DANCING THE NIGHT AWAY:

A HISTORY OF JOHANNESBURG'S SOCIAL DANCING WORLDS, 1920s to 1950s

by

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…because dance is difficult to describe…it is elusive in the historical record [and therefore] its deeper cultural implications are even harder to trace... [1]

[1] J. Malnig, *Ballroom, boogie, shimmy sham, shake*, 2009, p. 19.

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Abstract

This doctoral study uses social dance as a lens to reflect on race relations and class divisions in the greater Johannesburg region. It offers a new perspective by exploring why and how communities chose and recreated popular social dances from the global West to suit their restrictive local social circumstances. It explores a critical half century in the South African past, 1920s to 1950s, a time when segregation predominated, and apartheid was pending which influenced every aspect of life. By 1928 Johannesburg was the major city in South Africa and on its periphery, it had three of South Africa's largest townships allocated for people designated as black. It also had an expanding entertainment hub including palais de danse, dance halls and a number of teachers who taught the latest dance trends from abroad. This study explores how imported social dances were integrated into the new culture of white and black middle-class elite. Using alternate and underexplored sources this research reflects on why members across the spectrum of South African society could and wanted to dance and how they recreated their dancing world to be sustainable in their restrained and restricted environment.

Keywords

Social dance; Johannesburg; jive; jitterbug; segregation and apartheid, white and black middle-class; ballroom dancing; dance; inter-group relations; leisure; dance hall; social clubs; music bands; dance fashion.

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List of Abbreviations

ADA	Amateurs Dancers Association
ANC	African National Congress
BMSC	Bantu Men's Social Centre
BNS	Binnelandse Sake (Internal Affairs)
BSC	Bantu Social Centre
CAPAB	Cape Performing Arts Board
CBD	Central Business District
CNN	Central News Network
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
ESAT	Encyclopedia of South African Theatre, Film, Media and Performance
HPRA	Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand
IASA	International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives
ILAM	International Library of African Music
ISCOR	Iron and Steel Corporation (South Africa)
ISTD	Imperial Society of Teachers of Dance
ITDA	International Dance Teachers' Association
KAB	Kaapse Argief Bewaarplek (Cape Town Archival Repository)
NASA	National Archives of South Africa
NFA	National Film Archives
NP	National Party
PACT	Performing Arts Council of the Transvaal
SA	South Africa
SAB	Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefbewaarplek (Public Records of central government since 1910)

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SABC	South African Broadcast Corporation
SADTA	South African Dance Teachers Association
SAFA	South African Film Archives
SAIRR	South African Institute of Race Relations
TAB	Transvaalse Argief Bewaarplek (Public records of the Transvaal Province)
TVO	Transvaal Volunteers
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States (of America)
USA	United States of America
VOC	Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (Dutch East India Company)
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
ZA	Zuid-Afrika (South Africa in Dutch)
ZAR	Zuid Afrikaanse Republiek (South African Republic)

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Chapter 1: Stepping onto the dance floor: An introduction

1.1 Introduction

Patricia Cohen suggested in "Jazz dance as a continuum" that when studying dance instead of asking: "What is (social, jazz, ballroom…) dance?" a more pertinent question would be: "Where is the dance"?[2] In this context, this doctoral study scrutinizes the social dancing worlds of Johannesburg and the central role that social dancing played there. It uses social dance as a lens to reflect on race relations and class divisions in the greater Johannesburg region. It explores why and how these local communities chose and recreated popular social dances from the global West to suit their restricted and divided social circumstances. It focuses on a critical mid-twentieth century in the South African past, 1920s to 1950s, a time when segregation and proto-apartheid impacted on every aspect of life.

Founded because of the gold rush in 1886, Johannesburg had a vibrant cosmopolitan citizenship attracting a demographically diverse population from across the continent and beyond. By 1928, it was the biggest city in South Africa, containing three of the largest black townships, including Alexandra, Doornfontein and Sophiatown. Johannesburg also had an expanding entertainment hub complete with theatres, movie houses, palais de danse and at least 137 dance teachers who taught the latest dance moves from abroad.[3] Furthermore, the city had a strong dance representation in one of South Africa's formal dancing organisations, the South African Dance Teachers Association (SADTA), and a vibrant dance music culture in the townships.[4] Music and dance played a crucial role in developing a new culture set by the global Western example. It inspired dance orchestras and musicians like the Merry Blackbirds and Jazz Maniacs who took their dance music to the local dance halls, but also throughout South

[2] P. Cohen, "Jazz dance as a continuum" in L. Guarino & W. Oliver, *Jazz dance: A history of the roots and branches* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2014), p. 5.
[3] Treble Violl, "Dancing and the Ballroom: "Sprightly Springboks"- "Trebla"- Dancing "Do's and Dont's"," *Rand Daily Mail*, 11 June 1927, p. 7; A. Green, "Similar steps, different venues: the making of segregated dancing worlds in South Africa, 1910-39," in K. Nathaus & J. J. Nott (eds.), *Worlds of social dancing: dance floor encounters and the global rise of couple dancing, c. 1910-40*, ed. (UK: Manchester University Press, 2022), pp. 87-107.
[4] Townships were developed as part of urban segregation where people designated as "non-white" or black were forced to live. S. Mahajan, *Economics of South African townships, special focus on Diepsloot*, (Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group, 2014), pp. 1-19.

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Africa and across its borders. The proposed study examines the ways in which dance permeated cultures in South Africa, in a context of segregation, apartheid and strife in ways that outlived the struggle for democracy and continue to influence the dynamics of today's popular dance cultures.

This chapter begins by explaining the overall aim of the thesis. It then considers the relevant theoretical concepts commonly used in social dance histories, as well as the terms that apply to dancing in South Africa that are used in this study. The second part of the chapter focuses on methodology and the primary sources used in this social dance history of Johannesburg and concludes with the chapter division.

This research explores how imported social dances were integrated into the new culture of both the white and black middle-class elite.[5] Indeed, social dancing can been seen to have held South African social fabric together – it was in a sense the fibre of part of society. For some, it was a form of escapism from oppression and restriction, for others, it was a moment's participation in a better, self-created idealistical reality. This study reflects on why members across the spectrum of society could and wanted to dance and how they recreated their dancing world to be sustainable in their respective divided environments. It takes Johannesburg, the metropolitan hub of South Africa as a case study.

This thesis follows on from an earlier dissertation on ballroom dancing in South Africa by the candidate, entitled "Dancing in Borrowed Shoes: A History of Ballroom Dancing in South Africa (1600s-1940s)".[6] The candidate also contributed to a collaborative research project on the history of social dancing entitled *Worlds of social dancing: dance floor encounters and the global rise of couple dancing, c. 1910-40* in which she contributed the chapter: "Similar steps, different venues: the making of segregated

[5] The terms "white" and "black" are used in this study to denote the different racial categories into which society was divided. These terms are still used by the South African Statistical Bureau to designate racial categories. *Statistical release. Mid-year population*, (Pretoria: Stats SA, 2021).
[6] A. M. Green, "Dancing in borrowed shoes: a history of ballroom dancing in South Africa (1600s-1940s)", (University of Pretoria: Master's thesis, 2008).

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dancing worlds in South Africa, 1910-39".[7] This doctoral takes this focus further by studying a critical and contested period of South Africa's past.

In colonial times, as discussed in earlier studies on ballroom dancing in South Africa, social dancing was a means of association with the West.[8] This changed from the late 1920s onwards because of the developments that occurred within the economic and social structures of greater Johannesburg. From the mid-1920s, Johannesburg's population was rapidly increasing due to the expansion of work opportunities in the area. As the working, and especially the middle-class society expanded, so did the available social activities. Numerous entrepreneurs saw opportunities to create a sustainable living from the workforce's leisure time. This study investigates how one of these popular leisure activities, social dancing, was adapted to fit into the growing commercial hub that was Johannesburg to become a viable, sustainable commercial activity.

As Johannesburg's population grew in the 1920s to the 1950s the stranglehold that the government had on communities intensified. During the years of predominant segregation and pending apartheid, enforced legislation fractured and splintered communities along racial lines. Furthermore, the state used the church to justify the morality of its imposed restrictions. These legislature strictures influenced communities on all levels and affected every aspect of daily life. Within this context it was social dancing that was one of the few viable activities for all communities to participate in during these times. This acceptance was partly because dance had already been part of Johannesburg's social landscape in the past. Dancing was also regarded as an enjoyable pastime, and except for the moral objections of some, dance evenings created a publicly acceptable place to meet and interact. Social dance was perceived as socially acceptable whether it was viewed as a rite of passage, safe because dancing happened in a secure fancy hall, or controlled because of the presence of a dance host. Often it was customary to dance because it was so popular in and integral to the colonial West. However, social dance events were mostly allowed because they were seemingly easy for the government, church and cultural societies to demarcate and control. This study looks at how social dance events occurred, why they were popular and also what control

[7] Green, "Similar steps, different venues", 2022, pp. 87-107.
[8] Green, "Dancing in borrowed shoes", 2008.

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was placed over them and considers how this changed over the decades. As such, it also considers where communities danced in Johannesburg, as the physical space where dancing took place also greatly impacted who participated, on how it was practised and how it was controlled.

Not everybody danced socially or even approved of dance. Indeed, throughout its history in South Africa and abroad, groups (whether from church or local communities) habitually rallied against social dancing because of its association with liquor, sex and lower-class culture.[9] There is however no doubt that dancing was present and popular within Johannesburg's past. While the time, place and context of social dances changed, its popularity persisted throughout the years. As the economic and social gaps were increasing, different racial and economic groups were figuring out how to live together and how this togetherness could be sustained both during South Africa's traumatic segregationist past and during draconian apartheid. For example, in June 1932, the Johannesburg based newspaper, the *Bantu World*, reported on local ballroom dancing declaring that "Dancing becomes the best pastime".[10] Sixty years later an international article also emphasized the importance of social dancing in the same region. The article entitled "In S. Africa, a Ballroom Dancing Craze: It's the fastest-growing sport among youth in the beleaguered black townships" reported on the struggles and triumphs of young ballroom dancers in Soweto, Johannesburg. The article noted:

> Ballroom dancing has become the fastest-growing sport in the townships, offering discipline, pride, self-respect--and even a taste of glamour--for children struggling to become adults in a society pervaded by riots, crime, school boycotts and hopelessness.[11]

This presence, allure and social power that dancing had in local communities continued to feature in articles right through to the twenty-first century. A Central News Network (CNN) feature for example, also reported on the experience of young dancers and

[9] C. Hamm, "Rock 'n' Roll in a very strange society," *Popular Music*, 5, 1985, pp. 159-174; P.J. Pienaar, "Dans, gemengde baaiery, kaart-speel en wyn-drink," *Die Huisgenoot*, April 1920, p. 378.
[10] Anon., "Dancing becomes the best pastime", *The Bantu World*, 04 June 1932 p. 9.
[11] S. Kraft, "Culture: In S. Africa, a Ballroom Dancing Craze: It's the fastest-growing sport among youth in the beleaguered black townships.," *Los Angeles Times*, 20 July 1993, https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1993-07-20-wr-15072-story.html, Accessed: 07 June 2022.

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remarked how ballroom dancing was still booming in Johannesburg townships in 1995.[12] In 2019 an article in a locally published popular magazine tracked the experience and work done by a 65-year-old dance master, Phillip Gumede, in a township dance hall in Shiya Bazali. His story closely resembled that of the 1930s dancers that danced in one of Johannesburg's commercial dancing halls, the Inchcape. Here Gumede, along with Carol Hunter, passionately trained young and old dancers because it:

> transforms lives …and is an escape of the daily grind…[I]n the perceived grandeur of the ballroom life's realities disappear and suddenly they [the young dancers] are elegant, proud and accomplished…you would not know what humble backgrounds they come….[13]

The value of social dancing within Johannesburg lay in what Gumede and Hunter observed here in their twenty-first century dance studio called "Spirit of the dance", where dance is seen as having value and as an escape from everyday struggles. This thesis consequently also investigates how social dancing has the power to transcend economic and social boundaries, and in the South African context, racial divides.

1.2 Dancing concepts

Dance studies are broadly divided into two fields based on the intention of the performance.[14] The first field, concert dance, includes ballet which has a strong narrative, a performance element, and a codified base. Also, a body of professionals oversee concert dances. The second field of dance, participatory dance, has a strong community and social element. Here the focus is on dancing along, being involved, rather than just watching. It also follows the musical rhythm more closely rather than a performing storyline. Social dancing, especially ballroom and commercial couple dancing, as is discussed in this study, falls into the latter field. While it has a performance element, the main intention is to dance together. Social dancing involves a wide genre of dances performed in a social setting and includes a range of types from the court dances of the

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[12] Anon., "South Africans take up a European tradition - ballroom dancing," CNN, updated 1995, http://edition.cnn.com/WORLD/9511/safrica_ballroom/, Accessed: 07 June 2022.
[13] T. Beaver, "Township Kids Transformed by Ballroom Dancing in South Africa", *SA People*, 10 October 2019, https://www.sapeople.com/2019/10/10/township-kids-transformed-by-ballroom-dancing-in-south-africa/, Accessed: 07 June 2022.
[14] P. Nettl, "Notes on the History of the Dance", *The Musical Quarterly*, 15(4), October 1929, pp. 583-589.

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seventeenth century, to ballroom dances, Latin American dances and the various dance crazes (e.g. ragtime and jazz dances) of the mid twenty-first century.[15] The term also includes the later rock 'n' roll, disco and break dancing.

In this study, a distinction is made between folk dances and social dances. American-based dance historian, Julie Malnig, noted the difference between vernacular dances, like folk dancing (in the South African context these would include Afrikaans *Volkspele* or the Zulu *Ingoma*) and popular social dances (including waltz, tango, foxtrot, quickstep, jive, swing, rumba, boogie, jitterbug and the Charleston). Vernacular dance involves homogenous communities celebrating their own traditions. In contrast, at popular social dance events, the sense of community sharing a common set of social, cultural and economic interests, are a result of the *dances* themselves. Crucially here she notes that social dancing, more than any other concert, is "rooted in the materiality of everyday life".[16] Popular social dances thus have to be viewed not just as an event in time, but as a social activity, exercise, enjoyment, a form of self-expression, a speaking through the body and a sexual ritual.

The term "ballroom dancing" refers to a wide-ranging group of dances where two partners (one leading and one following) dance to popular music. In this dance form couple dances independently from other dancers on a dance floor. American dance historian, Claude Conyers, explained that the term "ballroom dancing" was used commonly from the twentieth century onwards. It referred to either a social dance for partnered couples for recreation or a set of couple dances performed at local, national, and international competitions.[17] The term "ballroom dances" would typically include dances like the waltz and Viennese waltz. Because of its regal origin and popular perception as elitist, ballroom dancing is often described as an exclusive European social pastime.[18] In the context of

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[15] Anon., "Social dance," Grove Music Online, 2020, https://doi-org.uplib.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.A2219509, Accessed: 22 June 2021.
[16] J. Malnig, *Ballroom, boogie, shimmy sham, shake: a social and popular dance reader* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 2009), p. 6.
[17] Anon., "Ballroom Dance,"Oxford Music Online: Grove Music Online, Oxford University Press, 2012, https://doi-org.uplib.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.A2218578., Accessed: 23 June 2021.
[18] J. Bosse, "Whiteness and the Performance of Race in American Ballroom Dance", *The Journal of American Folklore*, 120(475), 2007, pp. 19-47; Danielle Robinson, *Modern moves: dancing race during the ragtime and jazz eras* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

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South Africa, and this research study in particular, ballroom dancing was however never racially fully exclusive. On the contrary, nineteenth-century travel journals, for example, commented extensively on the practising of ballroom dancing as part of the culture of the free blacks, Mozambiquers, descendants of indigenous people, enslaved and working class whites.[19] In this thesis to be more inclusive and circumvent this popular elitist bias "ballroom dancing" is viewed as a division of social dancing where the ballroom element refers to the four key ballroom dances: the waltz; quickstep; tango and foxtrot as standardized by the International Dance Teachers' Association (ITDA).[20] On the competition floor, ballroom dances were often danced, especially at beginner level, alongside the international Latin American type dances: rumba, samba, cha cha cha, jive and paso doble.[21]

The term "ragtime dances" refers to the faster energetic dances that developed from the syncopated beats of ragtime music in North America in the 1890s.[22] Ragtime dances were radically different from the former ball dances that instilled composure, complete control over one's body and no choice in partners. In contrast, the new dances, and the more public spaces where they were was danced in, encouraged innovation and physical contact. Ragtime added a syncopated beat to music and was usually played in double time or at a faster speed. Ragtime dances included the cake walk, one step, animal dances (including the turkey trot, grizzly bear and bunny hug), foxtrot, tango and hesitation waltz. The popularity of these dances was fuelled by famous, glamourous dance partners, instructors and performers who put a public face to dancing. These included figures like Henry Fox, Maurice Mouvet, as well as Vernon and Irene Castle.[23] Most urban folk enjoyed these ragtime tunes, not only because it was accessible, but also because it had a strong global appeal. Dancers could easily associate with dancers from

[19] R. Semple, *Walks and sketches at the Cape of Good Hope; to which is subjoined, A journey from Cape Town to Blettenberg's* [sic.] *Bay*, (London: C. & R. Baldwin, 1805); W.W. Bird, *State of the Cape of Good Hope in 1822*, (Cape Town: Struik, 1966), p. 166.
[20] International Dance Teachers' Association, *Professional dance syllabus. Ballroom* (England: International House, August 2019), p. 10.
[21] International Dance Teachers' Association, *Professional dance syllabus. Latin* (England: International House, August 2019), p. 10.
[22] R. G. Giordano, *Social dancing in America: a history and reference. Volume two: Lindy Hop to Hip Hop, 1901-2000*, (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2007).
[23] Giordano, *Social dancing in America: a history and reference. Volume two*, 2007.

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other countries living in similar circumstances while they were dancing to the same music in the same dance styles in similar dance halls.

In South Africa, “marabi” style dances also started to feature on the community dance scene from the 1910s to 1930s. *Marabi* was a unique local form of Jazz closely associated with the shebeens of Johannesburg. These social events almost exclusively had both dancing and alcohol in common. The musical sounds were characterised by repeating a rhythmical single tune on the keyboard and or guitar and banjo.[24] For the purpose of this study, *marabi* is not viewed as a subdivision of social dancing, but rather as a separate vernacular dance form in itself.

Around the world, in the first half of the twentieth century public dance halls became part of the cityscape because of the popularity of ragtime dances. These halls were, as noted by British dance historian James Nott, venues either run commercially as dancing venues or public venues that were regularly used for social couple dancing.[25] In stark contrast to the private dance parties of a century earlier, these dance halls were a very public space, often built in the heart of the city for easy access. Dance entrepreneurs tapped into the commercial opportunities of the dance hall. They aimed their products, service offerings and advertisements at the growing middle-class market that had disposable income and leisure time. To add to the glamour of these venues dance halls adopted a French name: the “palais de danse”.[26] As is discussed in Chapter 4, South Africa followed this trend with palais de danse being built in the 1920s in cities across the country including Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg.[27] South African sources however, never standardised the spelling of “palais de danse”. The spelling of these dancing venues ranged from: “palace de dance” to “palaise de dans” and variations thereof reflecting on a process of acculturation.[28]

[24] C. Ballantine, "Concert and Dance: the foundations of black jazz in South Africa between the twenties and the early forties", *Popular Music*, 10(2), 1991, pp. 134-35.
[25] J. Nott, *Going to the Palais: a social and cultural history of dancing and dance halls in Britain, 1918- 1960,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), p. 3.
[26] Nott, *Going to the Palais*, 2020, pp. 17-18.
[27] Anon., "Johannesburg to have two new playhouses", *Rand Daily Mail*, 21 September 1926, p. 9.
[28] Unless directly quoted, this study follows the accepted British spelling: palais de danse when referring to the commercial dance halls.

