friend. Trust and distrust are also "conceptualised and rationalised" and "based on obligations and morality" (ibid: 19). These kinds of trust can become "so established, [they] can transform into common knowledge and habitual thinking".

In this kind of "trajectory of trust", trust comes about from negating one's distrust, and it could potentially come back. If trust is "negotiated, argued about, or brought in rhetorically", it means that there is little trust to be found in that situation. There is much value placed on trust: "some argue that trusting vastly increases our opportunities for cooperating with others and for benefiting from that cooperation" (McLeod, 2011: no page). Trust helps people who "tend to be powerless to exercise their rights or to enforce any kind of contract". It is essential, though, that they can trust the people in whom they put their trust. I referred to this kind of trust in the previous

chapter: marginal people, especially those such as Colin, are often powerless to exercise their legal and social rights and inadvertently trust some people in the environment around them, in order to survive. However, these 'powerless' figures need to distrust the spaces around them as they incite much fear and distrust.

Trust also relates to autonomy: "being autonomous is a skill that we acquire and exercise only in social environments where we can trust people to support it". This, of course, is based on the theory that autonomy is relational. Carolyn McLeod (2011: no page) furthers, "although often destroying trust is quick and dirty, creating trust is slow and painful". The reasons why people distrust, and the ways in which trust is destroyed, can be due to myriad conditions: personal, social, economic, political, and ideological. A political campaign, for example, makes promises to engender trust in them, but "whether such a campaign is morally appropriate…would depend on whether the resulting trust would be justified" (ibid). Furthermore, the "social or political climate of one's society [is] conducive to one's trusting well." McLeod uses an example of a woman who has been raped in a society where it is illegal; she will not fully regain that trust as she continues to live in that society (ibid). This proposition is particularly relevant in Observatory where crime is prolific. People experience many kinds of violence – including structural – in Observatory and yet still carry on their everyday lives. Many people who have experienced crime in the suburb express the sentiment that some of their trust has been lost, but there is little point moving out of the suburb as they believe it would happen anywhere; and that it indeed can be worse elsewhere. However, bitter feelings have been expressed towards certain members of the population of Observatory – namely drug users – when crimes are committed.

McLeod (2011: no page) argues, "philosophers writing on testimony argue that... almost all knowledge... depends for its acquisition on trust in the testimony of others". Foley (2005 in McLeod, 2011) states, "to have knowledge, including knowledge acquired through others' opinions and through our own past opinions, we need ultimately to trust ourselves". Trust can be emotionally based, too: "these characteristics (of emotion that trust shares) concern how emotions narrow our perception to certain 'fields of evidence': those fields that support the emotion" (McLeod, 2011: no page). Baier argues that the condition that "trusting can be betrayed, or at least let down, and not just disappointed" is a vital aspect of trust (1986: 235). McLeod (2011: no page) reiterates, "a refusal to be vulnerable tends to undermine trust or prevents it from occurring at all". She writes that "reliance without the possibility of betrayal is not trust", and:

> "The trustee must be competent and committed to do what the trustor expects of him or her, and may have to be committed in a particular way. Last, in cases of paradigmatic trust at least, the trustor must be optimistic that the trustee is competent and committed" (ibid).

The epistemology of trust, then, focuses on a central question: 'ought I to trust or not' (ibid). McLeod (ibid) posits, "people tend to ask this sort of question only in situations where they cannot take trustworthiness for granted – that is, where they are conscious of the fact that trusting could get them into trouble." People would ask this question if they are in unknown situations, or situations similar to those in which they have been betrayed in the past: "thus, the question…is particularly pertinent (though not restricted) to a somewhat odd mix of people that includes victims of infidelity, abuse, or the like, as well as foreign immigrants and travellers" (ibid). This point is particularly highlighted in Observatory where there are many victims of crime, victims of political ideology, victims of structural violence, and foreign travellers and immigrants.

Horsburgh (in McLeod, 2011: no page) argues that 'therapeutic trust' "involves the normative expectation that the trustee *ought* to do what one trusts him or her to do, rather than optimism that s/he *will* do it". The act of caring seems to be integral to trusting and trustworthiness, and "the particular reason why care is central is that it allows us to distinguish between trust and mere reliance" (McLeod, 2011: no page). This is especially displayed in the dynamics at work in Groote Schuur and Valkenberg Hospitals. The patients of these two hospitals rely on the care of the medical practitioners in these facilities. This goes beyond mere reliance, as the patients need to believe that the commitment and care of the practitioners will be given, no matter the context. There is the normative expectation that the official carers can be *trusted*, both to do their jobs and to care, but there is not much trust shown towards the actual hospitals and the bureaucracy congruent to them. The medical practitioners are indeed trusted, but people do not trust that there will be extended care in these institutions: "people are kicked out of the hospitals if they get too full"[21]. The economic position of these hospitals undermines the innate trust they should embody.