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The ragtime dance era was soon followed by the jazz dances. Like ragtime, jazz music was characterized by its syncopation. Jazz, however, had a stronger beat with polyrhythms or cross-rhythms that were created by mixing contrasting beats in a piece of music. Jazz allowed for improvisation that was audible and visible both in its music and in its dances and characteristically had blue tonalities.[29] While ragtime dance bands depended heavily on their string sections for the dance beat, jazz dance introduced wind instruments to the bandstand which became extremely popular in South Africa. Dance bands were typically smaller, only between four to six band members, making this performance style ideally suited for the young upcoming local musicians.[30] The Jazz dance forms included the Charleston, which was a fast-paced dance, danced in 4/4 time and danced closely together. The basic step of this dance incorporated kicks alternating with heels and knees pointing towards one another and outwards with hands placed on the knees.[31] Despite the initial apprehension in accepting this dance form, it remained fairly popular in South Africa and elements of the Charleston were still included in the jazz music style swing dances of the 1930s and early 1940s.

Indeed, the characteristic swing elements of some of the ragtime and jazz dances laid the foundation for swing dances like the Lindy hop and shag. As described by the Swing Dance Council of America, these new swing dances can be defined as having a six or eight syncopated beat pattern and incorporated movements like under arm turns, side passes, push breaks, and whips.[32] The word "jitterbug" was commonly used during this time and could refer to any one of these fast-paced swing dances. In South Africa the dance commentators often linked this with the jive, for example the jitterbug jive.[33] As discussed later in this study, jitterbug could also refer to the swing dancers themselves. These lively dances form the focus of this particular study as it was the time that the dance infrastructure in Johannesburg was firmly established and busy expanding.

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[29] K. J. Ogren, *The Jazz Revolution: Twenties America and the meaning of Jazz* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).
[30] Giordano, *Social dancing in America*, 2007, p. 51.
[31] Anon., "1920s - charleston dance," NP channel, updated 18 July 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pUpAcPAipDA, Accessed: 21 July 2022.
[32] Anon., "Swing dances," Grove Music Online, 2020, https://doi-org.uplib.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.A2092734, Accessed: 21 July 2022.
[33] Anon., "Jitterbug Jive", Grove Music Online, 2020, https://doi-org.uplib.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.A2092734, Accessed: 21 July 2022.

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Other popular social dances that will feature in the latter half of this study are the boogie woogie and the rock 'n' roll dances. The boogie woogie swing dance craze, with its piano playing blues musicians of the late 1930s early 1940s formed the basis for the rock 'n' roll dances that featured in the 1940s to 1950s.[34] Like the rag, jazz and swing dances, the term "rock 'n' roll" included a number of different dances or dance steps.[35]

As social dancing evolved within South Africa, so did the country's growing racially biased legislation. The term 'segregation' in this study refers to the systematic separation of different groups based on their race. In South Africa, it affected every aspect of daily life. While segregation was to some degree already part of local society, it became enforced and entrenched with the 'Native' Land Act of 1913. This Act clearly demarcated black and white areas, limiting the ownership rights of land, a sacred commodity in both black and white cultures.[36]

The term "native", also commonly used in dance sources of the time, was a reference specifically to black South Africans. Like "bantu", "native", meaning black South African, it was often used in a derogatory manner and implied that people of this racial group were lesser than their European counterparts.[37] Similarly, the term "coloured" was also used in a disparaging fashion and refers to a person of mixed racial ancestry. In South Africa the coloured community was marginalised and historically included a "strong association with Western culture and values in opposition to African equivalents... Coloured identity is a product of European racist ideology which, through its binary logic, cast people deemed to be of mixed racial origin as a distinct, stigmatised stratum between the dominant white minority and the African majority".[38] Another term that emanated out of this segregationist policy was "township". This informal settlement that was initially demarcated for the city's temporary workers, soon became a permanent area for the cities

[34] L. Birnbaum, *Before Elvis : the prehistory of rock 'n' roll* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2013).
[35] Anon., "The Twist", Grove Music Online, 2013, https://doi-org.uplib.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.A2093530, Accessed: 25 July 2022.
[36] "Act no. 27 of 1913. Native Land Act", *Statutes of the Union of South Africa* (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1913).
[37] G. Baderoon, "The Provenance of the term 'Kafir' in South Africa and the notion of Beginning", http://www.cilt.uct.ac.za/usr/cci/publications/aria/ download_issues/2004/2004_MS4.pdf., Accessed: 25 May 2023
[38] M. Adhikari, *Burdened by race: Coloured identities in Southern Africa,* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2009), pp. viii-ix.

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growing black workforce. It had similar negative associations as it referred to a section of society living in an area that was less developed than the suburbs. This study therefore considers a dancing community where racism was already largely institutionalised.

By 1948 apartheid became law with the National Party (NP) that came into power based on an almost exclusive white minority electorate. Through social engineering the NP restricted all movement and any contact between groups and prescribed education and all social activities. They wrote into law and actively policed strict separate development based on categories of race. The place and nature of social dancing impacted both the segregationist policies and apartheid legislation. This study engages with the effect these policies had on dance.

1.3 Methodology, sources and chapter division

This study is essentially literature-based using both primary and secondary sources all in the public domain. It has a qualitative-based approach where non-numerical data like newspaper articles, advertisements, videos, photos and oral interviews created between the 1920s and 1950s are analysed. The sources are read against the grain to ascertain the stance, opinions and experiences of the social dancers in Johannesburg. By using this methodology, the study considers how dancers could create successful and commercially sustainable social dance experiences despite the political and social restrictions. This methodology explores a new avenue to understand and reflect upon South Africa's social past. The qualitative research was conducted by following a phenomenological research approach. This approach forefronts the "everyday experiences of human beings" to "illuminate the specific".[39]

It is concerned with the "perspective of the individual as opposed to the generalisations or 'taken-for-granted' assumptions".[40] The study therefore investigates the social dancing phenomenon by assessing the dancers' lived experiences through the artefacts and memorabilia that they left behind.

[39] S. Lester, "An introduction to phenomenological research", Stan Lester Developments, Taunton, 1999, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Stan_Lester/publication/255647619_An_introduction_to_phenomenological_research/links/545a05e30cf2cf5164840df6.pdf, Accessed: 24 November 2023.
[40] Lester, "An introduction to phenomenological research", 2009.

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Juretta Hecksher makes the telling point that "because dance is difficult to describe…it is elusive in the historical record [and therefore] its deeper cultural implications are even harder to trace".[41] She adds the important observation that "…dancing cannot be separated from the larger cultural movement…".[42] This vagueness of dance events is especially evident in the South African dance record. Often dances are merely described as "traditional", "not traditional", "European", "black", "social", or "a formal event" or even generally as "South African Jazz". Grouping and assigning dances in this manner makes them appear exclusive and overlooks the interaction that happened between dance genres as well as between communities. Thus, dance historians such as Janet Landsdale and June Layson suggest following a multi-dimensional approach when studying dance.[43]

The leading cultural historian Peter Burke noted that, "[d]ance history, once the province of specialists, is now taken seriously by cultural historians and discussed in relation to politics and society".[44] This interest of cultural historians of dance have allowed for the production of a more nuanced history. Not unlike this thesis, these move beyond the stereotypical racial or economic assumptions where histories are grouped into black and white, the have-nots and the have-all's and present more inclusive and integrated histories. Social dancing thus, as argued by Barbara Cohen-Stratyner, should not simply be assumed to be popular and have a specific social purpose that supports societal norms or "reinforce[s] alternate social ideas".[45] She emphasizes the crucial role that time and context have in "discretionary selections within a socially conditioned set" like social dancing.[46] This approach to dance methodology consequently also considers the earlier mentioned questions like "where was the dance?", "when was it danced", "why was it danced?" and "how was it adapted?".

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[41] Malnig, *Ballroom, boogie, shimmy sham, shake*, 2009, p. 19.
[42] Malnig, *Ballroom, boogie, shimmy sham,* shake, 2009, p. 19.
[43] J. Lansdale & J. Layson, *Dance history: an introduction*, (London: Routledge, 1994); A. Carter (ed.), *Rethinking Dance History: A Reader*, (London: Routledge, 2004).
[44] P. Burke, *What is cultural history?* (Cambridge: Polity, 2017), p. 94.
[45] B. Cohen-Stratyner, "Social Dance: Contexts and Definitions," *Dance Research Journal*, 33(2), 2001, p. 121.
[46] Cohen-Stratyner, "Social Dance", 2001, pp. 121-124.

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Primary sources on social dancing are available in the public domain and come in a range of formats including instruction manuals, video and media clips, newspaper clippings and transcribed interviews. One of the key international primary sources for dance history are dance manuals. These appeared internationally from the late nineteenth century and for almost a century, manuals were the main mode of recording and instructing social dances. More recently, instead of replacing the dance manuals, digital media appears to have rather complimented written instruction manuals as the step-by-step guides continue to form part of the international landscape.

Step-by-step dance instruction manuals were a practical resource for dancers, helping them to understand both how dances were danced and how to adhere to the prescribed social practises of dance events. Popular dance manuals that were produced between the 1930s and 1980s include: Victor Silvester and Philip J.S. Richardson's *The Art of the Ballroom* (1936);[47] Alexander Moore's *Ballroom dancing* (1938);[48] the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing's publication *Ballroom Dancing* (1953);[49] Silvester's *Modern dancers' handbook* (1956);[50] London's Official Board of Ballroom Dancing publication *International social dance* (1963);[51] Carl Limon and Laurel Butler's *A step by step dance instruction book: 40 new vogue (old time) dances for the Social dancer as they are danced today* (1986);[52] Jane A Harris, Anne M Pitman and Marlys S Waller's *Dance a while. Handbook of folk, square, contra and social dance* (1988).[53] Publications that appeared later in the twenty-first century included: Stephanie Smith's ballroom dance series of five manuals entitled *The Ballroom Dancer's Companion: A Study Guide & Notebook for Lovers of Ballroom* Dance;[54] *Dance a While: A Handbook for Folk, Square, Contra, and Social Dance* (in its 10th edition);[55] Keyna Paul's *Dance Manual: The complete step by*

[47] V. Silvester & P. J. S. Richardson, *The Art of the Ballroom* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1936).
[48] A. Moore, *Ballroom dancing* (London: Pitman, 1938).
[49] Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing Ballroom Dancing, *Ballroom Dancing. In association with the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing* (London: Educational Productions, 1953).
[50] V. Silvester, *Modern dancers' handbook* (London: H. Jenkins, 1956).
[51] Dancing Official Board of Ballroom, *International social dance* (London: Dancing Times Ltd. for the Official Board of Ballroom Dancing, 1963).
[52] C. Limon & L. Butler, *A step by step dance instruction book: 40 new vogue (old time) dances for the Social dancer as they are danced today* (N.S.W: Dubbo, 1986).
[53] J. A. Harris; A. M. Pitman & M. S. Waller, *Dance a while. Handbook of folk, square, contra and social dance* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1988).
[54] S. Smith, *The Ballroom Dancer's Companion - Int'l Standard: A Study Guide & Notebook for Lovers of Ballroom Dance*, (California: CreateSpace, 2015).
[55] Waller, Dark & Pittman, *Dance a while*, 2015.

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step guide;[56] Janet Cunningham-Clayton, Fernandes Malcolm, Anton Du Beke's *The essential guide to ballroom dance*.[57] This abundance of new dance instructions manuals not only highlights the importance of social dancing in communities, but also emphasizes how often they were practised and how fast the dancing scene changed. These dance instruction manuals were a vital primary source used for understanding how social dances were practised during a specific time in a specific place. In this study, the dance manuals were further used to compare the British and American social dance styles to what was danced on a local level. This comparison made it possible to understand both how and why the wide range of Johannesburg communities had to adapt the dances to fit into their world.

The three-part documentary film *The Spirit moves: a history of Black social dance on film, 1900-1986* first appeared in 1990 and was remastered and reproduced by the *Dance Times* in 2008.[58] The series traces the social history of African American dance in urban America. Mura Dehn, a Russian born, European filmmaker created the documentary over a period of some thirty years. It includes original archival media clips, while Dehn narrates the historical and main characteristics of the dances. The films in the series highlight how essential the primary visual record is in understanding and comparing dances between regions and dance developments over time. When studying these films, it soon becomes apparent that, even on a local level, the visual record is a vital link to understanding the changing relationship between dances and dancers.

In 2001 another dance documentary film appeared - the ten-part series *Jazz* by Ken Burns. It was screened on the United States of America (USA) Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) television channel. The series traces the origins of jazz, blues, ragtime, swing, bebop and fusion. Like Dehn's documentary, this study contains both historical clips, advertisements and interviews with musicians and dancers. In the section on the Savoy ballroom, the acclaimed "Queen of Swing", Norma Miller, describes how she experienced the Savoy ballroom both as an outsider and then as a dancer herself. In her

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[56] K. Paul, *Dance manual: the complete step-by-step guide to dance* (United Kingdom: Haynes publishing, 2016).
[57] J. Cunningham-Clayton, M. Fernandes & A. Du Beke, *The essential guide to ballroom dance* (Wiltshire [England]: The Crowood Press, 2019).
[58] M. Dehn, *The spirit moves: a history of Black social dance on film, 1900-1986. Part 1, 2, 3* (New York, NY: Dancetime Publications, 2008).

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passionate account, she recalls the wonders of the ballroom and the types of dancers that frequented the “Home of happy feet”.[59] Here she notes: “The first place in the world that black and white walked through the door together was the Savoy. They were joined by a simple thing called Swing”.[60] Indeed, as explained by Burns and articulated so eloquently by Miller, the swing dances and the ballroom itself played an important role in establishing cultural relationships during a depression-filled and politically tense time in the USA.[61]

Social dances also appeared in various primary sources in South Africa. The history of social dance was influenced by and reflected on key cultural and political events. While dancers were dancing to fashionable styles, new popular media, including newspapers, film houses, radio and television were being established in the country. This new media affected how dancers first experienced the dances and how dance was archived for future reflection. Experiencing the dance for the first time in a dance manual, versus seeing it on stage, or hearing it on the radio, reading about or viewing it in your house on a television screen naturally influenced its uptake. One of the key primary sources that reported on social dancing in South Africa was the *South African Dancing Times* (1933 – 1950s). This magazine was published in Johannesburg, and it reported exclusively on dancing in South Africa. Its primary focus was on the white dance industry, although occasionally it would feature snippets on dancers from other population groups.[62] This magazine was lavishly illustrated and featured detailed commentary, updates on events in different regions across South Africa and advertisements on dancing goods.[63]

Local newspapers recorded much of Johannesburg social dance history and were both readily available and consumed across the region. During this time, literate black South Africans accounted for about 12.4% of the total black South African population and by the 1930s there were already nineteen registered African newspapers in the country.[64] By

[59] K. Burns, "Jazz," (PBS Documentary, 2001).
[60] Burns, "Jazz", 2001.
[61] Giordano, *Social dancing in America*, 2007, pp. 51 – 100; Burns, "Jazz", 2001.
[62] Anon., "Sensational African talent Nu-Zonk," *South African Dancing Times*, September 1945, p. 19.
[63] Anon., "First Annual Ball. The National Association of teachers of Dancing... at the Luthjes Langham Hotel," *South African Dancing Times*, August 1937, p. 23.
[64] L. Switzer, "Bantu world and the origins of a captive African commercial press in South Africa," *Journal of Southern African studies*, 14(3), April 1988, pp. 351-370.

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1948 the *Bantu World*, for example, had already garnered a circulation of 24 000. Studies estimated that an additional five African wage earners read each printed copy and each copy was further reread to illiterate family members and friends within the various communities.[65] These newspapers therefor catered for a significant proportion of the black population.

The white South African press of course dominated the industry and had an even wider reader base. By the early 1970s, for example, the daily *Rand Daily Mail* had a national circulation figure of 184 000, while the figure for the weekly *Sunday Times* was 492 000.[66]

Some newspapers included societal sections which often had a special focus on social dancing. The *Rand Daily* Mail (1902 – 1985), *Sunday Times* (1906 – current), *Umteteli wa Bantu* (1920 – 1991)[67] and *Bantu World* later *The World* (1932 – 1977) were all used extensively in this study. Other newspapers, with a shorter life span, also occasionally reported on the dancing scene. These included papers like the *African Leader* (1932 – 1933);[68] the weekly *Mmabtho News* (1978 – 1979)[69] and the Johannesburg pictorial *Egoli* (1950s – 1976).[70] Regional papers in Cape Town, Natal, the Eastern Cape, Free State, Swaziland, Namibia and Rhodesia also reported on the general state of social dancing in South Africa and the contact that dancers had with one another. These included papers like *The Cape Standard* (1936 – 1947),[71] *Indaba* (1980 – 2000)[72] and *Izwi lama Swazi* (1949 – 1964).[73]

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[65] L. Switzer & D. Switzer, *The Black press in South Africa and Lesotho: a descriptive bibliographic guide to African, Coloured, and Indian newspapers, newsletters, and magazines, 1836-1976*, Bibliographies and guides in African studies, (Boston: G.K. Hall &Co, 1979), p. 8.
[66] F. Ginwala, "The Press in South Africa", *Index on Cencorship*, 2(3), 1973, p. 33.
[67] *Umteteli wa Bantu* is sometimes spelt *Umteteli waBantu* and can be translated to mean the "Mouthpiece of the Native people".
[68] See for example dance outing organized by the club where Merry Blackbirds would entertain members at the Grand: Anon., "Bantu Sports Club", *African Leader,* 31 December 1932, p. 10.
[69] See for example report on the Transvaal and South African non-European Dancing Federation competition and Disco dancing: Anon., "Dancing through the finals," *Mmabtho News*, 10 February 1979, p. 5; Anon., "Disco magic. Dancing the night away at Ga-Rankuwa," *Mmabatho News*, 10 March 1979, p. 6; Anon., "Top dancers at Phokeng," *Mmabatho News*, 17 March 1979, p. 5.
[70] Anon., "Girl with the golden voice", *Egoli*, 27 July 1952, p. 10.
[71] Anon., "Eon Group Activities. ballroom," *The Cape Standard*, 05 December 1944, p. 4; Anon., "New dancing association formed", *The Cape Standard*, 21 March 1944, p. 3; Anon., "Professional ballroom classes to be started", *The Cape Standard*, 19 September 1944, p. 8.
[72] Anon., "Dancing to success?", *Indaba* (East London), 28 August 1986, p. 6.
[73] Anon., "Trotters ballroom dancing club", *Izwi lama Swazi*, 10 January 1959, p. 2.

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Another key source in this study is *The African Drum*, later known as the *Drum* magazine. *The African Drum* was first printed in March 1951 and aimed to contain, as summarized by a 1951 letter to the magazine's editor, "suitable reading for everybody" no matter their profession because it was a "well-balanced periodical" covering a variety of topics.[74] This magazine's focus on the social aspects of everyday life gives a vivid account and a variety of opinions on social dancing. Apart from letters asking for pen-pals who also liked ballroom dancing, the magazine also regularly featured photos of ballroom dancers. *Drum* also published a series of articles by Todd Matshikiza (1921 – 1968). He was a South African teacher, musician, composer, journalist, jazz critic and in the latter part of his life archivist. He was also the pianist for the Manhattan Brothers and its bandleader. His column titled "Music for Moderns" follows music, dancing and its role players amongst mainly black South Africans describes life in the Johannesburg region. The *Drum* also featured snippets of ballroom showcases. This included for example the tango, foxtrot and waltz demonstrations by the black South African Transvaal ballroom champions in 1951.[75]

Local newspapers not only reported on social dancing events, but also featured advertisements of the dances themselves. Social dance was also used to advertise other commodities.[76] Conversely, advertisements played a unique role in helping to establish dances within a community and were used as another source to study the acculturation of social dances within Johannesburg society.

The *Government Gazette* documented various pieces of legislation related directly or indirectly to dance. This source was used to ascertain what policies were in place to regulate dances, dancers and its infrastructure, highlighting the bureaucracy involved in sustaining social dancing in the city. Its meticulous record unravels a multifaceted history of dancing in Johannesburg, reflecting not only the vibrancy of its entertainment industry, but also its cultural and economic development.

[74] S. Zuna, "Letters to the editor", *The African Drum*, October 1951, p. 38.
[75] T. Matshizika, "Music for Moderns", *Drum*, December 1951, pp. 26-27.
[76] Anon., "Astoria The Palais (The Home of Dancing). To-night! Armistice Night", *Rand Daily Mail*, 11 November 1932, p. 8.

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As highlighted in the international studies above, the visual and sound archival record contains valuable information about the place and the repurposing of spaces for social dance within communities. On a local level, this was especially true in Johannesburg. Films from the South African Film Archives (NFA) in Tshwane, and sound clips and images from the International Library of African Music (ILAM) at Rhodes University, show how dancers moved into makeshift halls, while also recording and picturing the style and aptitude of the local dancers.[77]

The historical impact of film clips is far reaching and including it in studies on dance creates a dialogue that involves both academia and the public. The 1994 documentary *Ballroom Fever* produced by The Schadeberg Movie Company, for example, reported on the annual ballroom and Latin American dance competition in Sun City, South Africa. The short film showcases both the popularity of social dancing in South Africa and the dedication by participants, teachers and communities in preparing for competitions.[78] The film also highlights how the dancing sport draws societies from all walks of life together. Films that were produced later also explored the social dynamics involved in social dancing. For example, a 2019 South African film sponsored by Red Bull entitled *Rave and Resistance* examined the role that club dancing played in South Africa during the 1990s.[79] Another film, entitled *Rumba in the Jungle*, focuses on social dancing competitions in South Africa.[80] These films highlight the integral importance of social dancing in the more recent past, but also reflect on the role of dancing in various communities' histories.

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[77] "South African Dance Champions: Mr. J Strydom and Miss M McLaren of the Transvaal win the National Ballroom Dancing Championship at Cape Town", *African Mirror no 962*, 07 October 1931, National Film Archives (NFA).
[78] The Schadeberg Movie Company, *Ballroom Fever,* (South Africa, Sun City: The Schadeberg Movie Company, 1994).
[79] Z. Tisani, *Rave and resistance*," (Red Bull Media House, 2019), https://www.redbull.com/za-en/films/rave-and-resistance, Accessed: 20 April 2022.
[80] Y. Mogatusi, *Rumba in the Jungle*, (Sun City, 2021).

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Figure 1: South Africa's social dance timeline 1900 - 2000

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To understand how social dancing was acculturated in the greater Johannesburg region this thesis is divided into the following seven chapters:

Chapter 1: Stepping onto the dance floor: An introduction

Chapter 2: Dancing through publications: A select review

Chapter 3: Excess and exclusion: A social history of Johannesburg, 1850s to 1950s

Chapter 4: "JoJitterburg" and its "Jo'burg Jitters", 1920s to 1940s

Chapter 5: Restricted, restrained and resisted, 1920s to 1950s

Chapter 6: Dancing the night away, the changing 1950s

Chapter 7: Stepping through time: A retrospection

These chapters follow both a thematic and chronological structure. In terms of the thematic, this study first provides a background of the methodology and sources used in international and local social dance sources and then explains the cultural and political landscape of Johannesburg where this study is set. The study will then move to the chronology of the evolution of social dance, starting with a brief overview of the early presence of ballroom dancing in colonial South Africa between the late seventeenth and early twentieth centuries. It will then move to the 1920s with the building of Johannesburg's first palais de danse and focus specifically on the commercial development thereof in the 1930s.

Between 1920 and 1950 South Africa saw several new dances rapidly introduced to its patrons. Locally, this period also saw the enforcement of segregationist policies, cultural boycotts, the introduction of a national broadcasting company and the creation of theatrical and media houses. See Figure 1: South Africa's social dance timeline, 1900 – 2000 with key cultural and political events. These all greatly affected Johannesburg's social dancing scene.

Between the 1930s and 1950s South Africa experienced unique historical vicissitudes that impacted on the dances of the time. With its dense urban community, Johannesburg was particularly susceptible to these changes. The technological developments such as the introduction of film, radio and record players changed the way and the number of people that were exposed to dancing. Coupled with increasing political conflict, dancing became even more important.

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1.4 Conclusion

When reading the primary sources of the time, it was apparent from the outset that communities choosing to dance socially in Johannesburg had to adapt and create their own social dancing world that could function within the context of South Africa's restrictive political, social and economic reality. While social restrictions were not an exclusive South African phenomenon, the way Johannesburg's social dancers adapted their dancing worlds created unique experiences and novel products. Studying South Africa's history through the lens of social dance makes it clear that this past was far more than merely a case of white versus black or the state versus the people. This study of Johannesburg's social dancing scene highlights the important role of the individuals, the context, the time, the place and the interactions between different communities that often blur the lines of the accepted dichotomous past.

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Chapter 2: Dancing through publications: A select review

2.1 Introduction

This select literature review considers on the work produced on both international and local level that focuses on dance, including dancing in general and social dance specifically. This range of sources highlights certain focal points that are essential when studying the role of social dance in a community. They discuss the time and space where dance took place; the physical appearance of dancers; the historical sequence, such as, what was danced before and what dances followed; the technical aspects of the dance and the dance music. These focal points provide a deeper understanding and appreciation of the dancers themselves. Local sources on dance also often incorporated the non-dancing audience and typically recorded who or what promoted or restricted the dances. This first part of the chapter reviews a selection of international literature while the second explores local sources on social dance as well as music in South Africa.

2.2 International social dancing

The last few decades have seen international dance scholars emphasize and refocus on the place of dance in society. In her 2013 study, *Rethinking dance history: a reader*, Alexandra Carter examined how both the studying of dance and the writing thereof can be rewritten to give a clearer view of the past.[1] While most of the chapters focus on ballet, the *Reader* considers a more inclusive way of looking and studying dance in society – taking "dance off the stage, out of the ballroom and into the everyday life of the city street".[2] Like Carter, Janet Lansdale and June Layson's 1994 historiography of dance also underscores the idea that changes in dance writing were necessary. Already in the 1980s they highlighted the challenges of writing dance history in their publication *Dance History: an introduction*.[3] This study emphasized the importance of viewing dance history as a part of its socio, economic and political environment. The authors warned against over simplifying dance as either a technical performance or an example of a social, or recreational activity, as this undermines the role that dance

[1] A. Carter, *Rethinking dance history. A reader* (Florence: Taylor and Francis, 2013).
[2] Carter, *Rethinking dance history. A reader*, 2013, p. 132.
[3] J. Lansdale & J. Layson, *Dance history: an introduction*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1994).

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plays within a community. Lansdale and Layson also highlight the close relationship that specific dance types (like ballet and social dancing), have with history and the society that practices it.[4]

In their 2000 study *Europe dancing*, Andrée Grau and Stephanie Jordan explore how dancing (especially theatre dance) has advanced since the Second World War (1939 – 1945). They focus on Flanders, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. While their focus is on European dancing, chapters in this study not only highlight the diverse nature of dances, but also discuss how the political divisions of nations created what they described as "imagined" or artificial communities.[5] In their view, dance often transcends these boundaries. The case studies on the various countries incorporate the influence of physical boundaries on the development and explain, for example, in the case of the Netherlands that the "…sea forced its boundaries upon the people, but it also offered possibilities for foreign cultures to find their way in".[6] This places dance within its physical boundaries yet also acknowledges external influences and allows for a deeper understanding of how borders, like community demarcations, impacted on dance.

Theresa Buckland's 2006 study, *Dancing from past to present. Nation, culture, identities*, gives a general overview of dance history and dance ethnography.[7] Her work provides new insights on dance, as it does not focus on a top-down approach that was so typical of earlier centuries where studies compared the development of dance to how it was practised in Europe or USA. The essays here look at how dance is represented in diverse regions like Indonesia, New England, Romania, New Mexico, Tonga and India. These case studies are very much focused on anthropological personal experiences on how to collect and interpret dances by actively participating in activities. It does, however, also consider how dance histories are evolving in that they not only question the historical (written) source record, but also emphasise the

[4] Lansdale and Layson, *Dance history: an introduction*, 1994, p. 5.
[5] A. Grau & S. Jordan, *Europe dancing: perspectives on theatre dance and cultural identity*, (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 2-3.
[6] Grau & Jordan, *Europe dancing,* 2000, p. 21.
[7] T. J. Buckland, *Dancing from past to present: nation, culture, identities*, (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006).

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importance of incorporating the experiences and views of the community when analysing dance.[8]

Dance histories of black dancers and histories on black jazz dancing specifically, appeared regularly from the 1970s onwards. These included Lynn Emery's edited book *Black dance from 1619 to today* (first published in 1972 with revised editions appearing in 1988 and 1995);[9] Edward Thorpe's 1990 *Black dance*[10] and Thomas J. Hennesey's 1994 *From jazz to swing: African-American jazz musicians and their music 1890 – 1935.*[11] These studies often provide a slightly different analysis of the role played by dance and music than the more general dance histories. They portray dancing more as a performance – a showcase as such. In contrast, general, predominantly white dance histories present dancing almost exclusively as an art form and a commercial activity.

Another study entitled: *Social dancing in America: a history and reference* appeared in 2007 and captures the importance of social dancing within the United States of America (USA).[12] This eminent two-volume study by Ralph G. Giordano skillfully leads the reader through America's past from 1607 to 2000 by focusing on its social dance history. He gives a short description of the most popular dancers, opposition to the dance, who opposed them and how they were viewed by contemporary society, as well as which dances remained popular and which dances became a mere fad. Like other social historians of the time, Giordano highlights the impact that cultural and technological changes, like that of television and cruise ships, had on ballroom dancing. While this study is focused on dance, Giordano's inclusion of the social, political and economic terrain contextualises dance within society and thus moves away from the very specialised dance manuals that were so characteristic of the previous centuries.[13]

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[8] Buckland, *Dancing from past to present,* 2006, pp. 15-16, 181, 188.
[9] L. F. Emery, *Black dance: from 1619 to today* (Hightstown, NJ: Princeton Book Company Publishers, 1988).
[10] E. Thorpe, *Black dance* (Woodstock, N.Y.: Overlook Press, 1990).
[11] T. J. Hennessey, *From jazz to swing: African-American jazz musicians and their music, 1890-1935* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994).
[12] R. G. Giordano, *Social dancing in America: a history and reference* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2007).
[13] Giordano, *Social dancing in America: a history and reference*.

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Sherril Dodds's 2011 study, *Dancing on the canon*, is divided into two sections that looks at understanding first the theoretical and often marginalized framework in which dance has historically been placed and second focuses on case studies that look at how important popular dancing was in a community.[14] She highlights the very personal nature of dancing and writing about dance. Dodds also emphasizes the importance of social and economic aspects when looking into the various dancing communities. She questions the historical class division when studying elite culture and popular culture where some practises are considered as lower class and vulgar, while others are viewed as distinguished and assumed to be more appropriate for societies that are more affluent.[15] Dodds argues that differences in regions, and religion and gender, should also be studied alongside class disparities.[16] She also draws linkages between social dance and the political structure and how cultural dominance and cultural anxiety, in the case of ragtime dancing, for example, "…exposed the racist discourse that underpinned the dance practice and the desire to modify the dance served as a regulatory social framework".[17] As an analytical work of social dance, Dodds's study is at the forefront of a new turn in the writing of dance history.

In his 2012 thesis entitled "The Paramount ballroom in the 1930s: a modernist social and architectural space", Xi Zhang discusses how the Paramount Ballroom in Shanghai challenged traditional Chinese values of the 1930s.[18] This urban space, argued Zhang, was a "sign of modernity" as the various new ballrooms that were being built in the city allowed the Chinese middle-class to "cultivate an image of modern [Western] life".[19] Zhang notes how Chinese society embraced the foreign tradition of couple dancing which was traditionally alien to customary Chinese performance. He points to the commercialization of dance and its wholehearted adaptation into the middle-class culture.

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[14] S. Dodds, *Dancing on the canon: embodiments of value in popular dance* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 45.
[15] Dodds, *Dancing on the canon*, 2011, p. 89.
[16] Dodds, *Dancing on the canon*, 2011, p. 46.
[17] Dodds, *Dancing on the canon*, 2011, pp. 59-60.
[18] X. Zhang, "The Paramount ballroom in the 1930s: a modernist social and architectural space" (Master of Arts, Kentucky: University of Louisville, 2012).
[19] Zhang, "The Paramount ballroom in the 1930s", 2012, pp. vi, 2.

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Danielle Robinson's book entitled *Modern Moves: dancing race during the ragtime and jazz era*s was published in 2015 and examines the interaction of social dances in different USA communities.[20] In her monograph she moves beyond the suburban dance studios and considers how social dance allowed for, as she puts it, "cross-cultural exploration, connection, exploitation, contestation and confusion in twentieth century North America".[21] This movement of social dance beyond its perceived class and race borders is a theme that resonates with the South African situation.

Likewise, James Nott's 2015 ground-breaking study on the British dance hall, *Going to the Palais: a social and cultural history of dancing and dance halls in Britain* focuses on how the dance hall impacted on the working class culture of the lower and lower middle-classes in British society.[22] He describes the popularity of the dance halls as a "ritualized leisure pursuit of great social importance" that impacted on everyday life and reflects what these dance crazes say about British culture.[23] Nott's focus on the impact of social dancing on society provides a good example of positioning dance in society's past. Furthermore, the thorough referencing and detailed sources make this study useful as a source in itself to substantiate a range of views in other sources.

Historian, Klaus Nathaus, focuses his research on the importance and role of popular music, dance bands and leisure clubs in Germany and the UK. His articles include amongst others: "Popular music in Germany, 1900–1930: A case of Americanisation? uncovering a European trajectory of music production into the twentieth century";[24] "The production of popular culture in twentieth-century western Europe: trends in and perspectives on 'Europop'";[25] "All dressed up and nowhere to go?: spaces and

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[20] D. Robinson, *Modern moves: dancing race during the ragtime and jazz eras* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2015).
[21] Robinson, *Modern moves: dancing race during the ragtime and jazz eras*, p. xii.
[22] J. Nott, *Going to the Palais: a social and cultural history of dancing and dance halls in Britain, 1918- 1960,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).
[23] Nott, *Going to the Palais*, p. 2.
[24] K. Nathaus, "Popular Music in Germany, 1900–1930: A Case of Americanisation? Uncovering a European Trajectory of Music Production into the Twentieth Century", *European Review of History*, 20(5), October 2013.
[25] K. Nathaus, "The production of popular culture in twentieth-century western Europe: trends in and perspectives on 'Europop'", *European Review of History*, 20(5), October 2013.

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conventions of youth in 1950s Britain";[26] "Music in transnational transfers and international competitions: Germany, Britain, and the US in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries";[27] and the recent "Peter Pichler, metal music, sonic knowledge, and the cultural ear in Europe since 1970. A historiographic exploration".[28] Nathaus meticulous research over the past decade, discusses both the cultural exchanges and the dynamics of leisure in the twentieth century. As indicated in Chapter 1, Nott and Nathaus's edited publication *Worlds of social dancing: dance floor encounters and the global rise of couple dancing, c. 1910-40*, focuses specifically on social dancing between 1910 and 1940 in several urban milieus across the globe and how communities actively selected and adapted dances to fit into their specific environments.[29] This again echoes trends and developments in the South African situation.

Focusing on social dancing in Africa, a study done by Anusa Daimon looks at the role of dancing in identity formation of the migrant Chewa community in Zimbabwe.[30] While Daimon's 2007 paper focuses on vernacular dance and not on social dance specifically, her research highlights how important dancing was in the African migrant community. This again resonates deeply with how dancing was perceived in Johannesburg during the 1930s to 1950s. The dances, she explains, "…acted as a distinct variable in identity articulation against other popular concepts like race, class, religion, linguistics as well as ethnic characteristics and stereotypes".[31] Daimon argues that while bodies like colonial governments, also used vernacular dance forms to create imagined identities, in some instances cultural practice like dance became vital

[26] K. Nathaus, "All dressed up and nowhere to go?: spaces and conventions of youth in 1950s Britain", *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 41(1), March 2015, pp. 40-70.
[27] K. Nathaus, "Music in transnational transfers and international competitions: Germany, Britain, and the US in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries", in Mario Dunkel and Sina A. Nitzsche (eds.), *Popular music and public diplomacy: transnational and transdisciplinary perspectives*, (transcript Verlag, Bielefeld, 2019), pp.29-48.
[28] K. Nathaus, "Peter Pichler, metal music, sonic knowledge, and the cultural ear in Europe since 1970. A historiographic exploration", *Historische Zeitschrift*, 314(2), April 2022, pp. 555-557.
[29] K. Nathaus & James J. Nott (eds.), *Worlds of social dancing: dance floor encounters and the global rise of couple dancing, c. 1910-40*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2022).
[30] A. Daimon, "Migrant Chewa identities and their construction through Gule Wamkulu/Nyau dances in Zimbabwe " (Society, State & Identity in African History, Addis Ababa, 22 to 24 May 2007).
[31] Daimon, "Migrant Chewa Identities and their construction through Gule Wamkulu/Nyau dances in Zimbabwe", 2007.

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in the expression of a groups' characteristics and a way to differentiate groups from one another.[32]

In another study on Africa entitled "Dancehall politics: mobility, sexuality and spectacles of racial respectability in late colonial Tanganyika", Emily Callaci, studies *dansi*, a Swahili term for ballroom dancing in Tanzania. Callaci noted how *dansi* had different meanings for different people. She also found that while some viewed social dance as a "universalizing modernity based on the ideals of hetero social commercial leisure and cosmopolitan aesthetic affinities", others viewed it with anxiety because of the perceived demoralising effect it had on the youth and the loss of colonial and societal control.[33] She noted that by the 1950s "*dansi* took on a special significance as a site for competing visions of 'racial respectability'".[34] This term "racial respectability" is defined by Lynn Thomas as referring to: "people's desires and efforts to claim positive recognition in contexts powerfully structured by racism, contexts in which respectability was framed through racial categories, and appearances were of the gravest importance".[35] In her study Callaci examined the link between social dance, the changing ideas of the physical body and changing notions of racial respectability.[36] Here again there are points of similarity with the dance scene that evolved in South Africa.

Following on from Malnig's argument that the dance floor can be seen as a "rehearsal ground" or a way to explore or experiment changing class, race and gender roles,[37] Callici argues that inversely, debates or complaints about social dances also happen when sudden or intense historical changes take place.[38] She highlights how radically different the social dances (especially the view of the female body and allowances for

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[32] Daimon, "Migrant Chewa identities and their construction through Gule Wamkulu/Nyau dances in Zimbabwe", 2007.
[33] E. Callaci, "Dancehall Politics: Mobility, Sexuality and Spectacles of Racial Respectability in Late Colonial Tanganyika, 1930-1961", *Journal of African History,* 52, 2011, p. 366.
[34] Callaci, "Dancehall Politics", 2011, pp. 366, 383.
[35] L. M. Thomas, "The modern girl and racial respectability in 1930s South Africa", *Journal of African History,* 47, 2006, p. 462
[36] Callaci, "Dancehall Politics", 2011, p. 366.
[37] J. Malnig, "Apaches, tango and other indecensies: women, dance and New York nightlife in the 1910s", in J. Malnig (ed.), *Ballroom, Boogie Shimmy Sham, Shake* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), p. 85.
[38] Callaci, "Dancehall Politics", 2011, p. 367.