The hospitals, too, have changed the relation to the street: people wander out of the hospitals into Observatory, and people express uneasiness when they remember that many of the people in the street could be physically or mentally ill. However, there is distrust shown in who to believe needs care, and who does not. There are many people who beg at the houses in Observatory because they have been released unexpectedly from Groote Schuur Hospital and need to get home. Many people who have inhabited the suburb, even for a short time, distrust these people, as there has been a spree in con artists pretending to be sick people. The owner of the fish shop opposite Groote Schuur stated that the generally lower-income people who are released from the hospital often land up in his shop in order to ask for directions around Observatory. This instance highlights the distrust shown in the hospital: "the people there should give these sick people directions, and more help"[22]. This distrust of the institution of the hospital is furthered by experiences people have had there. For

[21] Personal communication, district representative.
[22] Personal communication, fish shop owner.

example, a white, middle-income participant's friend was lost on the way home from a night out in Observatory – which seems to be a relatively frequent occurrence. The friend had taken a taxi back to his home, but my participant did not know that, and the morning after the night out went to Groote Schuur to check if he was there. After being ushered through a security check for weapons, my participant, Jamie, was pointed to the trauma ward and the morgue to go to look for his friend alone. This uninhibited access to the bowels of the hospital illuminates the shortage of staff, the serious nature of the trouble with which the hospital must deal, and a breakdown of the hierarchy usually present in a hospital. The trust of the care one will get is also broken down: although the hierarchies present in carer-patient relationships are indeed problematic, the unintended subversion of the boundaries in the hospital causes great uneasiness. People have expressed that they would not go to Groote Schuur because they "don't trust it, even though [they are] sure they doctors and staff are very qualified". Most of my participants, from all social locations, noted that there is too much horror at the hospital for their trust in it; many would prefer to go to any of the other government hospitals around Cape Town, or else a private clinic. This highlights the trust shown towards a *space*, rather than the people in it. The looming forms of Groote Schuur and Valkenberg Hospitals further inhibit trust in the suburb itself: "Obs wouldn't be my first choice [in which to live]… those hospitals scare me"[23]. Govier (1997: 6) writes that "people also do not, or cannot, trust one another if they are easily suspicious of one another". This directly relates to the distrust of a *space* that induces fear. If people are suspicious of a space itself, it is less likely for them to trust the people within it. The disorder apparent in the hospitals in Observatory is one of the ways fear is caused in the suburb, which results in feelings of suspicion and distrust; a topic on which I elaborated in Section 2.4.

## 4.2. Institutional Trust in Observatory

There are many institutions set up in and around Observatory, and the city at large, which hope to enable trust in a space and between its people. These institutions in this section are some of the most visible manifestations of structure, control, and power. This section includes mention of the institution of the Observatory Improvement District (OBSID). Finally, I will argue that institutional trust is mobilised with reference to these institutions, as well as the *institution's* trust (see Robins, 2005c).

The editor of the *Obslife* newspaper was a veritable well of information on OBSID. The editor shows much hope in Observatory; unfortunately his mother passed away recently from

[23] Personal communication, young, black, female resident of greater Cape Town.

injuries sustained in a mugging as she was leaving book club in the suburb. The trust he shows in the suburb has been problematised by horrendous personal experiences. Somehow, though, these experiences do not automatically lead to desertion of the area. Of course, such crime can happen anywhere, but it is of great import that no matter what rogue activities occur in Observatory there still appears to be hope that this indeed does happen everywhere and that things will get better. I have encountered many people who have been affected by crime in the area who are still ardent supporters of the suburb. I believe that this hopeful outlook by many of the residents reflects a deep hope for the future of South Africa: the two sentiments were often expressed simultaneously. The visible community action with regards to safety in Observatory seems to soften the blow of rather devastating crime, as does the constant reporting and discussion of the crime that is happening in the suburb. The ease with which one can access information about crime in Observatory quells fear and, although the reports reflect a vast number of crimes that occur in the area, the fact that it is much discussed seems to strengthen people's trust in the area; a sentiment that is also often expressed about South Africa's constant discussion of its problems. The hoped-for degree of candour in the spread of information on problems in the suburb builds a form of trust in Observatory.