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gender mixing and sexuality) were from acceptable traditional social practises and how this caused inter-generational tensions.[39] In her study, Callaci shows that while some historians see *dansi* as a way to foster a sense of nationalism or anti colonialism, this was probably not the case for the majority of the dance enthusiast of the 1950s. Rather, social dance events allowed for a space where debates about body, race and sexuality could take place.[40] Callici described how, by the early 1930s, Tanganyikan youth organised their own "European style" social dance events with local musicians. It had, she explains, "cosmopolitan connections" that were symbolic of the newfound status brought on by wage labour.[41] Callaci described how these dance parties fed into the image of the new commercial youth, where attending an event required a certain type of clothing. Elite urban dance societies, in Callaci's study, also took care to distinguish their events as respectable to counter act the negative perception of dance as "alcoholic sex parties".[42] Callici emphasises how *dansi* moved with the youth throughout East and Central Africa and how it was an activity for people who wanted to be "connected to a wider world either through their own mobility or through their access to circuits of commodities and styles".[43]

Callaci further noted how crucial dance bands were in the urban social networks and how the size of audiences (as well as how well dressed the audiences were) impacted on the stature of the dance bands.[44] According to Callaci songs performed by the band members often became a "public commentary" on behaviour.[45] She explains that "the self-consciously cosmopolitan identification of *dansi* provided a fertile urban ground for a growing urban racial politics in the 1950s in Tanzania".[46] She further points out that *dansi* events were appealing because they created a "fantasy of participation in a universalizing cosmopolitan modernity".[47] However, it also highlighted the very stratified urban geography with its class divisions where the urban elite danced in fancy hotel ballrooms, while the poor danced in the densely populated areas under

[39] Callaci, "Dancehall Politics", 2011, p. 368.
[40] Callaci, "Dancehall Politics", 2011, p. 369.
[41] Callaci, "Dancehall Politics", 2011, p. 370.
[42] Callaci, "Dancehall Politics", 2011, p. 373.
[43] Callaci, "Dancehall Politics", 2011, p. 374.
[44] Callaci, "Dancehall Politics", 2011, p. 376.
[45] Callaci, "Dancehall Politics", 2011, p. 377.
[46] Callaci, "Dancehall Politics", 2011, p. 377.
[47] Callaci, "Dancehall Politics", 2011, p. 378.

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corrugated iron roofs. Dance halls created a sense of racial respectability, but also reflected on how gender-biased this respectability was as men went out alone to dance, but women were characterised as prostitutes and spinsters when dancing. Callaci shows how local Tanzanian social dance enthusiasts attempted to "establish urban leisure as a source of modern feminine respectability", by emphasizing the training and physical control required when dancing.[48] She explained how the dancing body became a contested site between what is respectability - trained and practised controlled body movement danced by a monogamous heterosexual couple danced in romantic dance halls with Western style fashions, even if it meant combining resources amongst a group and sharing one up to date dance outfit - and what was not.[49] She described urban leisure spaces as "microcosms of the nation".[50] Critics of social dancing events were ever present and objections against *dansi* events included*:* it being elitist and excluding the poor; being foreign and even taking away from activities like "study, prayer and home making; which were all considered necessary to African advancement".[51]

Callaci also pointed out how in the early 1960s Tanzania's first president, Juluis Nyerere, used social dance in his inauguration speech. Nyerere argued for decolonisation and noted how all of Tanzania could dance Western dances, but few know traditional Tanzanian dances.[52] She argued that while the dance halls did not create a sense of nationhood, they did create a shared space where experimentation and debate could take place.[53] She concluded by explaining that dance was where young people could "rework notions of gender, sexuality and social prestige in a city, disrupting any attempts to articulate a singular model of national personhood".[54] Callaci's seminal study on social dancing in Tanzania provides a fascinating comparison with social dance in Johannesburg during the period 1940s to 1960s.

[48] Callaci, "Dancehall Politics", 2011, p. 380.
[49] Callaci, "Dancehall Politics", 2011, p. 382.
[50] Callaci, "Dancehall Politics", 2011, p. 383.
[51] Callaci, "Dancehall Politics", 2011, p. 383.
[52] Callaci, "Dancehall Politics", 2011, p. 384.
[53] Callaci, "Dancehall Politics", 2011, p. 384.
[54] Callaci, "Dancehall Politics", 2011, p. 384.

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Betinna Ng'weno's research on ballroom dancing in Nairobi in the 1950s and 1960s highlights the important role that live music and social dance played in the Kenyan capital.[55] This 2018 study highlights both the number of social dancing clubs and how popular dances were in Nairobi during this period. Ng'weno, however also notes how segregated the venues were and how the colonial Kenyan government tried to make the city less appealing and less accessible to Africans by limiting leisure attractions.[56] Despite this authoritarian colonial regime, social dancing grew in the African communities with Ng'weno describing the intrinsic prevalence of dance as follows:

> …social halls provided a space in which this modern urban identity was best expressed, in the form of ballroom dancing; the music developed that supported the dancing and gave voice to the identity; the art and styles of being it enabled; the advertising and industries that recognized its power becoming instrumental in its promotion; and the people who made it their own, retooling the dance, music, and social halls for local and national political purposes.[57]

This self-creation of a new urban Kenyan identity through social dancing paralleled what was happening in Johannesburg during a similar time. As such this again provides insightful comparison points. Ng'weno argues that the creation of demarcated spaces for home, work and leisure was vitally important in creating and sustaining this urban identity.[58]

In her 2020 publication entitled *Malawian Migration to Zimbabwe, 1900–1965: tracing Machona*, Zoë Groves emphasizes the important role that dance played in the cultural identities of communities. In her chapter of Nyasa migrant identities she, for example, highlights the all-night tea dances in Salisbury's (in Rhodesia's, later Zimbabwe) townships beer halls and how and why government attempted to control the dances. She states:

> …[t]he 1920s and the 1930s, patriarchal control of African women and youth was an especially important concern for European settlers in Southern Rhodesia. 'Black Peril' fears (white settler anxieties

[55] B. Ng'weno, "Dancing is part and parcel of someone who is cultured: Ballroom dancing and the spaces of urban identity in 1950s Nairobi," in M. wa Mutonya & K. Kiiru (eds.), *Music and dance in eastern Africa: current research in humanities and social sciences*, (Nairobi: Africae, Twaweza Communications, 2018).
[56] Ng'weno, "Dancing is part and parcel of someone who is cultured", 2018, par. 6.
[57] Ng'weno, "Dancing is part and parcel of someone who is cultured", 2018, par. 6.
[58] Ng'weno, "Dancing is part and parcel of someone who is cultured", 2018.

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> about African men sexually assaulting white women) were used to justify attempts by the administration to bolster chiefly authority in controlling the mobility of African men and women.[59]

While her focus is on Malawian relocation, the study provides insights into how dances could transcend perceived boundaries and her discussion on the concern of various groups regarding dance, also reverberates with the South African situation.[60]

2.3 Local social dancing

On a local level, general South African history texts seldom refer to ballroom or social dancing. A few publications do mention or give a short discussion on the influence of "dancing", but these remain chequered and superficial. South African histories that do refer to dancing in the colonial times, do so merely as a leisurely past time.[61] Travel documents and early colonial texts such as the journals and diaries of Lady Anne Barnard (1793- 1803),[62] Robert Semple (1805),[63] William J. Burchell (1822),[64] William Bird (1822),[65] Margery Perham (1929)[66] reflect on the social activities of the early colonial times and are an early record detailing the prominence of ballroom dancing within specific communities. Typical of this time, dancers and the dances are compared with how similar or different they were to Europe.

Another travel journal was that of Ralph J. Bunche. Bunche was an official in the United Nations and received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1950 for his mediation efforts in the Middle East. On his way to do fieldwork in Francophone West Africa for his Harvard PhD, Bunche visited South Africa in late 1937 to early 1938 to study fieldwork

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59 Z. R. Groves, *Malawian Migration to Zimbabwe, 1900–1965: Tracing Machona* (Cambridge: Springer International Publishing, 2020), pp. 99-114.
60 Groves, *Malawian Migration to Zimbabwe,* 2020, p. 98.
61 A. M. Green, "Dancing in borrowed shoes: a history of ballroom dancing in South Africa (1600s-1940s)" (Master's thesis, University of Pretoria, 2008).
62 D. Fairbridge, *Lady Anne Barnard at the Cape of Good Hope* (England, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), pp. 19-20.
63 R. Semple, *Walks and sketches at the Cape of Good Hope. A journey from Cape Town to Blettenberg's* [sic.] *Bay*, (London: C & R. Baldwin, 1805), p. 29.
64 W. J. Burchell, *Travels in the interior of southern Africa*, (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1822), p. 38.
65 W. W. Bird, *State of the Cape of Good Hope in 1822* (Cape Town: C. Struik, facsimile reprint, 1966), pp. 164-166.
66 M. Perham, *African apprenticeship: an autobiographical journey in southern Africa 1929* (London: Faber and Faber, 1974), p. 146.

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methodology with the eminent anthropologist Isaac Schapera.[67] He visited many Coloured, Indian, and African communities in South Africa and his detailed notes and analysis were published in *An African American in South Africa: the travel notes of Ralph J. Bunche, 28 September 1937-1 January 1938*.[68] There are references to dance as a leisure pastime in his recollections.

Ethnographical studies done in the 1920s and 1930s by Hugh Tracey and Percival Kirby focused specifically on the traditional music and dances of the African population in southern Africa. Their publications include: *The musical instruments of the native races of South Africa;*[69] *African dances of the Witwatersrand gold mines*;[70] and *The Musical Instruments of the Indigenous People of South Africa*.[71] In her analysis of the historiography and methodology of research perspectives on black South African music, Deborah James noted that both Tracey and Kirby focused on the "technical and formal details of performance rather than the social uses of music".[72] Furthermore, both researchers were funded by the Carnegie Corporation during a time when the "Native question" was central in the South African political and social landscape.[73] As such, their study is very much a compartmentalization of communities as "the other", without much consideration for outside influences or intergroup creativity. Despite the strong emphasis on demarcated racial groupings and their focus on the technically of the instruments and music forms, these researchers' detailed descriptions and recordings of how music was played and dances performed, was meticulously done. Furthermore, while almost no mention is made of dances and music other than the "traditional", the place and intricacies of the music and dances that Kirby and Tracey describe, highlights the importance of music and dances in the communities. Their research can thus form a baseline regarding what was already part of the communities'

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[67] R. J. Bunche, *An African American in South Africa: the travel notes of Ralph J. Bunche, 28 September 1937-1 January 1938*, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992).
[68] Bunche, *An African American in South Africa*, 1992.
[69] P. R. Kirby, *The musical instruments of the native races of South Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934).
[70] H. Tracey, *African dances of the Witwatersrand gold mines (*Johannesburg: African Music Society, 1952).
[71] Kirby, *The Musical Instruments of the Indigenous People,* 2013.
[72] D. James, "Musical form and social history: research perspectives on black South African music", in J. Brown; P. Manning, K. Shapiro & J. Wiener (eds.), *History from South Africa. Alternative visions and practises*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press. Radical History Review, 1991), p. 310.
[73] P. R. Kirby, *The Musical Instruments of the Indigenous People,* 2013, pp. xi-xii.

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social lives and explain how other, Western dances, could easily be incorporated in the urban communities with their diverse backgrounds.

Social histories with a focus on the white South African communities include the cultural historian Victor de Kock's 1955 publication *The fun they had! The pastimes of our forefathers*, who highlighted the informal nature of social dances of the Dutch during the seventeenth century.[74] Both Alan Hattersley and Colin Botha in their social histories published in the 1960s and 1970s respectively, noted social dancing's regular presence in the eighteenth century South African homesteads.[75] Similarly in the 1970s, in their seminal second volume: T*he Oxford History of South Africa II: South Africa 1870-1966* Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson point to social activities (including dancing) practised by various races in South Africa.[76]

A short, but annotated overview of ballroom (social) dancing appeared in the 1971 *Standard Encyclopedia of Southern Africa*. The author of this contribution was Dorothy Dymond, who was a life member of the "Imperial Society of Teachers of Ballroom Dancing" as well as an examiner of the "South African Association of Teachers of Dancing", in Cape Town. She mentions the regularity of social dancing where dancers danced alongside local musicians. While Dymond presents an overview that is entirely white and colonial with only a single concluding sentence referring to "coloured" and "bantu" participation, her overview highlights the skillful and passionate dancers prevalent in South Africa.[77]

Even more so than the earlier mentioned travel documents and colonial texts on the Cape's social history and the pre-twentieth century history of SA, social studies reflecting on the wider Johannesburg region and its townships give a vivid description

[74] V. de Kock, *The fun they had! The pastimes of our forefathers* (Cape Town: Howard B. Timmins, 1955), p. 47.
[75] A. F. Hattersley, *An illustrated social history of South Africa* (Cape Town: A.A. Balkema, 1969), p. 17;
C. G. Botha, *Social life in the Cape Colony with social customs in South Africa in the 18th century* (Cape Town: C. Struik, 1973), pp. 51, 85.
[76] M. Wilson & L. Thompson (eds.), *The Oxford history of South Africa II: South Africa 1870-1966* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971).
[77] D. Dymond, "Dancing Ballroom", in D. J. Potgieter (ed.), *Standard Encyclopedia of Southern Africa*, III (Cape Town: Nasou, 1971) p. 558.

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of the presence of music and social clubs in the area. This includes Richard Phillip's 1971 publication entitled *The Bantu in the city: a study of cultural adjustment on the Witwatersrand*, as well as Mia Brandel-Syrier's study entitled: *Reeftown elite: a study of social mobility in a modern African community on the Reef*.[78] In both dance is mentioned among the many other recreational activities.

In his popular 1981 pictorial history of South Africa, *Reader's digest: South Africa's yesterdays* popular journalist Peter Joyce discusses ballroom dancing mainly as a form of white recreation. In this publication he makes mention of the first national ballroom dance competition held in 1928 and refers to heats that were danced throughout South Africa with the final taking place in Johannesburg.[79] In the 1980s and 1990s passing reference is also made to specific ballroom dances, like the tango and the waltz, in texts such as *Cape Town the making of a city* and *South Africa in the 20th century chronicles of an era*.[80]

In the 1989 *Along the road to Soweto. A racial history of South Africa*, K.C. Tessendorf examines the causes for the 1976 Soweto riots by looking at how the race relationships developed since prehistoric times.[81] His chapter entitled "Soweto: Youths black rage" highlights the plenitude of, what he dubs, the "white amenities" including sixty social clubs, as well as the youth's appreciation of American culture.[82] While he does not refer to social dance specifically, his detailed descriptions of leisure and the infrastructures available in the Johannesburg region forms a backdrop from which to explore social dancing.

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[78] R. Phillips, *The Bantu in the city: a study of cultural adjustment on the Witwatersrand*, (South Africa: The Lovedale Press, 1970); M. Brandel-Syrier, *Reeftown elite a study of social mobility in a modern African community on the Reef*, (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971).
[79] P. Joyce, *Reader's digest: South Africa's yesterdays (*Cape Town: Reader's Digest Association, 1981), pp. 102-103.
[80] N. Worden; E. van Heyningen & V. Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town the making of a city: an illustrated social history (*South Africa*:* David Philip Publishers, 1998), pp. 139, 148-149; P. Joyce, *South Africa in the 20th century chronicles of an era* (Cape Town: Struik Publishers, 2000), pp. 31, 141, 176, 103.
[81] K.C. Tessendorf, *Along the road to Soweto. A racial history of South Africa,* (New York: Atheneum, 1989).
[82] Tessendorf, *Along the road to Soweto*, 1989, pp. 170, 172.

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In the 2012 *Orlando West, Soweto: an illustrated history*, Noor Nieftagodien and Sally Gaule specifically present the founding of Orlando West and analyse the living circumstances in the area. *Orlando West* includes several photographs alongside first-hand accounts of life in the area that included both the struggle to survive in the township as well as fashion, music and leisure activities. This publication also notes the presence of various social clubs and community halls like: the Pelican Club; Uncle Tom's Hall; and the Orlando Communal Hall.[83] While they do not mention dancing specifically, Nieftagodien and Gaule's focus on the halls, musicians and life of the people living in Orlando West serves to create a backdrop for studying leisure activities in the Johannesburg region.

Some chapters in the 2012 *The Cambridge history of South Africa. 1885-1994* reflect on social and cultural history in South Africa. In his chapter entitled: "Modernity, culture and nation", Thlalo Radithalo explains that the "…evolving world of the colony was not a smooth one: the cultural, economic, and political interest of the dominated and the dominant collided regularly…".[84] While dancing is just a passing reference in this *Cambridge History*, contributors to this edition incorporated activities that were practised alongside social dances like music, drama and social clubs. Radithalo, for example, highlights the popularity of performance style dances like *marabi* and praises the adaptability of musical bands like the Mthetwa Lucky Stars and the Darktown Strutters who performed despite economic and political adversity.[85] Similarly, in his chapter on "South African Society and culture 1910 to 1948", Phillip Bonner noted how music helped black South Africans to "cope with the dehumanisation of the South Africa system".[86] This study's incorporation of leisure and culture in the South African milieu is evidence of the recognition of what a critical role it plays in shaping histories.

In recent decades a few studies have been done that focus less on the general and social histories as described above, and more on music and dance specifically. This

[83] N. Nieftagodien & S. Gaule, *Orlando West, Soweto: an illustrated history*, (Johannesburg: Wits University press, 2012), pp. 40, 41.
[84] T. Radithalo, "Modernity, culture and nation" in R. Ross; A. K. Mager & B. Nasson (eds.), *The Cambridge history of South Africa. 1885-1994* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). pp. 578-579.
[85] Ross, Mager & Nasson (eds.), *The Cambridge history of South* Africa, 2012, p. 579.
[86] P. Bonner, "South African Society and culture 1910 to 1948" in Ross, Mager & Nasson (eds.), *The Cambridge history of South Africa,* 2012, p. 311

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includes the 2008 ethnomusicological study by Carol Muller entitled *Focus: music of South Africa*. This work examines the wide and diverse spectrum of South Africa's music culture.[87] She discusses the popular, ethnic and religious significance of music in the twentieth century which encompasses the cultural milieu. Muller also emphasizes the important and often overlooked role that local and regional transfers of music played in local regions. She further analyses how apartheid legislation influenced both international performers' perceptions of South Africa and allows for a deeper understanding of how acculturation took place. As such, this study provides a more general understanding of the settings where social dancing took place and why social dancing continued to be such a popular activity in South Africa.[88]

The 2012 collection of studies published in *Post-Apartheid dance: many bodies, many voices, many stories*, reflects on how dance specifically (including ballet, theatre dance and traditional dances) are represented within South African communities after 1994.[89] In her contribution, Sharon Friedman explains that South African arts and culture was deeply influenced by the apartheids government's separate development policies and style. Despite the negative impact that these policies had on communities, a particular value was placed on "British ballet as a high art form above all forms of dance" even after South Africa was no longer a colony.[90] Friedman explained that the Eurocentric emphasis that was placed on the "officially sanctioned art forms" led to the creation of fully funded professional ballet companies of exceptional standard. Inadvertently this meant that other arts and dance forms were perceived as of far lesser value than ballet. This collection of essays provides a unique insight into the general South African dancing scene and how dance needs to be reassessed to bring out the voice of the marginalized in South Africa.

In their 2014 study entitled *Geographies of dance*, Adam Pine and Olaf Kuhlke highlight the importance of specific dances. Their study focused on the physical aspects of dance and on how this always interacts with the body, social consciences

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[87] C. A. Muller, *Focus: music of South Africa*, 2nd ed (New York: Routledge, 2008).
[88] Muller, *Focus: music of South Africa,* 2008.
[89] S. Friedman, *Post-apartheid dance: many bodies, many voices, many stories* (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), p.1.
[90] Friedman, *Post-apartheid dance*, 2012, p.1.

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or social injustices and the physical space that it is performed in.[91] The study observed how dances are experienced by the dancers themselves and crucially how the space where dance takes place influences the dances.[92] Like Giordano's study, each chapter sets out the physical, political and economic scene and then highlights how dances were performed in specific designated spaces and time. *Geographies of dance* reflects on a variety of dances including, ballet, contemporary dance, social, exotic and traditional dances from various countries. It also contains a section specifically on South Africa and its jazz dances. Tamara Johnson's chapter entitled "Some dance to remember: The emotional politics of marginality, reinvention, embodied memory, and all that (Cape) Jazz" describes the place of jazz dance in a local South African community and the role it played in forming, as she states, a "coloured identity and collective embodied memory".[93] Dancing thus helped with a form of nation-building by being a place where changes were processed. It also became a place where the past could be remembered and reassessed collectively.

Other local case studies that focus on social dancing specifically follow a similar trend as the international studies where there was a specific focus in social dances performed by South African blacks. These studies include work done by David Coplan, Veit Erlmann, Christopher Ballantine, Modikwe Dikobe and the pictorial works of Jürgen Schadeberg. However, there have been relatively few studies done on South African urban arts and fewer still on social dance. Ethnomusicologist Coplan explains that this lack of research endeavour has been ascribed to a longstanding view that cultural behaviours, like dances, are dependent on social action, meaning that in order for a dance to take place an action must occur (e.g. wedding, celebration, social injustice). Dance is thus seen as reactionary. Coplan argues that this is not so, stating that dance should be viewed as a "causal variable in social action".[94] Indeed, reports on the social conditions in the 1930s and 1940s emphasize the fundamental presence

[91] A. Pine & O. Kuhlke (eds.), *Geographies of dance: body, movement, and corporeal negotiations* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2014), p. ix.
[92] Pine & Kuhlke, *Geographies of dance: body, movement, and corporeal negotiations*, p. viii.
[93] T. Johnson, "Some dance to remember: the emotional politics of marginality, reinvention, embodied memory, and all that (Cape) Jazz," in Pine & Kuhlke (eds.), *Geographies of Dance*, 2014, p. 76.
[94] D. B. Coplan, "The urbanization of African performing arts in South Africa" (Indiana University, PhD, Anthropology, 1980).

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of social dancing in Johannesburg and its “slum yards”.[95] Coplan’s extensive research on the music and dancing worlds of urban black Johannesburg highlights the unique circumstances in which communities formed a very successful industry. He focuses on music and dance as an art and not a reactionary form. His publications include: *In Township tonight: South Africa’s black city music and theatre* first published in 1985;[96] *Popular culture and performance in Africa* published in 1983;[97] as well as several shorter pieces that focused on the black Witwatersrand[98] entertainers and African working class culture.[99] While his focus is not on social dancing, his research reflects the close relationships between dance bands, dance events with their immediate environment and the drive to create a new cultural urban class that was different from rural life.

Erlmann, also an ethnomusicologist, has written extensively on the cultural history and sociology of South Africa’s black musicians. His publications include the 1999 *Music,*

[95] E. Koch, "Doornfontein and its African working class, 1914 to 1935: a study of popular culture in Johannesburg" (University of the Witwatersrand, MA, 1983).
[96] D. B. Coplan, *In township tonight!: South Africa's black city music and theatre*, 2nd ed., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).
[97] D. Coplan, *Popular culture and performance in Africa* (Grahamstown: Rhodes University, 1983).
[98] The Witwatersrand (sometimes called the Reef or the Rand) included a number of towns and cities on the north-facing escarpment in South Africa's Gauteng province nestled between north-flowing streams forming numerous small kloofs or gorges and waterfalls. It includes Bedfordview, Johannesburg in the center, Roodepoort and Krugersdorp. The light-coloured quartzite rock in this plateau was rich in gold and when it was discovered in 1886 started the Witwatersrand Gold Rush. However, given its distribution often deep in the conglomerate made excavating difficult and required large scale deep mining operations. This required a large-scale cheap works force. E. T. Mellor, *Department of Mines and Industries. The Geology of the Witwatersrand: An Explanation of the Geological Map of the Witwatersrand,* (Pretoria: Government Printing and Stationary Office, 1917), pp. 9, 40-41; R. Ross, *A concise history of South Africa*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 70-73.
[99] D. Coplan, "The African musician and the development of the Johannesburg entertainment industry, 1900-1960," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 5(2), 1979, pp. 135-64; D. Coplan, "The African performer and the Johannesburg entertainment industry: the struggle for African culture on the Witwatersrand," in B. Bozzoli (ed.), *Labour, townships and protest*, (Johannesburg: Ravan press, 1979), pp. 183-215; D. Coplan, "Marabi culture: continuity and transformation in African music in Johannesburg, 1920-1940," *African Urban Studies*, 6, 1979, pp. 49-75; D. Coplan, "The emergence of an African working-class culture," in S. Marks & R. Rathbone (eds.), *Industrialisation and social change in South Africa; African class formation, culture, and consciousness, 1870-1930*, (UK: Longman press, 1982), pp. 358-373; D. Coplan, "Popular history: cultural memory," *Critical arts: a journal of media studies,* 14(2), 2000, pp. 122-144; D. B. Coplan, "Sounds of the "Third Way": Identity and the African renaissance in contemporary South African popular traditional music," *Black music Research journal*, 21(1), 2001, pp. 107-124.

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modernity and the global imagination: South Africa and the West;[100] the 1996 *Night song: performance, power, and practice in South Africa*;[101] and the 1991 *African stars: studies in Black South African performance*.[102] Erlmann detailed the performance traditions like that of *isicathamiya* or male acapella groups and choirs. While Erlmann's focus is more on the performance aspect of dances, his research noted how important dancing was, despite it not being recorded to the same degree as the protest actions and political gatherings of mainstream histories.

In the genre of non-fiction, Rammitloa's 1973 novel entitled *Marabi dance* provided a unique perspective and detailed insight into the "slum yards" of Johannesburg.[103] He wrote this book under the name of Modikwe Dikobe. The story follows the life of Martha, her relationship with the *marabi* boy George, dancing and alcohol. While fictional, Dikobe's work gives a realistic detailed account of the infrastructure (including the Bantu Men's Social Centre, bioscopes and bands) that were available and created to support not just *marabi* dance, but also a wider range of social dancing.

Ballantine, a professor of music, focused his research on the sociology of music in South Africa and the power that music has to change the perception of a group's identity. His publications include the 2017 *Living together, living apart?: social cohesion in a future South Africa;*[104] *Marabi Nights: Jazz, 'Race' and society in early apartheid South Africa* that was first published in 2012;[105] "Concert and dance: the foundations of black jazz in South Africa between the twenties and the early forties", published in 1991;[106] the 1984 study entitled *Music and its social meanings*,[107] and

[100] V. Erlmann, *Music, modernity and the global imagination: South Africa and the West*, (Oxford: Oxford University press, 2008).
[101] V. Erlmann, *Nightsong: performance, power, and practice in South Africa*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).
[102] V. Erlmann, *African stars: studies in Black South African performance,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).
[103] M. Dikobe, *The Marabi dance*, (London: Heinemann, 1973).
[104] C. J. Ballantine; M. Chapman, K. Erwin & G. Maré (eds.), *Living together, living apart?: social cohesion in a future South Africa*, (Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2017).
[105] C. J. Ballantine, *Marabi nights: jazz, 'race' and society in early apartheid South African*, (Scottsville, South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2012).
[106] C. J. Ballantine, "Concert and Dance: the foundations of black jazz in South Africa between the twenties and the early forties," *Popular Music*, 10(2), 1991, pp. 121-145.
[107] C. J. Ballantine, *Music and its social meanings* (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1984).

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Twentieth Century Symphony that was published in 1983.[108] He has also published widely on topics ranging from popular South African bandleaders with Peter Rezant (bandleader of the Merry Blackbirds) and the history of South Africa's jazz music.[109] Ballantine also published a collection of interviews he carried out verbatim giving a unique primary archival record of these musical legends' recollection of the time. Ballantine had also made much of this primary material (including audio recordings of the music) used in his years of research available in the University of KwaZulu-Natal's "South African Music Archive Project".[110] This forms a unique primary source for research in this field.

Besides the video documentary entitled *Ballroom fever* referred to in Chapter 1, Jürgen Schadeberg, a *Drum* photographer during the 1950s, also published collections of the images of his work done in South Africa. His publications include: the 1994 *Sof'town blues: images from the black '50s;*[111] *Jazz, blues & swing: six decades of music in South Africa;*[112] and *Tales from* Jozi;[113] both published in 2007. These pictorial works give a vivid imagery of the social milieu, as well as the music and dancing of South African communities.

Apart from the above-mentioned published works, there are also other academic studies that include ballroom dancing within broader themes. Ellen Hellmann's study entitled: *Rooiyard. A Sociological survey of an urban native slum yard* was based on her 1935 M.A. thesis at the University of the Witwatersrand. Hellmann recorded the

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108 C. J. Ballantine, *Twentieth century symphony* (London: D. Dobson, 1983).
109 C. J. Ballantine, "Peter Rezant: Doyen of South African Jazz-Band Leaders," *South African Music Studies,* 34/35(1), February 2016, pp. 229-261; C. J. Ballantine, "John Blacking: a personal tribute," *Journal of the International Library of African music,* 7(2), 1992, pp. 3-4; C. J. Ballantine, "Gender, migrancy, and South African popular music in the late 1940s and the 1950s", *Ethnomusicology*, 44(3), Fall 2000, pp. 376- 407; C. J. Ballantine, "Fact, ideology and paradox: African elements in early Black South African Jazz and Vaudeville," *Journal of international library of African music*, 7(3), 1996, pp. 44-51; C. J. Ballantine, "Edmund 'Ntemi' Piliso jazzing through defeat and triumph: an interview," *Journal of the International Library of African music,* 10(4), 2018, pp. 144-159.
110 Anon., "Welcome to South African Music Archive Project," University of KwaZulu-Natal, https://samap.ukzn.ac.za/, Accessed 21 April 2022.
111 J. Schadeberg, *Sof'town blues: images from the black '50s*, (Pinegowrie, South Africa: Jürgen Schadeberg, 1994).
112 J. Schadeberg & D. Albert, *Jazz, blues & swing: six decades of music in South Africa,* (Claremont, South Africa: David Philip, 2007).
113 J. Schadeberg, *Tales from Jozi*, (Pretoria: Protea, 2007).

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everyday life and analysed the various problems that individuals experienced living in a "slum yard" during the early 1930s. Although ballroom dancing is only mentioned in passing, the detailed research done on especially the social struggles and economic capabilities of these urban citizens makes it a valuable resource in determining what kind of ballroom dance infrastructure was available to them, as well as the milieu in which they lived.[114]

Claude de Villiers's 1972 two-volume study entitled "Die vryetydsbesteding van volwasse manlike Bantoe in die gebied Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereniging" (Leisure activities of the male adult Bantu in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereniging area) also gives a detailed analysis of the nature of leisure activities among the black community, following much the same analytical structure that Hellman did forty years earlier. The value of this study lies in the author's understanding of the area, the people and especially in the detailed recording and the extensive nature of the questionnaire data collection and comparative tables.[115] These also double-up as a valuable source of primary information.

A few academic studies also focus on the presence of ballroom dancing in South African society specifically. Matilda Burden's study entitled "Die herkoms en ontwikkeling van die Afrikaanse volksdans" (The origin and development of Afrikaans folk dances) is a limited exploration of the existence of social dancing in South Africa between 1652 and the 1940s, but has a distinctly Afrikaner "volk" focus. Her research is based on early travel journals and diaries and mainly Afrikaans magazines and newspapers, as well as several Afrikaans-based questionnaires.[116] Another study by Hanke Ramona entitled, "The impact of ballroom dancing on the marriage relationship, explores the psychological value that social dancing has on marriage in the twenty-first century".[117] Although both studies provide some insight into the social value of dancing in South Africa, the limited range of the authors' questionnaires/interviews

[114] E. Hellmann, *Rooiyard. A sociological survey of an urban slum yard,* (Northern Rhodesia: The Rhodes-Livingston Institute, 1948), pp. 37, 93, 94.
[115] C. M. de Villiers, "Die vryetydsbesteding van volwasse manlike Bantoe in die gebied Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereniging", (Universiteit van Pretoria, D.Phil.- thesis, 1972).
[116] M. Burden, "Die herkoms en ontwikkeling van die Afrikaanse volksdans", (Universiteit van Stellenbosch, M.A.-verhandeling, 1985).
[117] H. Ramona, "The impact of ballroom dancing on the marriage relationship", (University of Pretoria, M.A. Thesis, 2006).

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and the small amount of primary archival documents used, limits the scope of these studies as they therefore fail to explore ballroom dancing outside of its leisure milieu. Moreover, Burden is more focused on Afrikaner folk dancing, while Ramona's work is psychological in nature.

The candidate has also produced several research works on the topic. This includes the already mentioned Master's thesis entitled: "Dancing in borrowed shoes: a history of ballroom dancing in South Africa (1600s-1940s)" that focused on how and why ballroom dancing came to South Africa from abroad; how South Africans borrowed from the international dancing world; what they copied, what ideas they followed and how they chose to dance ballroom.[118] Subsequent research includes studies on the literature on ballroom dancing;[119] ballroom dancing during the First World War in South Africa; [120] an overview history of competitive ballroom dancing in South Africa; [121] and the rise of couple dancing and the industries that surrounded it in pre-apartheid South Africa.[122] This doctoral thesis sets out to fill the lacuna in this field of research by extending the period of study through to the latter part of the twentieth century.

2.4 Conclusion

As indicated in the secondary literature discussed in this chapter, social dancing was by no means an accidental mindless frivolous pastime. It often was an integral part of the life of a community and studying its place, popularity and changes over time creates a moment to pause and examine how a society reacted to its everyday challenges. Apart from the historical context that it provides, more recent studies on social dancing in Africa specifically - the studies done by Callaci, Groves and Friedman discussed above- implies that research should move away from the grand narrative of a social activity as a reactionary nation building force against the oppressor. Studies

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[118] Green, "Dancing in borrowed shoes", 2008.
[119] A. Green, "Dancing with literature: an overview of South African ballroom dancing," *New Contree*, 57, 2009, pp. 53-70.
[120] A. Green, "The Great War and a new dance beat: Opening the South African dance floor," *Historia* 60(1), 2015, pp. 60-74.
[121] A. Green, "Passionate competitors: the foundation of competitive ballroom dancing in South Africa (1920s - 1930s)", *The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in southern Africa,* 5(1), 2009, pp. 123-143.
[122] A. M. Green, "Similar steps, different venues: the making of segregated dancing worlds in South Africa, 1910-39," in Nathaus and Nott (eds.) *Worlds of social dancing,* 2022, pp. 87-107.

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should perhaps rather view leisure activities, like social dancing, as the earlier mentioned "microcosm of society" where issues of race, gender and class within a specific area can be understood. Following on from this theoretical understanding, this study explains how and why there were so many social dance events taking place in South Africa's troubled past, who was dancing, where were they dancing, why were they dancing then and what place it had in their everyday lives.

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Chapter 3: Excess and exclusion: A social history of Johannesburg, 1850s to 1950s

3.1 Introduction

In 1953, after studying the urban communities of Johannesburg, J. C. de Ridder described the city of Johannesburg as follows:

> …the focal point of the greatest gold-mining industry on earth. Radiating outwards from the central city is a vast urban complex – a kaleidoscopic variety of elite 'garden' suburbs, European sub-economic housing schemes, model African Townships, and squalid, shanty-town slums. Within this economic diversity live a heterogenous community of Whites, Coloureds, Africans and Asians – a conglomeration of races, differing in colour, creed, cultural traditions, economic wealth and status, and standards of civilized advance.[1]

Indeed, the medley that was Johannesburg in the 1950s differed vastly from the makeshift camp formed when gold was discovered in 1886. The city grew rapidly because of the promise of riches, and within ten years, the small mining tent camp in a Boer Republic reached more than 100 000. The population consisted of international fortune seekers, local hopefuls, and a large group of cheap labourers.[2] By the early 1920s, Johannesburg was a global city, one of the largest in the Union of South Africa with a rapidly growing economy and infrastructure. It was profoundly different from the cities in the southern part of South Africa and had a unique social and economic dynamic. However, deep schisms that were entrenched by the colonist in the south and the local government in the north existed along class, economic, work, and religious lines.[3] This chapter will focus on the social history of Johannesburg as a backdrop against which the acceptance, adaptation, and in some instances, rejection of the social dances can be understood. It first discusses the people who came to settle there and the landscape of the city. The chapter also briefly considers the impact that politics and war (including the Anglo-Boer War or the South African War, First and Second World

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[1] J. C. de Ridder, *The personality of the urban African in South Africa. A thematic apperception test study*, (Routledge: Taylor and Francis, 1953), p. xi.
[2] R. Turrell, *Capital and Labour on the Kimberley Diamond Fields 1871–90,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); B. Freund, "Labour Studies and Labour History in South Africa: Perspectives from the Apartheid Era and After", *International Review of Social History*, 58(3), December 2013, pp. 493- 519.
[3] C. Van Onselen, *New Babylon, new Nineveh. Everyday life on the Witwatersrand 1886 – 1914*, (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 1982), p. 32.

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Wars) had on the city, its policies and its people. It looks at the founding of Johannesburg's major industries and its supporting infrastructure. In addition, discusses the establishment of Johannesburg leisure and media industries, as these industries sustained social dancing throughout the city's history. The chapter concludes by briefly considering the far-reaching hand that local and national authorities had in establishing and destroying towns such as Sophiatown. This chapter argues that despite its unique riches, advancements, and growing cosmopolitan population – attributes that nurtured the growth of social dancing in the urban centre – Johannesburg was the symbol of both opulent wealth and stringent segregation – excess and exclusion.

3.2 South Africa's unequal development, 1850s to 1890s

From the mid-nineteenth century, the Zuid-Afrikaanse Republic (ZAR), the independent Boer Republic, governed the region when George Harrison first discovered gold in the Johannesburg area. The Boers, later known as Afrikaners because of their language, were a group of descendants from the Dutch-speaking Free Burgers of the Cape frontier that relied on subsistence farming until the late 1860s.[4] During the Great Trek movement (1834 – 1850s), the Boers advanced from the British-controlled colonies in the Cape and Natal to appropriate land for their farming practises so as to escape the constraints of British colonial rule.[5] The Boers settled around the interior of South Africa, clashing with both the British and people of African descent, including the Tshwana, Basotho and Venda, who were also dependent on land for farming. By the middle of the 1870s, the rapid expansion of the white settlers ended, and they settled in the area where it was apparently weakened by the Mfecane/Difaqane (a series of Nguni wars that caused a mass forced migration) in the Republic of the Orange Free State and the Republic of the Transvaal.[6] The areas in the interior were isolated, and for most of the nineteenth century, their economies were mainly based on subsistence farming and hunting. There was little economic incentive for infrastructure development or take over by a major European power.[7]

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[4] M. Meredith, *Diamonds, gold, and war: the British, the Boers, and the making of South Africa*, (New York: Public Affairs, 2007), p. 7.
[5] R. Ross, *A concise history of South Africa,* (United Kingdom, Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 35-55.
[6] K. Shillington, *History of* Africa, (London: Macmillan Education, 1995) p. 274.
[7] Ross, *A concise history of South Africa,* 1999, pp. 35-55; H. Giliomee; B. Mbenga & B. Nasson, *New history of South Africa*, (South Africa: Tafelberg, 2022), pp. 174-208.

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Undoubtedly, in the mid-1850s, there were vast differences between the new independent colonies in the interior and northern parts of southern Africa and the established British colonies in the south. One of the main differences was the commitment to a transport system and infrastructure, like harbours, railways and roads, to move people and goods especially products such as wool, wine and wheat.[8] Much of the initial funding for the infrastructure was made by financial institutions in Cape Town while smaller towns built by the colonists in the Cape and Natal Colonies gradually grew.[9] In contrast, the routes to the interior and northern parts of southern Africa were mere trek, game and ox wagon routes, and the journey to the interior was treacherous.[10] Communities were scattered and hence generally isolated.