Every month the *Obslife* newspaper features a spread on OBSID's plans, people, and problems. The OBSID managers and the security guards, who predominately come from the area or from Nyanga, often talk to the editor as the newspaper provides a space for them to contact the residents of Observatory. OBSID trailers are widely situated around Observatory and the security guards and patrol cars are often seen. This provides OBSID's visibility to most people who enter the suburb. The OBSID guards and patrol vehicles are strangers in their own right: they do not follow any set pattern on their patrols, and the trailers suggest an unbounded state in the space. Charl Brooks, the head of the security company, Orbis, which is contracted to OBSID, argues that he "doesn't like the tagging system that requires certain patrollers to follow a certain route" (*Obslife,* April 2012: 7). Brooks believes that "such a system undermines trust in the patrollers [and a] hands-on management style engenders trust and should do away with the need for a tagging system". Orbis also provided the security for the Groote Schuur and Woodstock Improvement District before moving to OBSID. They initially dedicated more guards in the day but reviewed this, as "the biggest problem in Observatory emanates from rogue night clubs in the area", which are not all operating in the terms of their liquor licences, as I discussed in the previous chapter. OBSID is also starting to move away from foot patrols to camera surveillance. This is a further example of how Foucault's ideas on the panopticon (1977) are mobilised in the suburb, and cities in general. The constant unseen surveillance of cameras is meant to ensure that people self-discipline. Many people do not fully understand the ways in which cameras will help instilling a feeling of

safety in the suburb: their predominant fears are based on the fact that the camera surveillance will be reviewed after any event has taken place, even if people are watching constantly, and mobilisation of help will occur more slowly. The self-discipline hoped to occur with this surveillance becomes defunct if people do not care if the cameras are there or not. Distrust in the suburb is heightened in two ways because of this, then. The cameras do not instil trust in the people who enter the space, and they take away a method that did engender this trust – the foot patrols. The cameras, too, and the unseen, controlled surveillance they symbolise are distrusted substantially: people are reminded of a police state, namely apartheid, and the invisible enemy.

Figure 19: OBSID guard at the railway tunnel entrance, 2015

City improvement districts are often only found in Central Business Districts and 'inner-cities' (see Besteman, 2008). OBSID was based on the New York Improvement District, and was officialised after the Groote Schuur Improvement District was initiated by the University of Cape Town's Vice Chancellor, Max Price. The Groote Schuur Improvement District was formed because of the murders of three UCT students in 2010: two in Observatory on Main Road, and one in Woodstock. At that time, OBSID had already stated with two patrols funded by Observatory residents and based on volunteering. The basic structure of OBSID was based on the Cape Town Improvement District's work; but was argued to be more of a civic association rather than a 'quasi-state structured public company', one of my participants in OBSID stated. When OBSID was made official, a levy paid by residents was introduced. 51% of the property-owners in Observatory were in favour of everyone's requirement to pay the levy. Black River Park, the large business complex on the Liesbeek River, swayed the vote. The levy is based on the value of the property. This levy is still controversial, however many home and business owners are content to pay the levy. The people who are most happy to pay the levy are also the ones who expressed the most hope for the future of the suburb, and voiced a substantial amount of trust in the suburb. These residents are spread throughout Observatory, including in the contended 'dangerous' areas of Observatory, and are mixed-income and multi-racial, and have lived in the suburb for varying amounts of time. These

residents also had knowledge of what the levy entails, and what they have access to by paying the levy.

These services also include the rejuvenation of Observatory, such as creating urban gardens (see Figure 20) and cleaning the suburb. An interesting article in the *Obslife* newspaper (February, 2012) stated that there had been complaints from residents that the OBSID cleaners have been seen “sitting around doing nothing”. The article explains that the cleaners start at 6:30 and have tea at 8:30, so as not to disturb people who live and work in the area and to avoid the heat of the day. Most have to leave for work at four o’clock in the morning, as they are not residents of Observatory. This is clearly the case when one notes the times of the cleaning and speaks to the cleaners, who are primarily black women who travel from Nyanga or Khayelitsha. The visible general cleanliness of Observatory, though, does not dispel the anxieties of some residents that they cannot trust the cleaning staff and institutions in place to ‘better’ the suburb.

Figure 20: OBSID pavement garden, 2014.

There are many ‘institutions’ intended to invoke a community spirit in Observatory, and concurrent institutional trust in how one relates to others in a space, the stability in one’s environment, and in efforts to provide a positive environment in which to live. The following examples of ways in which institutional trust is invoked in the suburb are varied, and ways in which institutional and social distrust are negated. The dog park in Arnold Street in Observatory was created for the dog owners of Observatory. It was open to the public for a few years but had to be locked and residents could buy a key from OBSID for R17. It was transformed into a less economically accessible, private space because “human faeces, broken bottles and needles”

(*Obslife*, September 2012) littered the grass. The park is very busy, though, and there is a very trusting atmosphere, where children and pets play together without much supervision. However, the dog of one of my participants, a white woman in her twenties, was badly attacked and injured by another dog, and the owner of the attacker's brusque attitude towards the incident has diminished my participant's trust of the space, the people who use the space, and the owner in particular. It is indeed true that trust is slow to materialise, but distrust can be caused in a moment. One's negative experiences with regard to trust often outweigh positive occurrences. Institutions that seem very positive to trust have problematic aspects in their development and maintenance, which hinder interpretations of trust.

## 4.3. Personal and Social Trust in Observatory

The social, and sociable, nature of Observatory contributes to the trust found in the area. There are many, regular occurrences in which unmistakable social and interpersonal trust is mobilised, some of which are unexpected, as I will demonstrate below. The regularity and nature of these instances creates a feeling of timelessness in a rather dynamic environment. Many of these occasions also marshal feelings of autonomy and agency in a precarious space. The sound of hooves on tar is heard every Tuesday, when a local Rastafarian drives his horse-and-cart around the suburb calling for odds and ends – old clothes, cutlery, crockery, equipment, etc. His horse's coat shines and his cart is frequently repainted. The City of Cape Town's animal control unit regularly check all the working horses in Cape Town, and there are a variety of funds open for the maintenance of the carts and care of the horses. The Rastafarian said that many of the Rastafarian population has moved out of the suburb because they are erroneously thought to be the cause of the drug trade in Observatory. He hopes that Observatory renews its strange, but not dangerous, atmosphere. Every Wednesday, a group of coloured men – most of whom are related to the three oldest men – drive around the neighbourhood in their *bakkie* [pick-up truck] selling fresh fruit. They only sell in Observatory but also branch out to serve ex-residents who they have come to know. They run a fruit farm roughly one hundred kilometres outside Cape Town and would bring fruit to their families who lived in Observatory. Through word of mouth they started to sell to Observatory entire, and are renowned for the freshness of their fruit. Every day at eleven o'clock in the morning, many young – in their twenties and thirties – coloured people in smart suits stand smoking outside the colonic irrigation clinic on Lower Main Road, often joined for some coffee by some of the other small business employees around the area. Every day the school bells are heard from the many schools in the neighbourhood. The call to prayer from the mosque floats across Observatory in the evening air.

These routine activities, among many more, illuminate ways in which social trust is rallied in Observatory. Through networks of trust people can expand their social actions and make connections in an urban setting. The ritualistic nature of these activities enhances that trust[24]. It develops mutuality and relations among many different groups of people, and positive links are made to other places in the city (Mbaye, 2013; Chari and Gillespie, 2014). Furthermore, as Mbaye (2013: 259) argues, "the principle of solidarity presupposes an economic manifestation of 'reciprocity' that sustains the solidarity between the different members of the community". The informality of the fruit-sellers and Rastafarian collector, as well as the positive developments involved in these cases, add to the spatial trust in the suburb. Furthermore, their position as 'strangers' highlights how strangers can be trusted and prove a vital part in the suburb. The navigation of social trust speaks directly to how people manage in a hostile urban environment.

Figure 21: Horse, Cart, Man and Child in Lower Main Road, 2015.

Social trust is the belief that unknown people one meets in one's everyday life are not going to harm one. It is the basic assumption that allows us to function in spaces where we do not know everyone we meet and where there is space for chance encounters. This form of trust is mobilised when one does not have prior knowledge of a person, including having no knowledge of the role they could play in one's life. Interpersonal trust, on the other hand, operates on the premise that one knows ones social relation to another person: for example, a doctor-patient relationship or an

[24] See Ross (2008) on 'rhythms of the day'.

interaction with a shop attendant. In these cases, one is guided in one's trust through knowledge of a social 'role' and of experience with that role and situation. Social trust is also mobilised through experiential reasoning, but it relies on more general assumptions. There are also 'abstract systems' of trust management that call on 'macro-social relations' (Bauer, Dobler and Förster, 2007), which is concerned with the grouping of people, and the congruent placement of rules on such groups. This can diminish trust. Social trust is also "based on a specific strand of experience that is independent of other strands and to some degree also of generalisations" and "if the level of basic social trust in society is low, interpersonal trust may become more relevant" because it enables interactions with a "limited number of others despite all the insecurity that prevails in other interactions" (ibid).