All of this changed dramatically when prospectors discovered diamonds north of the Orange River in the 1870s and gold in the Transvaal Republic in the 1880s. Within a few decades, Johannesburg moved from a small impoverished agricultural economy to a full-scale industrialised city surpassing the size and development of all the coastal cities.[11] In addition, after the discovery of gold several people, both from within South Africa and from outside its borders, came looking for gold. The initial mining camp, Fereira's camp, was a temporary tented camp housing approximately 3 000 diggers.[12] It had no civic status, no railway link, and no rivers and was far removed from any ports. Its only transport connection was the ox wagon trails linking it with Kimberley.[13] Most of the first settlers were unskilled labourers, and this included impoverished Afrikaners who moved to the Johannesburg area, as well as black workers from the Cape, Transvaal and Mozambique. Even workers from as far as Ethiopia came to

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[8] Ross, *A concise history of South Africa,* 1999, pp. 35-55; Giliomee, Mbenga and Nasson, *New history of South Africa*, 2022, pp. 174-208.

[9] Giliomee, Mbenga & Nasson, *New history of South Africa*, 2022, pp. 174-208; Ross, *A concise history of South Africa,* 1999, pp. 35-55.

[10] M. Mitchell, "A brief history of transport infrastructure in South Africa up to the end of the 20th century. Chapter 1: Setting the scene", *Civil Engineering*, January/February 2014, pp. 37-38; R. A. Janse van Rensburg, "The history of the rail, transport regulatory environment in South Africa", 1996, https://scholar.sun.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10019.1/85556/jansevanrensburg_history_1996.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y., Accessed: 20 May 2023.

[11] Shillington, *History of* Africa, 1995, p. 274; Van Onselen, *New Babylon, new Nineveh*, 1982.

[12] Van Onselen, *New Babylon, new Nineveh*, 1982, p. 2; E. Palestrant, *Johannesburg. One hundred* years. *A pictorial history*, (Craighall: AD Donker, 1986), pp. 11-13.

[13] J. Clark (ed.), *Like it was. The Star 100 years in Johannesburg*, (Johannesburg: Argus Printing and Publishing Company, 1987), p. iv.

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settle here.[14] Other hopefuls looking for work included white men from the British colonies in the Cape and Natal, as well as foreigners from as far as Australia, America, United Kingdom, Scotland, Germany and the Middle East. There were also some wealthy mine owners and commercial middle-class families that came to settle in the town. Johannesburg further attracted mission-educated Africans who worked as servants for the middle and upper white working classes, as lower managerial personnel at the mines and as artisans, some were even able to bring their families to Johannesburg.[15]

It soon became clear that the mines had unsurpassed potential, and a few prefabricated iron and timber buildings started to be built alongside the temporary camp to make way for approximately 100 000 residents.[16] Van Onselen noted how as the landscape changed to form both a defined inner city and suburbs, so did the leisure activities. "Drinking, whoring and gambling…[gave way to]…'balanced' family entertainment centred around the theatre, the cinema and communally organised sport and recreation" – which included dance.[17] The government allocated a piece of surplus triangle land, "uitvalgrond" named Randjieslaagte for the new village around the end of 1886. This piece of ground was the centre and commercial hub of what was to become Johannesburg, and many of the street names, including Pritchard Street, Bree, Commissioner and Market Street, remain to this day.[18]

The "Randlords", or the mining capitalist, controlled both the mineral industries and several secondary industries (such as housing and alcohol industries) from the 1870s until the First World War.[19] Some of these entrepreneurs were Abe Bailey, Barney Barnato, Cecil John Rhodes, Alfred and Leopold de Rothschild, Herman Eckstein,

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[14] Van Onselen, *New Babylon, new Nineveh*, 1982, p. 6; D. B. Coplan, *In Township tonight. Three centuries of South African Black city music and theatre,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), p. 56.
[15] D. Coplan, *In Township tonight. Three centuries of South African Black city music and theatre,* (United Kingdom, University of Chicago Press, 2008), p. 56.
[16] Van Onselen, *New Babylon, new Nineveh*, 1982, p. 2.
[17] Van Onselen, *New Babylon, new Nineveh*, 1982, p. 45.
[18] Clark, *Like it was,* 1987, p. 3.
[19] G. Wheatcroft, *The Randlord*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1985); Van Onselen, *New Babylon, new Nineveh*, 1982, p. 33; D. Pretorius, "The Early Days of Johannesburg", https://www.stjohnscollege.co.za/about/history-of-st-johns/the-early-days-of-johannesburg, Accessed: 23 May 2023.

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Alfred Beit, and Lionel Phillips.[20] The upper and middle white classes in the growing city built lavish new homes and frequented newly built clubs such as the Rand Club and the Country Club. These clubs had a very exclusive membership base that required not only a membership fee but also a certain social status. The clubs were based on the English club tradition, and conventional European social activities such as dancing events formed a typical part of club activities.[21] The Johannesburg Stock Exchange as well as the first newspaper *The Star* and the Wanderers sports ground were founded in 1887.[22] To entertain the growing upper and middle-class families, a few theatres were built, including the Theatre Royal (1887), Globe Theatre (1889) and the Empire Theatre (1894 that took over the second Globe Theatre).[23] The 1890s also saw the introduction of horse-drawn trams in the town, roads, street lighting, telephones, and a postal service. A railway line was also built to connect the eastern and western parts of Johannesburg as well as Cape Town and a few years later, Lourenço Marques, to the city.[24]

The town was expanding not only in infrastructure, but also demographically. A census done in 1896 recorded the Johannesburg population as 26 303, no distinction was made between the various races or sexes.[25] The first census of Johannesburg held in

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[20] H. Sayer, "Sir Abe Bailey. His life and achievements", (University of Cape Town, History honours research paper, 1974), p. 8; J. Human, "The randlords and figurations: An Eliasian study of social change and South Africa", (University of Edinburgh, PhD thesis Sociology, 2018).
[21] A. Green, "The Great War and a new dance beat: Opening the South African dance floor", *Historia*, 1(1), 2015, p. 61; J.B. Wentzel, *A View from the Ridge: Johannesburg Retrospect* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1975), pp. 94–96; G.A. Leyds, *A History of Johannesburg: The Early Years*, (Cape Town: Nasionale Boekhandel, 1964), p. 196; E. Itzkin, *Gandhi's Johannesburg: Birthplace of Satyagraha* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press in association with MuseumAfrica, , 2000), pp. 48–49; P. Joyce (ed.), *South Africa's Yesterdays*, (Cape Town: Reader's Digest Association, , 1981), pp. 110–111, 279.
[22] Anon., "JSE. History & Company Overview", https://www.jse.co.za/our-business/history-%26-companyoverview#:~:text=The%20JSE%20was%20formed%20in,system%20in%20the%20early%201990s, Accessed: 27 May 2023; Anon., "In your pocket: Essential city guides. History of Johannesburg", https://www.inyourpocket.com/johannesburg/Johannesburg-History, Accessed: 25 May 2023.
[23] Anon., "Johannesburg1912: Theatres and Bioscopes in early Johannesburg", https://johannesburg1912.com/2013/07/29/theatres-in-early-johannesburg/, Accessed: 27 May 2023; Anon., "Burning of the Globe Theatre", *The Star*, 02 October 1889.
[24] Clark, *Like it was,* p. 20; Elizabeth Ann Cripps, "Provisioning Johannesburg, 1886 – 1906", (University of South Africa, MA(History), 2012), pp. 9, 173; C. Van Onselen, *The night trains: moving Mozambican miners to and from South Africa, circa 1902-1955*, (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2019).
[25] K. Munro, "Census 1896 – The making of Johannesburg", The Heritage Portal, https://www.theheritageportal.co.za/article/census-1896-making-johannesburg, Accessed: 25 July 2023.

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1890 recorded suburbs such as Booysens, Fordsburg, Langlaagte, Braamfontein, Auckland Park, Marshall's Town, Ferreira's Town, Prospect and Jeppe's Town. There was also a “Coolie Location” and a Veldtschoendorp, generally for people not designated as white.[26] Most of Johannesburg’s population was, however, single males who came to work on the mines, and from its inception, workers were divided along racial lines. White miners were housed in Johannesburg boarding houses (located on the mining property or Jeppe and Fordsburg), and the unskilled black workers settled in the mining compounds.[27]

For the ZAR president Paul Kruger, Johannesburg was a troublesome entity. He and the Pretoria government distrusted the “uitlanders” (foreigners) and like most, did not think that the gold industry would last. Despite the affluent elite building houses, clubs, and theatres, by the early 1890s, with little financial input and political vision, the town’s administration was mostly in disarray. There were few sanitation services, water was scarce, and disease broke out often. A jailhouse was the town’s first public building. Another feature of Johannesburg in the 1880s was the number of saloon bars and hotels it had to entertain both the very rich and dirt poor. In contrast, this period also saw several churches being built, including the Nederduits Hervormde Kerk, the Baptist and the Methodist churches, as well as the Salvation Army. Johannesburg also had a few schools, the majority being for white children only teaching in English as the foreign population grew exponentially.[28]

Political tension between the ZAR government and the mining houses added to the administrative woes in the region. Kruger, worried that the number of male “uitlanders” (foreigners) would soon surpass the number of white Dutch-Afrikaans speaking voting-men in the ZAR, changed the legislation, making it extremely difficult for the “uitlanders” to vote.[29] The 14-year residence required allowed the Randlords little say

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[26] Cripps, “Provisioning Johannesburg, 1886 – 1906”, 2012, pp. 9, 173.
[27] Van Onselen, *New Babylon, new Nineveh,* 1982, p. 6.
[28] Clark, *Like it was,* pp. 8-10; C. S. le Roux, “A historical-educational appraisal of parent al responsibilities and rights in formal education in South Africa [1652 - 1910]”, (The University of South Africa, Doctor of Education, November 1998), p. 329.
[29] Kruger convened a Second Volksraad that allowed the “uitlanders” to join after two years of naturalisation. Members of the Second Volksraad only had an input into Johannesburg affairs and decisions made by the Second Volksraad had to be approved by the First Volksraad before

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in policy making. The ZAR's monopolistic concessions further restricted the Randlords' power in buying their own supplies and recruiting labour without government buy-in, thereby limiting their profits.[30] The gold mines required cheap migrant labour to ensure profits, while the government was set on ensuring a strong white work force. Initially, alcohol was used as an easy way to draw workers to the city, as money spent on cheap alcohol extended the duration of migrant labour.[31] While alcohol remained a troublesome permanent part of Johannesburg social history, it did not ensure a stable workforce.[32]

The looming riches and endless potential of the gold mines and who could benefit from them increasingly strained relationships between the ruling ZAR government of Transvaal, the Randlords, and the British Colonial powers in the south which dominated the period. This tension between industry and government continued throughout the city's history. The mining industry itself experienced a crisis during the 1890s, seeing British gold shares crash on the London stock exchange, and the Empire started to view the Rand gold as a real possibility to back their currency.[33]

Mining in Johannesburg and surrounds had enormous potential but required mining at deeper levels.[34] Finding investment for this deep shaft mining required capital, and the individual mining claims soon turned into small mining groups that became a few monopolistic mining companies. Deep level mining began in 1895, and by the latter half of the 1890s, the whole of the Witwatersrand was controlled by half a dozen mining houses, run by the Randlords and mostly funded by investors from the UK and Europe.[35]

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it could be implemented. T. Cameron & S. Burridge Spies (eds.), *An Illustrated history of South Africa*, (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1987), p. 186.

[30] D. Pretorius, "The Early Days of Johannesburg", https://www.stjohnscollege.co.za/about/history-of-st-johns/the-early-days-of-johannesburg, Accessed: 23 May 2023; Cameron & Spies (eds.), *An Illustrated history of South Africa*, p. 186.

[31] C.M. Rogerson & D.M. Hart, "The Survival of the 'Informal Sector': The Shebeens of Black Johannesburg", *GeoJournal*, 12(2), 1986, p. 157.

[32] Van Onselen, *New Babylon, new Nineveh*, 1982, p. 45.

[33] G. Blainey, "Lost causes of the Jameson Raid", *The Economic History Review,* 18(2), 1965, pp. 352-354; S. Marks & Stanley Trapido, "Lord Milner and the South African State", *History Workshop*, Autumn, 1979, pp. 50-80, p. 50.

[34] Blainey, "Lost causes of the Jameson Raid", 1965, pp. 350-366; Marks & Trapido, "Lord Milner and the South African State", 1979, p. 50.

[35] Blainey, "Lost causes of the Jameson Raid", 1965, pp. 352-354.

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Johannesburg continued to expand and was declared a municipality with 12 wards in 1898. Land ownership was a contentious issue as the Gold Law Act of 1898 (Law no 15 of 1898), "people of colour" (this included "African, "Asiatic Native" or "coloured American person" "coolie" or "chinamen") were not allowed to own property.[36] Thus, in a sense, the interest of mining companies in the Johannesburg area were protected.

Tensions between the British Empire and the Boer Republic reached breaking point in 1899. In September, the British government demanded that British citizens receive voting rights or face invasion. The ZAR declared war when the British refused to withdraw their forces on the Transvaal border.[37] Like most areas in South Africa, Johannesburg was seriously impacted by the Anglo-Boer War also known as the South African War (1899-1902). The British occupied Johannesburg in May 1900 and while the mines remained intact and the city was not destroyed in the invasion, everyday work almost all but ceased.[38] By October 1899, the government listed 66 of the major mines closed, with only 17 remaining operational. Opened mines offered some bonuses to those (especially the white workers) who continued to work. Many of the African labourers were however forced out of the compounds where they lived, causing great feelings of unrest and distress.[39] Looting was also rife. To eliminate the "problem", the ZAR government decided to send the "savages" and "uitlanders" back to the British colonies via crowded trains.[40] Most businesses and houses were boarded up, and even Johannesburg's horses used to draw the trams were commandeered by the Boers. During the War, Johannesburg had 115 white

[36] A. L. Matlapeng "Bommastandi of Alexandra Township", (University of the Witwatersrand, Doctor of Philisophy, 2011), p. 108.
[37] F. Pretorius, "The Second Anglo-Boer War: An Overview", *Scientia Militaria, South African Journal of Military Studies*, 30(2), 2012, pp. 111 - 125, p. 111; "National Archives. Exhibitions. Census 1901. The South African War", https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/census/events/britain5.htm, Accessed: 29 May 2023.
[38] Anon., "Boer War 1899 -1902", https://www.angloboerwar.com/boer-war, Accessed: 31 May 2023.
[39] D. R. Cammack, *The Rand at war, 1899-1902: the Witwatersrand and the Anglo-Boer War*, (London: James Currey, 1990), pp. 48-51.
[40] Cammack, *The Rand at war,* 1990, pp. 48-51.

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concentration camps and two black concentration camps set up by the British in an effort to stem the support of the Boer War effort.[41]

The War devastated the social fabric of the republics and colonies, bringing almost all leisure activities to a halt.

3.3 Johannesburg, 1900s and 1910s

In May 1902, the War ended with the signing of the Treaty of Vereeniging. According to the treaty, the Transvaal and Orange Free State were made self-governing colonies of the British Empire.[42] Johannesburg quickly resumed its activities, and even before peace was signed from the beginning of January 1902, many of the uitlanders, local miners and businessmen returned to clean-up the city and re-open industries, entertainment infrastructures and the mines.

After the War, South Africa experienced major political, economic, social, and labour challenges. On the political front, Sir Alfred Milner (the British High Commissioner for South Africa, 1897-1905) envisioned, as Diana Cammack explained, "to mould the four colonies into an Anglicised and prosperous federated dominion within the British empire".[43] Milner planned to use the revenues from the Rand mines to generate funds to resettle the Boers on the farmland and modernised agricultural production. He also wanted to use the mining revenue to settle British families in Johannesburg, hoping that they would bring with them secondary industrial and commercial growth to help fund the colonial administration. By increasing the British population, Milner also envisioned winning future elections.[44]

While Milner had some success in growing the British proletariat in Johannesburg and modernising agriculture by implementing better farming techniques, it soon became

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[41] Palestrant, *Johannesburg,* 1986, pp. 78-80; Anon., "Joburg. Play in Johannesburg. Tales when Joburg was at war", https://www.joburg.org.za/play_/Pages/Play%20in%20 Joburg/Culture%20and%20 Heritage/Links/Tales-when-Joburg-was-at-war.aspx, Accessed: 29 May 2023; Clark, *Like it was,* p. 29.
[42] Ross, *A concise history of South Africa,* 1999, p. 74.
[43] Cammack, *The Rand at war,* 1990, pp. 48-51.
[44] Marks & Trapido, "Lord Milner and the South African State", 1979, p. 69; Cammack, *The Rand at war,* 1990, pp. 48-51.

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clear that far greater control and legislation would be necessary to reform the colony and suppress mounting tensions.[45] Despite Milner's efforts he was unsuccessful in negating the Boers to rural areas. Collective memory of suffering during the War served to unite the Boers, and under the Boer generals (Jan Smuts and Louis Botha), the pro-Afrikaner party *Het Volk* was founded*.* While *Het Volk* had the support of many of the white Afrikaners, unlike Kruger's ZAR political party, they were also willing to negotiate with the mining companies. Crucially, representation of the black urban communities was deliberately diverted.[46] Albert Grundlingh noted how the treaty left many of South African society disheartened and excluded. He explained that:

> Members of the educated black elite – teachers, ministers of religion, lawyers, journalists, clerks and small-time businessmen – who sought inclusion in the new state, were sadly disillusioned by the post-Anglo-Boer War settlement…[47]

The immediate focus after the War was to rebuild the Transvaal and address the mounting War time debt. Large pieces of farmland were destroyed by the scorched earth War-time policy, leaving many South Africans poor and vulnerable. A drought that broke out shortly after the War served to further exasperate farming challenges.[48] The government also supported the reestablishment of white farmers over black workers, a policy that would continue throughout most of South Africa's history. In the city, there was a dire need to create stability and establish infrastructure such as schools and industries to build up society. Political tensions between the Empire and the former Boer government persisted despite the signed treaty and promise of self-governance, making governing the region difficult. Mines also pressurised the British colonial government to assist them with the chronic labour shortage.[49]

Monopolising the labour recruitment industry ensured that African wages could be kept artificially low; in contrast, white workers were paid more and employed in more senior

[45] N. Garson, "'Het Volk': The Botha-Smuts Party in the Transvaal, 1904-11", *The Historical Journal*, 9(1), 1966, pp. 101-132 p. 105
[46] Garson, "'Het Volk'", 1966, pp. 104-106.
[47] A. Grundlingh, *War and Society: Participation and Remembrance: South African black and coloured troops in the First World War, 1914-1919*, (Stellenbosch: Sun Media, 2014), p. 3.
[48] L. Maqutu, "The Management of African Workers' Wages at South African Mines: Law and Policy Before 1948", *PER*, 2022, pp. 1-32; Sayer, "Sir Abe Bailey", 1974, pp. 32-44; Cammack, *The Rand at* war, 1990, p. 203.
[49] Maqutu, "The Management of African Workers' Wages at South African Mines", 2022, pp. 1-32; Sayer, "Sir Abe Bailey", 1974, pp. 32-44.

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skilled positions. Commissions formed after the War further justified this "racialised wage inequality" by claiming that the "African native tribes [were mainly] …agricultural communities…whose standard of economic needs are extremely low".[50] This general view of black workers as "temporary" with little need or value apart from being cheap, easy-to-replace labourers became entrenched not only in policy but also in the social fabric of society. This was evident especially in the temporary housing, long travel distances to their place of work and the inadequate leisure facilities that were made available for the black workers. These oppressive practises stood in stark contrast to the money that was poured into industrialising the city. Indeed, Johannesburg was a prime example of how an African economy was simultaneously responsible for the development and underdevelopment of the economy and its people.[51]

The mine workers were not a silent voice under this oppression. While pay stayed the same as pre-War figures, living costs rose to almost double, and workers were unwilling to accept this.[52] They formed organised labour unions to demand living wages, but the protest was crushed almost immediately by the government upon the insistence of the industrial capitalist Randlords. This meant that bureaucratically, industry and government became blurred into one. Van Onselen explains that this was done mainly to "…stabilise the Rand's skilled white proletariat, secure British hegemony, and facilitate control by separating the labouring classes from the dangerous classes".[53] This involved the social engineering of the city by municipal authorities that defined what social group could live where and be employed in certain capacities.[54]

One of the means to control movement and ensure that unskilled workers stayed on the mines was to implement pass laws. While the pass law system was not new in the colonies (enslaved people were required to carry passes since the 1700s in the Cape, for example), these laws ushered in a new era of racism. Cammack explains:

> …racialism along the reef came to mean something quite different. No longer was it a paternalistic, face-to-face experience between master and man, madam and maid, subject to the nuances of personality. New racialism, like the economy was to be rationalized,

[50] Maqutu, "The Management of African Workers' Wages at South African Mines", 2022, p. 5.
[51] Cammack, *The Rand at war*", 1990, pp. 205-206.
[52] Cripps, "Provisioning Johannesburg, 1886 – 1906", 2012, p. 10.
[53] Van Onselen, *New Babylon, new Nineveh,* 1982, p. 32.
[54] Matlapeng "Bommastandi of Alexandra Township", 2011.