Bauer, Dobler and Förster (2007: 10) describe interpersonal trust as a "micro-social relation", which is "described in terms of dichotomies such as intimate or familiar versus anonymous (stranger)… the house/home versus street, private versus public sphere". This kind of trust is experiential and individually experienced. Furthermore, there are context-specific limitations, for example there are some limited forms of trust interpersonally which do not exceedingly matter to the individuals. This kind of trust is also present in already existing relationships (Bauer, Dobler and Förster, 2007). Interpersonal trust is largely based on whether the stakes are high or low. These stakes also apply to when truths are told. There are exceptions to this in Observatory; primarily when people have a form of interpersonal trust in an especially rogue environment. For instance, my neighbours gave me their keys in order for me to check on their house and water their plants for three weeks when they went on holiday. The stakes were very high in this situation: their whole house's safety was in my hands. I had only known them for four months, but because of my position as a neighbour and because the alternative was to leave their house empty, they had implicit interpersonal trust for me. Of course, they had had time to gauge my abilities, personality, and history, but apart from knowing that I was capable, they did not know I was indeed competent or trustworthy. As I will highlight in the following paragraph, interpersonal and social trust deeply relate to how much one shows to have financially *and* socially invested in a space. This investment is haphazard in Observatory and it does not equate with property necessarily. The stranger can be socially invested in a space, for example, and this means that trust is shown in peculiar situations.

One Saturday morning before a vintage car festival in Observatory's Lower Main Road, I met Dennis, who sat down arbitrarily at my table outside a restaurant. At the particular restaurant at which I sat with Dennis, he was well known and is a "VIP all along this road". Dennis is a familiar figure, although his position as a 'stranger' is unclear. Dennis, a forty-year-old coloured man, moved to Observatory when he was twelve years old, "'cos it was a 'grey area', you know, in

Apartheid", and spent twenty-seven years in the area, before moving to Woodstock last year. His father is a builder, and was an antique dealer at 131 Lower Main Road, which is still an antique dealership. Dennis's mother is a liquidator, and he lives with both his parents, who taught him to speak fluently Afrikaans, English, Xhosa, and Italian. Dennis was very observant and provided an in-depth commentary of Observatory. Simmel's argument that the 'stranger' is often party to being told intimacies ([1908] 1971) materialised when Dennis said, "I don't know if this is appropriate to say on our first meeting… it could be inappropriate… but you are so open and kind… I had an accident and that's why I'm a little… slow". It was clear that Dennis suffered from speaking difficulties, but his admission was surprising in the context of the public restaurant, in which people who know each other do not often even greet. He also didn't work for twenty-two years because of his accident, and that is one of the reasons why he spent time in Observatory even when he moved to Woodstock: he felt comfortable walking around in Observatory and after a while the changes in the suburb interested him, and he "used [his] walking around to look at people changing, and who comes to the suburb is different to how it was but the kind of people who live here are the same". Dennis noted the human geography of Lower Main Road:

> "Hawkes and Findlay [the hardware] own the whole block. Jason and Tony own Trenchtown, and Tony also owns Obz Café but there he's the glorified caretaker. There are lots of couples who have businesses here. And families. Also, now there are lots of UCT and foreign students who come here for a bit. Some come just to party, others come to rent for a bit. But most of them don't stay, and they don't really talk to people here. You know, UCT is la-di-da like that."

Dennis highlighted what many people, especially those who have inhabited the suburb for some time, express. There is more trust in those people who have a *social* investment in the space. Those that are known by many others are more likely to be somewhat trusted. For example, a drunk student, who had lived in the suburb for five years, and who had many interactions with those who were more 'indigenous' to the suburb, was trusted by Dennis, even as he wandered down the road, using plants as microphones, at eleven on a Saturday morning. Conversely, a group of three American young women, one of who shouted, "hey, I'm an American dyke", were not trusted by him. These two incidents highlight much: paradoxically, the young, drunk man who was walking alone was more trusted than a group of sober young women. The figure who had shown interest in the dynamics of Observatory and who showed an equal possibility of staying and leaving was more trusted as he walked down the street. The three women who were 'wanderers' were not trusted, even though they displayed more 'trustworthiness' on mere presence. There were also subtle dynamics that the young man showed which contributed to his more trusted position: when walking on the pavement he was respectful of oncoming foot traffic, and would step back to let people pass.

Conversely, the women walked three abreast which immediately mobilised a feeling of irritation in the other pavement occupants; many people looked back at them, scowling.

One of my neighbours and subsequent interlocutor and gatekeeper, a white Capetonian woman who is a psychologist and has lived in Observatory for about thirty years, gave me some poems she had written on Observatory in the eighties and more recently. In her poetry, she captures many experiences I have had in Observatory. In a poem written in 2008, Adrienne describes Bob:

> "the ancient bearded eternal
> Man whose gargantuan dog
> Is always called
> Rex
> He waved, he always waves
> He never does not greet
> Me"

Her *poem for the 26 july 2006* speaks about walking in Observatory and describes the children who sit on the school steps in the dark of the early morning and evening waiting for their transport; and continues to describe: "someone walking ahead of me down lower main road/ Smoking dope, strong smell". These images represent invocations of personal and social trust in the suburb. The 'reliability' of seeing certain people is a pivotal deciding moment in whether to trust the person. Many new residents of the area argue that they felt more comfortable in and trusting of the suburb when they were aware of familiar faces, and especially when these people greeted them. Very few residents know the name of the "ancient bearded eternal man", nor have ever spoken to him, but his, and his dog's, presence instil a sense of continuity in a restless, ever-changing suburb. One of my interlocutors stated that, "I trust and know most of my neighbours [and] you get to know who the dodgy people are". The presence of children, too, contributes to the spatial trust in and of the area. At the same time, the children who sit long hours outside the school or walk up to Main Road to get taxis display the inequality in the suburb. The pupils at the Observatory Junior School are predominately black South Africans from Nyanga or Khayelitsha[25]. There are not enough residential children of the area to fill up the school. However, there are a number of preschools in the area, which appeals to families with young children. Many children's activities are apparent on the street: there are many groups of children who skateboard in the suburb around their places of residence, often in the middle of the road. Spatial trust becomes apparent in this situation, especially as Observatory is known for its narrow streets and "crazy" drivers. There is an interesting racial dynamic shown here, too. The children who skateboard in the quieter residential roads are white,

[25] Informal discussion, Paul, district representative, 2013.

coloured, and black. The children who skateboard in the busy main road that marks the border of Salt River are predominately coloured.

Figure 22: Observatory Junior School's vegetable garden, 2015

This displays the racial layout of the suburb: although it was a grey area in apartheid, the smaller houses closer to the lower income suburb of Salt River and the industrial warehouses on that side of Observatory are generally occupied by middle income coloured families, young couples of all races, and students renting cheap rooms in communal houses. The houses here are also vicinal to the mosque and many Islamic families inhabit this area. The houses here are cheaper (Sharon Ball Estate Agents and Werner Properties, 2014): a two bedroom property with off-street parking – a valuable asset in Observatory as many cars are broken into – on this side is usually around R1-million, whereas a property with two bedrooms with off-street parking on the side closer to where the original, bigger houses in Observatory were is approximately R2-million. The less compact side of Observatory is populated by middle-income people of all races, although there are many more upper-middle income black and white people than in the 'Salt River side'. There are few middle-aged South African black people living in the area; the racial spatial divisions implemented in apartheid are still apparent in Observatory. The visitation to the suburb reflects a very racially mixed urban environment at certain times. The house prices have gone up substantially in the entire suburb in the years since the Observatory Improvement District was executed, which could possibly heighten spatial inequalities apparent in the city.

Figure 23: Positive Day/ I Love Obz graffiti above Spar, 2015.

## 4.4. Conclusion

As this chapter has demonstrated, there are many definitions and understandings of trust. Theories of trust can be found in many academic contexts; including anthropology and philosophy. There are many different understandings of trust, but it seems that “trust is above all a fundamental psychosocial feeling” (Simmel in Marková, Linell and Gillespie, 2008: 16). There is no basic definition of the multi-faceted trust, however, which is one of the reasons why it is useful to analyse in conjunction with a complex urban environment. There are some pertinent cases of the types of trust found and the mobilisations of trust in Observatory, as I highlighted in my first section. I mentioned Groote Schuur Hospital with reference to the trust that results from the act of caring; much distrust results from the presence of the hospital. Furthermore, the hospital blurs private and public spaces. In sections 4.2 and 4.3, I discussed three of the four types of trust that Bauer, Dobler and Förster (2007) propose: social, personal, and institutional trust. Personal, social, and institutional (dis)trust are mobilised often in the everyday lives of people in Observatory, as I showed through mention of OBSID, Dennis’s thoughts, and the routine activities that occur in the area, as well as by continuing arguments on the ‘stranger’ and the ‘rogue’. I conclude my research in the following chapter.

## Chapter 5 – Rogue Urban Connections: Concluding Comments

### 5.0. Abstract

This chapter summarises and concludes this dissertation by discussing the arguments presented in each chapter and their basis in endogenous ethnographic research in Observatory, Cape Town.