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> efficient and impersonal. When customs were not strong enough to remould age-old practises to fit the new society, legislation was used. Colour in the industrial economy was to bar a man from advancement, limit his wages, determine his living conditions, his recruitment and dismissal procedures, his hours and length of service and his relationship with his coworkers and employer.[55]

Milner appointed Sir Godfrey Lagden to set up and run the Native Commission in 1903. This commission was tasked with managing the details of colonial administration. This included the issuance of passes, official confirmation of the recruiters' employment contracts, marriage registration and tax collection.[56]

However, the social history of Johannesburg was not only that of exploitation, but also that of exceptions, expansion, and adaptation. Racially diverse townships also belied the view that races had to be separated to ensure economic and social stability. One of these townships was Sophiatown, which was formed between 1903 and 1905 and was located 6 km west of the city centre. The land was bought by entrepreneur Hermann Tobiansky, who named the leasehold township after his wife and subdivided it into smaller stands. It soon became a mixed township where black, white and coloured bought stands.[57] Other freehold townships were Newclare (founded in 1904) and Martindale (also founded in 1904).[58] Alexandria, originally also owned by private investors, was declared a township by the municipality when it became clear that white citizens were not interested in buying plots there in 1912 and allowed black people to buy stands.

Many white higher- and middle-class people also came to settle in the expanding city with their families. This period saw the building of schools, churches, and public buildings specifically for this more affluent group.[59] It also saw mission-educated Africans moving to the city. Coplan noted how they formed roughly twenty-five percent of the permanent African population in 1904, they were “fully literate”, and in this

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[55] Cammack, *The Rand at war,* 1990, p. 206.
[56] Cammack, *The Rand at war,* 1990, p. 206.
[57] L. T. Leta, “Deconstructing the dominant narrative of Sophiatown: An Indian perspective of the 1950s”, *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 76(4), p. 1.
[58] Matlapeng, “Bommastandi of Alexandra Township”, 2011, p. 109.
[59] Anon., “Carlton Hotel”, https://www.artefacts.co.za/main/Buildings/bldgframes.php?bldgid=6739, Accessed: 11 June 2023.

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community, "Christianity, westernisation and urbanisation were closely interrelated".[60] Indeed, after the War, Johannesburg experienced a municipal revolution.[61] Keith Beavon dubbed this layout of the city the "geography of affluence" when referring to the Northern suburbs and the Johannesburg central business district (CBD) that was built during this time.[62] The British Milner administration measures were targeted to sustain the mining capital and ensure white dominance. This period also saw the introduction of the typical European press, including Johannesburg's foremost newspaper, the *Rand Daily Mail* in 1902. Edgar Wallace, a journalist from London's *Daily Mail*, was the first editor. Sir Abe Bailey bought the newspaper in 1905 and it was operated as a private company, The Rand Daily Mails Ltd., until 1955.[63] In 1906, its weekly sister publication *The Sunday Times* appeared.[64] Like the *Rand Daily Mail,* it had a liberal approach in its reporting on the social events of the time, such as the influence of the "horseless carriages" motor vehicles that appeared in 1906, the fashion of the day, the impact of War and commentary on leisure activities including dance. [65]

In 1907 *Het Volk* won the election and took over the now self-governing Transvaal.[66] In 1910, South Africa was declared a Union consisting of the former British colonies of the Cape and Natal and the Boer republics of Transvaal and Orange Free State.[67] The British High Commissioners and Governors-General of South Africa remained the Empire representatives in the country.[68] The new self-governing Transvaal passed even more legislation to ensure white worker privilege. Certificates of competency were, for example, required to conduct a certain type of work under the new Mine and Workers Act of 1911. These competency certifications were only issued to white

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[60] Coplan, *In Township tonight*, 2008, p. 56.
[61] K. Beavon, *Johannesburg: The making and shaping of the City*, (South Africa: University of South Africa Press, 2004), p. 71.
[62] Beavon, *Johannesburg: The making and shaping of the City*, 2004, p. 88.
[63] S. Keogh, "The Rand Daily Mail and the 1976 Soweto Riots. An examination of the tradition of Liberal journalism in South Africa as illustrated by The Rand Daily Mail coverage of the Soweto uprising on June 6 1976", (University of the Witwatersrand, Master of Arts in Journalism and Media Studies, 2006), p. 19.
[64] N. Dreyer, "Delving into the history of this great newspaper", *Sunday Times*, 18 August 2005, p. 6.
[65] Dreyer, "Delving into the history of this great newspaper", 2005, p. 6.
[66] Garson, "'Het Volk'": The Botha-Smuts Party in the Transvaal, 1904-11", 1966, p. 105.
[67] Palestrant, *Johannesburg,* 1986, p. 94.
[68] Personal interview, J. Lambert, UNISA, Pretoria, 20 April 2006.

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workers further entrenching a colour bar.[69] The Native Labour Regulation Act of 1911 made it a criminal offence for black workers to strike.

Many of the people who fell outside of the white government classification felt disillusioned with the new Union. The newspaper *Star,* for example, reported how in 1910, the coloured people's organisation of the African People's Organisation (APO) addressed the leaving Lord Selbourne in St Alban's Hall, explaining that they felt "disowned in the Act of Union".[70]

The leaders of the South African National Party, Genls Louis Botha and Jan Smuts, took over the administration of the Union government. Under their governance, the Natives Land Act, Act no. 27 of 1913, was passed that restricted black land ownership inside native reserves. Townships such as Sophiatown, Newclare, Martindale and Alexandria were exempt from this Act because they were established prior to 1913. This Act limited African land ownership to seven percent and forced many black South Africans to move to the Johannesburg region in order to survive. While there was no unambiguous evidence that mine owners actively promoted the bill, the Native Land Act no doubt ensured a steady stream of cheap labour to Johannesburg.[71]

In September 1914, South Africa joined the First World War and declared war on Germany. Approximately 250 000 South Africans were enlisted, of whom 80 000 were black.[72] The Johannesburg Town Hall (later to become the City Hall when Jo'burg was declared a city in 1928) was opened in 1915 in Rissik Street and commemorated the impact that the First World War had on Johannesburg and the many lives lost with the word "Lest We Forget" on its steps.[73] Indeed, the economic and social impacts of the

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[69] F. Wilson, *Labour in the South African Gold Mines 1911-1969*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972) pp. 8-10.
[70] Clark, *Like it was,* p. 56.
[71] H. M. Feinberg, "The 1913 Natives Land Act in South Africa: Politics, Race, and Segregation in the Early 20th Century", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies,* 26(1), 1993, pp. 65-109.
[72] Clark, *Like it was,* p. 69.
[73] Later, it was also at the City Hall that Black Sash women protest would take place years later to protest the atrocities of apartheid legislation. This four-story Edwardian style building with its half-dome portico and Ionic columns had three halls: the City Hall, the Selbourne Hall and the Duncan Hall. The Selbourne Hall was often used for dances and could accommodate 500 dancers at a time. The town hall housed the Johannesburg City Council from 1915 to 1972. Anon.,

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First World War were, as pointed out by Bill Nasson, a "mixed bag" of experiences and were greatly influenced by the geographical locations and identities of the South African people.[74] The War was supported by many of the urban English-speaking Randlords and the English white middle-class, but found little favour amongst the working classes who were struggling to survive because of a sudden lack of income, basic goods and rising costs. This War almost all but halted work on the mines. Britain, South Africa's main export partner, could no longer export goods to the country, causing a severe shortage and subsequently a rise in inflation. Many left Johannesburg and only returned after the War. The conflict did, however, spur a new industrialisation age, and by 1917, Johannesburg had several new factories supported by modern road and railway links.[75] Indeed, while the mining industry was already well established, the inception of South Africa's manufacturing industry only dates back to 1914.[76] The South African Economic and Wage Commission of 1925 found that because of the difficulties in sourcing products during and after the War, several smaller industries were established, seeing a growth of 130 percent of people employed in factories.[77] Despite the expansion of industry, the growth of factories was uneven chiefly because of the cost involved in infrastructure and labour.[78]

To try and ease the labour costs, the Johannesburg municipal authority disregarded most of the national policies and permitted racial mixing to take place in the expanding urban "slums".[79] Employers could provide African labourers permission to live in metropolitan areas through a municipal system of exemption certificates.[80] Most black workers,

"Johannesburg City Hall", https://www.theheritageportal.co.za/article/remarkable-journey-inside-johannesburg-city-hall-gauteng-legislature, Accessed: 10 June 2023; P. van Dyk, *Explore Gauteng*, (Pretoria: Izimpilo C & S Publishing division, 2003), p. 62.

[74] B. Nasson, "Economies and home front", in U. Daniel; P. Gatrell; O. Janz; H. Jones; J. Keene; A. Kramer & B. Nasson, (eds.), *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, (Berlin: Freie Universität Berlin, 2018), https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/economies_and_home_front_union_of_south_africa, Accessed: 26 May 2023.

[75] B. Nasson, "Economies and home front", in Daniel; Gatrell; Janz; Jones; Keene; Kramer & Nasson, (eds.), *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, 2018.

[76] Luli Callinicos, *A people's history of South Africa. Working life 1886 – 1940.* Volume 2, (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987), p. 83.

[77] Callinicos, *A people's history of South Africa,* 1987, p. 83.

[78] Callinicos, *A people's history of South Africa*, 1987, p. 118; M. Latilla, *Johannesburg then and now,* (South Africa: Penguin Random House, Kindle Edition, 2018); https://johannesburg1912.com, Accessed: 13 June 2023.

[79] S. Parnell, "Race, power and urban control: Johannesburg's urban slum-yards, 1910 – 1923", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 29(3), 2003, pp. 615 – 637.

[80] Parnell, "Race, power and urban control", 2003, pp. 615 – 637.

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however, lived in the city illegally due to the employer's indifference for properly filling out the paperwork.[81]

The first decade of the twentieth century witnessed a burgeoning city with a multi-racial profile and a fractured economy. This laid the foundation for the decades to come.

3.4 Johannesburg, 1920s and 1930s

In the early 1920s, Johannesburg experienced a large-scale proletarianization of black workers both because of the impact of the 1913 Land Act and the growth of the manufacturing sector. While the municipalities needed labourers, the city was unprepared and ill equipped to manage the influx of workers and increased demand for their skills. This resulted in significant social issues.[82]

Trade union growth mirrored industrial growth, with membership rising from 10,500 in 1915 to a peak of 135,000 in 1920.[83] In that year, Jan Smuts succeeded Genl Louis Botha as the South African premier, and the first major issues that Smuts had to address were these mounting tensions between the workers and the capitalists.[84] Between 1919 and 1922 several strikes broke out creating a huge loss for industry whereby 2.8 million man days were lost.[85] On 28 December 1921, the Chamber of Mines announced that it was going to remove the racial colour bar. It sought to scrap the agreement on the white-to-black worker ratio and replace 2000 semiskilled white workers with black workers. The wage demands were overshadowed by the race issue, and a strike, the Rand Revolt, erupted, with 22 000 white miners protesting the "capitalist plot to replace white workers".[86] The insurrection was brutally suppressed by Smuts with over 550 people injured and 153 killed.[87]

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[81] Parnell, “Race, power and urban control”, 2003, pp. 615 – 637.
[82] M. Cross, “A Historical Review of Education in South Africa: Towards an Assessment”, 22(3), *Comparative Education*, pp. 188-189.
[83] A. Plant, “The Reports of the South African Economic and Wage Commission (1925)”, *The Economic Journal*, 36(144), December 1926, p. 669.
[84] P. Joyce, *The making of a nation. South Africa’s road to freedom*, (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2007), p. 74.
[85] Palestrant, *Johannesburg*, 1986, p. 102.
[86] Clark, *Like it was,* p. 73.
[87] J. Krikler, "Women, Violence and the Rand Revolt of 1922", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 22(3), September 1996, pp. 349-372.

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Johannesburg's communities were also impacted by the changes in national governance that became increasingly pro-white during the 1920s and 1930s. The ruling government passed the Natives in Urban Areas Act in 1923, racial segregation was extended and job reservation laws were also enacted the following year.[88] In 1924 the Pact Government between, Barry Hertzog and his Nationalist and the Liberal party took over. Unlike the previous ruling parties that supported foreign investors, the Pact Government's focus was on growing the local economy and ensuring that manufacturing industry could increase. Business and mining were growing making Johannesburg the biggest city in southern Africa with the largest mining centre in the world.[89] To further boost the local economy the Pact Government passed the 1925 Tariff Act that heavily taxed imported goods. This Act made locally produced products more appealing.[90]

Under this Pact dispensation the Afrikaner welfare state would be established. Policies created commissions that assisted Afrikaners in becoming economically independent at the expense of other racial groups. These included the Wage Act of 1925 that prescribed minimum wages; a separate Native Affairs Department established in 1927 to focus specifically on the administration of black South Africans; Mine and Works Act of 1926 that reserved certain jobs on the mines and railways for whites; the Immorality Act of 1927 that prohibited relationships between white people and people of other races; and the Amendment of the Natives in Urban Areas Act which further restricted black people.[91] The latter Act allowed the government to relocate black workers without ensuring that there was proper housing. In 1931, this allowed the government to relocate many black workers from an area called Prospect to Orlando, the first suburb of Soweto. The government also created state-run institutions, including the Electricity Supply Commission (ESKOM) in 1923, and the Iron and Steel Corporation (ISCOR) in 1924, that exclusively benefited the minority, white, population group. Ultimately

[88] Joyce, *The making of a nation*, 2007, p. 74; Clark, *Like it was,* p. 73.
[89] Palestrant, *Johannesburg*, 1986, p. 104.
[90] Callinicos, *A people's history of South Africa*, 1987, p. 119.
[91] N. J. Xaba, "A Comparative Study of Afrikaner Economic Empowerment and Black Economic Empowerment: A Case Study of a former South African Parastatal in Vanderbijlpark", (University of Stellenbosch: DPhil, 2020), pp. 91-96; Plant, "The Reports of the South African Economic and Wage Commission (1925)", 1926; Maqutu, "The Management of African Workers' Wages at South African Mines", 2022, p. 114.

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Johannesburg was declared a city in 1928.[92]

In 1929, the Carnegie Commission (led by E G Malherbe) was established to specifically investigate the extent of the plight of poor white Afrikaners.[93] The recommendations of the commission influenced government actions and policies and created further division within the urban working classes. Some of the Carnegie Commission's recommendations that were implemented included the establishment of vocational training centres and the expansion of settlements, exclusively for the poor whites. While this benefitted the poor whites, especially in Johannesburg, the Commission ignored the larger systematic issues of poverty and inequality in the country. About 20 percent of the total public expenditure of the Union was used to create this “welfare state”.[94] In 1930, white women over the age of 30 were granted the right to vote, increasing the minority’s party-political support, but simultaneously excluding people of colour.[95] In 1934, the Union of South Africa parliament, created by a fusion of the Smuts and Hertzog parties, enacted the Status of the Union Act, which declared the country to be a sovereign independent state. This Act removed the last remnants of British legal authority over South Africa and gave all legislative powers to the pro-Afrikaner government.[96]

Apart from the internal political struggles, Johannesburg also experienced external challenges that impacted the city during this time. The Great Depression (1929 -1934) and prolonged, recurring droughts (1914-1916, 1919, 1924, 1925-1928) forced more

[92] J. Seekings, “‘Not a single white person should be allowed to go under’: swartgevaar and the origins of South Africa’s welfare state, 1924 –1929”, *Journal of African History*, 48, 2007, pp. 375–394; Xaba, “A Comparative Study of Afrikaner Economic Empowerment and Black Economic Empowerment”, 2020, pp. 91-96.

[93] J. Seekings, “The Carnegie Commission and the Backlash against Welfare State-Building in South Africa, 1931–1937”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 34(3), September 2008, pp. 515-537.

[94] Seekings, “The Carnegie Commission and the Backlash against Welfare State-Building”, 2008, pp. 515-537.

[95] Seekings, “‘Not a single white person should be allowed to go under’”, 2007, pp. 375–394; Xaba, “A Comparative Study of Afrikaner Economic Empowerment and Black Economic Empowerment”, 2020, pp. 91-96.

[96] H. van Themaat & V. Loren, “Legislative supremacy in the Union of South Africa”, *University of Western Australia Annual Legal Review,* 3, 1954, p. 59; “BBC News. South Africa profile – Timeline”, 19 December 2022, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14094918, Accessed: 25 May 2023.

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people to move to Johannesburg to survive.[97] Johannesburg's municipality had to house its increased workforce and their families, but also had to assess how to formally manage the work and leisure time of the new urban families, both black and white, educated and not educated.[98]

While the depression did impact the city, its effect was only felt briefly in Johannesburg. When the country left the gold standard and the world price of gold almost doubled, Johannesburg experienced an unprecedented economic boom. The new manufacturing industry grew mainly around the Old East Rand in areas like Germiston, Benoni and Boksburg and soon the number of black workers working in the secondary industries surpassed those working on the mines.[99]

Historian Louis Grundlingh explains that: "Johannesburg entered the 1920s and 1930s with a bravura that supported its appetite for new – and preferably imported – ideas and trends".[100] This vibrant transformation and economic growth was strikingly evident in the city's modern architecture and expanding facilities. Johannesburg experienced remarkable urban changes and a tremendous construction surge, driven by the flourishing mining industry in the 1930s. More than 10,000 Art Deco apartment buildings were erected to accommodate the growing workforce, while upscale retail stores replaced older structures and became integrated into the heart of the city. These towering skyscrapers, along with the development of power, transportation, and telephone networks, bestowed upon Johannesburg a palpable "New York feel," earning it the distinguished title of the "Wonder of the Modern World".[101] In 1936 a

[97] W. Visser, "Water as agent for social change, 1900-1939: Two case studies of developmental state approaches in establishing irrigation schemes", *Historia,* 36(2), 2018, pp. 40-61.
[98] Joyce, *The making of a nation*, 2007, p. 74; Clark, *Like it was,* p. 73; L. Grundlingh, "Municipal modernity: the politics of leisure and Johannesburg's swimming baths, 1920s to 1930s", *Urban History*, 2022, pp. 771-790.
[99] Ross, *A concise history of South Africa,* 1999, p. 108; F. Barchiesi & B. Kenny, "From workshop to wasteland: De-industrialization and Fragmentation of the black working class on the East Rand (South Africa), 1990 – 1999", *Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis,* 47(10), 2002, p. 39.
[100] Grundlingh, "Municipal modernity", 2022, p. 775
[101] *Johannesburg. Een hondered Jaar* (Melville: Van Rensburg, 1986), p. 54; P. Harrisona & T. Zack, "The power of mining: the fall of gold and rise of Johannesburg", *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 30(4), October 2012, p. 558; Grundlingh, "Municipal modernity", 2022, p. 775; Palestrant, *Johannesburg*, 1986, p. 106.