### 5.1. Conclusion

Observatory is somnolent in early dawn. The only sounds are the seagulls' squawks while they sun themselves on the roofs, an occasional foghorn from the harbour, and the vague, wave-like sound of light traffic. An air of suspense hangs between resting and waking. The last partygoers have drowned drunkenly into their beds, and the early-risers quietly walk their dogs or load their surfboards onto their cars. The strong fishy smell that is blown in from the sea at night lingers, before the diurnal smell of the brewery in Newlands replaces it. The quiet, empty Lower Main Road seems anachronistic in the modern city. There will later be a dramatic surge in activity in the relatively densely populated suburb. Police and ambulance sirens rend the air. The hospital, student residence, and apartment blocks will wake up. This results in an overspill of sewerage onto the bowling greens opposite Hartleyvale sports ground, as the 1930s sewerage lines cannot handle the additional 16 000 people at Groote Schuur Hospital, the 800 students housed at Obz Square and the many more apartments that have been built to answer calls for 'densification'. Even though much of the sewerage is sent to Athlone sewerage works, there is still overspill at seven in the morning and evening – when people are waking up and settling down, and when it's visiting hours at the hospital. The prosaic ways in which densification is being initiated produce many problems for the suburb. Observatory is a place of anxieties and vice, but also of hopes and desires. It is a space of liminalities, just as South Africa is. There is non-permanence and anonymity to it. It is a place of considerable ambiguities. It is a place that heightens *and* destabilises normative, hierarchical beliefs and structures. Observatory is marked by preservation and of ruin: the expensive restored Victorian mansions stand next to the vandalised remains of a dairy farm. A war memorial with a disregard for race stands on a green of buried, bulldozed homes. It is important to note that one can use emotions and feelings to understand a space, and 'trust' is a major part of human relations in a city and intrinsic to the way people operate in an urban environment. Observatory is a place where a careful balance of trust and distrust is required. The division and categorisation of the South African urban landscape under apartheid

legislation caused societal hierarchies and affect the way people trust and distrust a space. In order for productive and beneficial urban social connections to occur, the constructive 'rogue intensities' and sidewalk subtleties in a city must be understood, renegotiated, reimagined, and maintained. Strangers, walkers, wanderers, residents and visitors amalgamate on the city streets. The streets of Observatory are negotiated in unexpected ways: where criminals police the streets, and rumour and gossip are applied before rational thought in decisions to trust.

Throughout this essay I have argued that trust is an integral part to life in an urban environment. It is an ambivalent and potent strategy of urban survival in contemporary South Africa. Trust, as I have shown, has no simple or clear meaning or invocation. These subtle forms of (dis)trust appear especially in liminal areas. Furthermore, the ways trust is mobilised are dynamic and unexpected. The narrative of trust allows us to understand the intricate ways in which people manage to live in an urban environment.

In my first chapter, I argued that an endogenous anthropological approach was necessary to describe and understand fully the dynamism of trust and the city, as it is in the disorder that the beneficial ways of trusting and living are found. Thus, I walked the city, through a 'calculated drifting', in order to see the subtleties in the urban environment. In this chapter, I further discussed the 'stranger' as one of the liminal characters who proves to be an entity that adjusts and produces trust in Observatory. 'Strangers' are often aware and self-reflexive in their decisions to trust the spatial environment of Observatory. They mobilise forms of liminal trust that are pertinent to an understanding of everyday life in a South African urban space. The participatory 'stranger' opens up new arenas for trust and problematise social binaries. The 'stranger' is distinct from the 'indigenous inhabitant', including 'indigenous outsiders', and from 'wanderers'. The 'stranger' often denies the need to assimilate. The non-permanence of the suburb is heightened by the mobility integral to the stranger. Observatory is very mobile, globally and locally. People come and go; come and stay indefinitely; and leave. People who inhabit Observatory that are mobile show the most critical understandings of society and trust. It seems that it is necessary to break the "Cape Town Bubble"[26] in order to understand everyday narratives in the city itself. Judgment and prejudice comes without knowledge and mobility. Social hierarchies cannot order that mobility for beneficial forms of collectivity and community to reproduce. My first chapter further mentioned the relevant history of 'strangers' in Cape Town: of which there were many, including both the settlers and the nomadic Khoisan. The rogueness apparent in Observatory mirrors the rough living environment and unruly people of early Cape Town. I continued my discussions on the 'stranger' and trust through examination of Jane

[26] Personal communication.

Jacobs's ideas on the sidewalks and the streets of a city, and how the sidewalks of Observatory make clear various trustable strangers; as well as some who are less so. The safety of the streets, particularly that which is managed by those on the sidewalk, is highlighted in Observatory's Lower Main Road. This brought my chapter to an analysis of the supposed binary of trust and fear, with reference especially to the *fear* versus the *distrust* of places and people. Sensationalism exacerbates the feelings of fear towards the suburb, and distrust is easily mobilised when one fears. My first chapter, then, discussed the framework of my methodology, how my methodology applied to my research, the 'stranger' figure in Observatory – of whom I was one –, and the arenas in which the 'stranger' becomes visible. These arenas also make visible various forms of trust, specifically that to do with safety and fear.

My second chapter, Chapter 3, focussed on the state of 'betwixt and between': 'liminality', as well as they ways in which urban marginality is affected by race, class, income, profession, and land ownership. I highlighted how a state of liminality has become permanent in Observatory; the uncertainty of the space is certain. In section 3.1, I posited that it is the 'rogueness', suspended reality and liminality of Observatory that make trust particularly visible in the suburb. Observatory is a politically, ideologically, racially, and religiously liminal place. However, there are still ingrained class borders, as well as boundaries between 'cliques', which people find hard to cross. The strangers provide a conduit between groups through their denial of assimilation, as I illustrated in Chapter 2 (my first chapter). Integration and conviviality become possible in these liminal spaces. The carnivalesque contributes to the rogueness in the area, and also heightens social divisions. In the second section of this chapter, I examined how some *marginal* people are rather 'liminal' in Observatory: the *bergies* are between being homed and homeless. Observatory is a place where distinctions in marginal people become apparent. Finally, I discussed how sex, drugs, and alcohol in the suburb also make visible social distinctions and rogueness. The arbitrariness of alcohol and drugs is at the root of many of Observatory's difficulties and the residents' complaints. There are ways in which the activities inherent in sex, drugs and alcohol problematise many contextually intricate binaries between legality and illegality, trust and distrust, and 'good' and 'bad'. My second chapter continued my arguments on trust and the 'stranger', as well as how trust is a potent strategy of urban survival. The ethnography in Chapter 3 reveals much about the predicaments of urban life in Observatory. For example, the lack of understanding and communication between the homeless population and the landed residents in Observatory has resulted in tension and distrust. The accounts that Veronica gave me problematises the homeless/homed binary, and illuminates much larger issues in the

city, as well as in the politically and historically entrenched ideas around productive citizens and land ownership.

My arguments around spatial and liminal trust led the research to a discussion of the manifestations of personal, social and institutional trust in Observatory in Chapter 4. I first analysed the theoretical and epistemological background of trust. Trust is ephemeral and visceral. It is a social contract and communal understanding that is embedded in social life. It requires collectivity and mutual understanding of strengths and weaknesses in order to function positively, and it is unstable in some contexts. Personal and social histories affect trust. Minority, vulnerable, and marginalised groups who have been subjected to structural violence lead to a greater sense of fear and distrust, as I mentioned in my first chapter. Trust and distrust are distinct from goodwill, vulnerability, reliance, and fear. In the second section of my final chapter, I posited that trust could be engendered through and by institutions, of which there are many in Observatory. Some of these reinforce destructive boundaries, but some show positive outcomes, especially when social developments have happened from a 'liminal' 'within'. In the final section of Chapter 4, I elaborated on the regular mobilisations of social and interpersonal trust in Observatory, often in unanticipated arenas and people. The everyday manifestations of trust are important to people's navigating of their social actions. Some of the activities present in the suburb further add to ways of living in the city; people make connections at a personal level and routines are used to boost social trust. However, I discuss how there is racial and class separation in these routine activities, which reveals much about the city at large.

In this research, then, I have discussed the ways in which people manage to live in an urban environment marked by a history of segregation; present boundaries between races, classes, income groups, social groups and nationality; and a supposed 'disorderly' environment. I discussed Observatory as a microcosm of the subtle and dynamic ways of living in a South African urban environment. I used an endogenous anthropological approach when addressing the issues I wished to understand. Through the theoretical framework of trust, liminality and the 'stranger', I addressed the problem of undertaking research in a dynamic urban environment, the subtle intricacies at work in the city, and how people manage to live in a 'rogue' environment. The 'rogue', too, contributes to an understanding of trust and people's agency and autonomy. I showed that through (dis)trust people can manage to make beneficial connections across boundaries and gain hope in the future. However, the mechanisms of (dis)trust also heighten social hierarchies and the binary of fear and trust makes tension in Observatory, and contributes to the segregation of certain groups of people. Observatory, then, proved to be a fieldsite in which

unique ways of living became visible, as well as where social divisions were revealed, through the mobilisation of trust and distrust.

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## Appendix 1: Map of Lower Main Road