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census counted a total population of 474 908 people: 252 379 white people, 21 103 coloured people, 9 888 Asian people and 191 338 black people.[102]

Apart from its increased number of buildings, several leisure spaces and sport facilities were also built, especially for Johannesburg white residents in the 1930s. This included facilities such as municipal swimming pools (11 new pools were built during this time), a library (the Johannesburg library opened in 1935), racecourses and sport facilities (including Ellis Park, which opened in 1928). New cinemas, including the Apollo Cinema in Doornfontein (1930); the Colosseum Theatre on Commissioner Street (1931); The New Empire Theatre on Commissioner Street (1936) and the 20th Century Cinema corner President and von Brandis Street (1939), were also built to entertain the urban proletariat. Little public money was, however, spent on black housing let alone recreational facilities.[103]

Instead of investing in physical infrastructure like they did in white suburbia, liberal organizations promoted cultural and educational institutions to appease the emerging African urban proletariat. Organisational gatherings were often held in public halls or self-bought venues and venues often had multiple purposes. For example, the Inchcape Hall in Turffontein functioned both as a dance hall, a theatre, and a venue where political groups could gather.[104] These venues not only provided structured activities, but also fostered a shared cultural consciousness among this class. By addressing their common demands and interests, the members maintained social cohesion and developed a distinct cultural identity. Key organizations established during this period included the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), the Gamma Sigma Club, the Bantu Men's Social Centre (BMSC), and the Helping Hand

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[102] Palestrant, *Johannesburg,* 1986, p. 110.
[103] G. Herbert, *Martienssen & the international style: The modern movement in South African architecture*, (Cape Town: A. A. Balkema, 1975), pp. 215 –217; Grundlingh, "Municipal modernity", 2022, p. 775; M. Latilla,"Doornfontein Pt.4 (Yards, Alhambra Theatre, Van Wouw house, Marlborough House, Crystal Bakery & Jewish Workers Club", Johannesburg 1912.com, https://johannesburg1912.com/2011/09/21/doornfontein-part4/; M. Latilla, *Johannesburg then and now,* (South Africa: Penguin Random House, Kindle Edition, 2018); "Colosseum theatre", https://www.artefacts.co.za/main/Buildings/bldgframes.php?bldgid=3517, Accessed: 03 July 2023.
[104] R. J. Bunche, *An African American in South Africa: the travel notes of Ralph J. Bunche, 28 September 1937-1 January 1938*, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992), p. 351; Anon., "Both sides of native life. Rotarians' night visit. Slum and cultural aspects", *Rand Daily Mail*, 13 May 1931, p. 10.

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Club for Native Girls. Additional clubs formed during this time were the South African Board of Music in 1930 and the Bantu Dramatic Society, which operated as part of the BMSC in 1932.[105]

In the 1920s and 1930s, mining companies and private capitalist further helped to establish thriving printing, radio broadcasting, and gramophone industries in the city. These industries played a crucial role in disseminating information and connecting events with the public, but also contributed to the leisure sector. Notable newspapers during this time included *Umteteli wa Bantu*, a multilingual publication produced by the Chamber of Mines in 1920, and the *Bantu World*, founded in 1932 by white salesman Bertram Paver's Bantu Press with black investors.[106]

These newspapers initially hired talented black journalists from the city, recognizing the growing African reading audience as a potential market. The literacy rate among Africans also saw a significant increase, rising from around 9.7% in 1921 to 21.3% in 1946. However, within a year, Argus Printing and Publishing, which had a monopoly in the African printing industry, acquired *Bantu World*. Fuelled by the government's concerns about a militant press, Argus Printing began dictating the newspaper's content. Additionally, government departments, such as the South African Institute of Race Relations and the Department of Native Affairs, started supplying news to Bantu Press that they deemed “suitable” for a black audience.[107]

Advertisers took advantage of the new market potential, targeting their advertisements towards agriculture, health, the artistry of black children, and the political status of black Africans as well as leisure activities. The combination of corporate control, targeted advertising, and externally provided news shaped the Bantu Press into a powerful mass communication platform, altering the content and direction of the black press during this period.[108]

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[105] M. Cross, “A Historical Review of Education in South Africa: Towards an Assessment”, 22(3), *Comparative Education*, pp. 188-189.
[106] L. Switzer & D. Switzer, *The black press in South Africa and Lesotho. A descriptive bibliographic guide to African, Coloured and Indian newspapers, newsletters and magazines 1836 – 1976,* (Boston: G.K. Hall &Co, 1979), p. 7.
[107] Switzer & Switzer, *The black press in South Africa and Lesotho*, 1979, p. 7.
[108] Switzer & Switzer, *The black press in South Africa and Lesotho*, 1979, p. 8.

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Like the newspaper industry, the recorded music industry was also established in this time and became a profitable industry in Johannesburg in the 1920s and 1930s. Record companies including Brunswick, Decca, Columbia and Pathe had well-established marketing channels in Johannesburg.[109] The drive to distribute these products was mainly economic and filled a huge gap in the emerging urban market. On another level, it was also used as a means of control, as the legislation was introduced to regulate the content of what was distributed.[110] Despite some recordings done by Hugh Tracey on indigenous music and a few ("boere music") Afrikaans recordings, most of the records were imported. It was only in the 1950s when Gallo, a Johannesburg subsidiary of Brunswick company founded in 1932, created a pressing plant, that more local recordings were made.[111]

Radio broadcasting was also started in Johannesburg during this decade. There was great interest in wireless broadcasting after the First World War and the Union government invited entrepreneurs from various cities to apply for broadcasting licences.[112] Officially regular broadcasts started on the evening of 1 July 1924 including a musical programme in Johannesburg from the Stuttafords Building.[113] The initial three radio stations were incorporated into The African Broadcasting Company based in Johannesburg and were owned by American entrepreneur I. W. Schlesinger's company the Schlesinger Company.[114] Lourenço Marques, another broadcasting station, started its broadcasting in 1934 but its programmes were mostly in English and focused on entertainment and popular music.[115] In 1934, the *Rand Daily Mail* noted the important role radio played in Johannesburg society:

> South Africans are definitely radio-minded. Every new development is followed with the keenest interest, and the well-known establishment whose announcements appear in these 26 special

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[109] C. A. Muller, *Focus on World Music Series: Music of South Africa,* 2nd edition, (New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 39.
[110] Green, "Dancing in borrowed shoes", 2008, p. 95; D. Laing, "A Voice without a Face: Popular Music and the Phonograph in the 1890s", *Popular Music*, 10(1), January 1991, p. 4.
[111] Muller, *Focus on World Music Series*, 2008, p. 41.
[112] F. S. Afọlayan, *Culture and Customs of South Africa*, (London: Greenwood Press, 2004), pp. 114 -115.
[113] Joyce (ed.), *South Africa's Yesterday,* 1981, p. 141.
[114] Afọlayan, *Culture and Customs of South Africa*, p. 115; Joyce, *South Africa's Yesterday*, 1981, p. 142.
[115] Joyce, *South Africa's Yesterday,* 1981, p. 142.

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pages are well alive to these facts. They keep the Rand public thoroughly up-to-date.[116]

In 1936, the Broadcasting Act established the South African Broadcast Corporation (SABC) a single state-run radio service. Under this Act all the control passed from the commercial enterprises to the state. By 1937 the radio had two language programmes: the English A programme and the Afrikaans B programme.[117] The air waves carried both music and commentary of relevance to the leisure industry, and particularly the dance world.

This second decade of the twentieth century ushered in a more established commercial city with aspects like public amenities, newspapers, newsbroadcasts and other media emerging. It also witnessed the introduction of policies that increasing restricted and regulated the lives of people of colour – as opposed to whites.

3.5 Johannesburg, 1940s and 1950s

In 1939, the Second World War broke out and South Africa fought alongside Britain and the other Allied nations.[118] Throughout the conflict, South Africa actively participated both on the battlefield (South African forces, for example, captured Addis Ababa and Florence) in political negotiations after the War (General Jan Smuts was instrumental in establishing the United Nations) and supporting supply for the War effort (ISCOR supplied steel).[119] The decision about the development and management of the economy and social infrastructure to support it was soon run by a few (white) elite decision makers.[120]

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[116] Anon., "The 'Big broadcast'. Fascinating film for radio fans", *Rand Daily Mail*, 19 January 1934, p. 13.
[117] Muller, *Focus on World Music Series: Music of South Africa,* 2008, p. 35.
[118] Joyce, *The making of a nation,* 2007, p. 74.
[119] Joyce, *The making of a nation*, 2007, p. 74.
[120] These included Smuts; HJ van der Bijl (Director General of War Supplies); H J van Eck (Chemical engineer at ISCOR) and E. G. Malherbe (Head of Military Intelligence and Army Educational Services during the war and educationalist), as well as D. F Malan (SA Prime Minister), H.F. Verwoerd (Minister of Native Affairs). B. Freund, "A Ghost from the past: The South African developmental state of the 1940s", WISER, 2011, https://phambo.wiser.org.za/files/seminars/Freund2011.pdf, p. 8, Accessed: 27 June 2023; H. Giliomee, " A note on Bantu education, 1953 to 1970", *South African Journal of Economics*, 77(1), March 2009, pp. 190-198.

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Apart from mining, heavy industries, which provided the most work and ensured the growth of the economy and big infrastructure, now moved away from private enterprise and international input, and focused on local control. Johannesburg's population growth exemplified the economic expansion that occurred during this period.[121] By 1940, approximately a quarter of South Africa's white population and 90% of all African urban dwellers resided on the Witwatersrand. Industrial plants were expanding, and the local industry sought to capitalize on the opportunities presented by the War and post-War economic growth. The War also had a profound impact on social dynamics. Importantly, the shared experience of black and white individuals fighting together for a common cause created a new reality in which different races could work and live and die alongside each other. The visit of the British Royal family in 1947 stood out as a significant event on the social calendar, fostering an iconic sense of community. The Royal family travelled for 49 days in the "White Train", traversing southern Africa.[122] According to local newspapers, people from all racial backgrounds lined the streets together to warmly welcome the royal family.[123] While the tour, like the War, was a contested issue many social functions were held in their honour across the racial spectrum.[124]

However, despite the promise of economic growth and social distribution, insufficient effort was given to supporting the majority of the city's workforce. The national government and local municipalities were unprepared and unwilling to deviate from their century long segregated policies and instead increased policies of control. During the 1930s and early 1940s temporary measures were put in place by the Johannesburg City Council and its Native Affairs Department to control and remove the "slum areas" in the city. Because there was little investment in housing infrastructure, little progress was made in controlling the expansion of the "slum areas". By the mid-1940s, another eleven squatter camps "mushroomed in the veld...".[125] Unable to ignore the growing workforce, the government set out to enhance

[121] Freund, "A Ghost from the past", 2011, p. 8.
[122] H. Sapire & A. Grundlingh, "Rebuffing Royals? Afrikaners and the Royal Visit to South Africa in 1947", *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 46(3), 2018, p. 528.
[123] L. Callinicos, *A place in the city. The Rand on the eve of Apartheid. A people's history of South Africa*, (Braamfontein: Ravan Press, 2017), p. 1; Clark, *Like it was,* p. 131.
[124] Sapire & Grundlingh, "Rebuffing Royals?", *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 2018, pp. 530 - 537.
[125] Joyce, *South Africa's Yesterday,* 1981, p. 77.

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its control of communities by writing acts and earmarking areas to ensure racial separation. The all-Afrikaner Purified National Party cabinet took over control in 1948. Their policies ushered in a four-decade-long era of legalised and entrenched apartheid in the context of increasing white anxiety and fear that the country would be taken over by black South Africans.[126] The increased urbanisation further helped to create as noted by Albert Grundlingh:

> …unprecedented black political volatility on the Witwatersrand during the 1940s [as it] improved the logistical possibility of sustained political activity amongst a closely settled urban population as opposed to a scattered rural one.[127]

This government launched several commissions to investigate the escalating urbanisation problem. The 1946 Fagan Commission (that found that black urbanisation was unavoidable and should be regulated) and the 1947 Sauer Commission (that advised that urbanisation was undesirable and should be reversed) were instrumental in governing Johannesburg.[128] When the Johannesburg City Council proved to be reluctant to follow national policies of forced separation, the National Party government set up its own local authority, the Native Resettlement Board, which started an aggressive policy of "slum clearance".[129]

The government primarily relied on forced control and taxation policies imposed on the black community to sustain the township areas. The Group Areas Act 41 of 1950 was fundamental in this process as it relegated different racial groups to separate areas and displaced people in multiracial areas like Sophiatown. The Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act 52 of 1951 further prescribed harsh punishment for black workers settling outside the designated resettlement areas. Another piece of legislation was the Natives Services Levy Act of 1952, which mandated employers of black labour in urban areas to pay a monthly levy to the municipalities for each employee. The revenue generated from this levy was then allocated to ensure essential amenities such as water and

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[126] Freund, "A Ghost from the past", 2011, p. 8; Harrison and Zack, "The power of mining", 2012, pp. 551-570.
[127] Grundlingh, *War and Society,* 2014, p. 123.
[128] P. Alexander; C. Ceruti; K. Motseke; M. Phadi & K. Wale, *Class in* Soweto, (South Africa: University of KwaZulu Natal Press, 2013), p. 37.
[129] Anon., "A history of Soweto", South African History Online, https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/history-soweto, Accessed: 26 June 1923; Alexander (et al.), *Class in Soweto*, 2013..

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sanitation in the township areas.[130] The Native Building Workers Act of 1951 allowed black workers to be trained in construction, but limited the places they could work to the township areas.[131]

The 1940s also marked the beginning of a period in which the manufacturing sector surpassed gold mining[132] as the core of the national and local economies.[133] This shift in economic focus brought about a significant change in the composition of the workforce compared to a century prior. Gone were the days when most of the Johannesburg's working population consisted of temporary mining labourers contracted for a limited time. Instead, a new dynamic emerged, with most workers now being long-term or permanent settlers, firmly establishing their roots in the city.[134] Despite efforts to control mass urbanisation by the end of the 1940s it was clear that Johannesburg's permanent urban population was rapidly expanding. A 1951 government report found that "...314,000 families have already accepted the urban areas as their abode. Migration of Bantu women to the towns is usually of a permanent nature".[135]

Even though the economy and population were growing, life for the average lower- and middle-class workers was difficult.[136] In 1940 even those black workers earning regular employment did not make the R15,48 found by the government's Smit Commission to be the baseline to live "in decency". The "informal sector" was crucial in the struggle to survive. People developed unofficial (sometimes illegal) enterprises to earn extra income. "Hawking, sewing, carpentry, brewing, entertainment and petty thieving all helped to supplement the family income".[137] Restriction was everywhere and especially

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130 M. Cornell, "The Statutory Background of Apartheid: A Chronological Survey of South African Legislation", *The World Today*, 16(5), May 1960, p. 192.
131 M. Strauss, "A historical exposition of spatial injustice and segregated urban settlement in South Africa", *Fundamina*, 25(2), 2019, pp. 135-168; Cornell, "The Statutory Background of Apartheid", 1960, pp. 181-194.
132 From 1952 uranium was being mined on the Rand. This was arguably more profitable as mining metal as it did not require deep level mining but was a by-product of the surface gold-bearing rock. Palestrant, *Johannesburg*, 1986, p. 123.
133 Harrison & Zack, "The power of mining", 2012, p. 552.
134 Harrison & Zack, "The power of mining", 2012, p. 552.
135 "The Tomlinson Report - extract from the summary of the Report of the Commission for the Socio-Economic Development of the Bantu Areas within the Union of South Africa", *South African Medical Journal*, 30(36), January 1956, p. 871.
136 Callinicos, *A place in the city*, 2017, pp. 34-35.
137 Callinicos, *A place in the city*, 2017, pp. 34-35.

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evident in the government-controlled townships where most of these areas were surrounded by a fence and a single gate for entering or existing. The Location Superintendent issued permits for visitors and was supported by a police force who patrolled the street and clamped down on any illicit activity including unauthorised functions, beer brewing or visitors.[138]

Despite the restrictions and harsh conditions Johannesburg's permanent population continued to expand. While this permanency was not always evident in its infrastructure (War time shortages and restrictive policies limited development), it was visible in the city's leisure industry. Radio, theatre, shops, newspapers, and magazines continued to flourish during this time.

In 1940 the Native Affairs Department launched radio transmissions to "natives" as an emergency War measure to refute disruptive rumours about the course of World War II and South Africa's engagement in the battle. These "broadcasts" were delivered over telephone lines to subscribers in black "locations" around major cities.[139] Broadcasts were made in Sotho from Johannesburg, as well as Afrikaans, English, Zulu and Xhosa and included talks and dramas. There were also extensive music programmes that played mainly African American music, black choral and traditional music.[140] The target market was furthermore severely limited, both geographically and monetarily. Only black citizens residing in or near urban areas who had enough money could afford radio receivers. Most of the audience was drawn from the small black elite, which was divided into two groups: the traditional petit-bourgeoise of small-scale producers and traders and the new group of professionals including journalists, teachers, clerks, intellectuals, and civil servants.[141]

The initial focus of the black radio service that was aimed at broadcasting programmes of general interest to listeners changed when the Apartheid government took over in

[138] Callinicos, *A place in the city*, 2017, pp. 34-35.
[139] C. Hamm, "'The Constant Companion of Man': Separate development, Radio Bantu, and music", *Popular Music*, 10(2), May 1991, p. 148.
[140] Muller, *Focus on World Music Series*, 2008, p. 35; Hamm, "'The Constant Companion of Man'", 1991, p. 148.
[141] Hamm, "'The Constant Companion of Man'", 1991, p. 148.

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1948. A new “rediffusion” radio service was started by the SABC in Orlando in August 1952. This was a paid subscription service, and transmission took place from 6 am to 9 pm on weekdays. On Sundays, broadcast was from 9 am to 9 pm. Charles Hamm noted the distinct paternalistic nature of the rediffusion service, with the main aim of the SABC to “educate the native” and “provide the native with entertainment in his own home, and in this way to contribute towards the prevention of crime”.[142] To build on the success of this radio service the SABC regularly featured light jazz programmes as well as European classical, choral music by black composers and traditional “Bantu music” (e.g., indigenous music). American jazz and swing music was already very popular in the local communities. The rediffusion had over 4000 home subscriptions by 1952.[143] For the white population, a commercial radio station, Springbok Radio, was started in 1950 as a bilingual Afrikaans and English radio station. Within two years, it was clear that this commercial station was a resounding success, with over 632 000 adult listeners per day, and it was the main source of advertising revenue. It catered to a wide spectrum of listeners and helped to promote local music and talent, including music associated with ballroom dancing.[144]

Towards the mid-twentieth century there was a growing sense of Afrikaner identity and an apartheid government that deeply feared being invaded by the growing African population despite their economic dependency on it.[145] This led to parliament issuing a number of restrictive acts which included the Population Registration Act (Act No. 30 of 1950), The Groups Areas Act (Act No. 41 of 1950) and the Suppression of Communism Act (Act 44 of 1950). In 1951, the Bantu Authorities, Abolition of Passes and the Criminal Law Amendment Act. In the following years more restrictive legislation was passed including: the Natives Laws Amendment and Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act of 1952 and the Separate Amenities Act and the Bantu Education Act of 1953. In 1955 in protest and in reaction against this increasingly draconian and discriminating legislation the ANC launched its Defiance Campaign.[146]

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[142] Hamm, "'The Constant Companion of Man'", 1991, p. 151.
[143] Hamm, "'The Constant Companion of Man'", 1991, p. 151.
[144] R. Buys & I. Assmann, “Copyright vs Accessibility: The challenge of exploitation”, *International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives (IASA) Journal*, September 2013, pp. 7-14, p. 7.
[145] Joyce (ed.), *South Africa’s Yesterday,* 1981, p. 86.
[146] M. Cornell, "The Statutory Background of Apartheid: A Chronological Survey of South African Legislation", *The World Today*, 16(5), May 1960, pp. 181-194, M. Strauss, “A historical

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Despite these exclusionary Acts, African writers of the time reported a sense of hope that political reform would soon be possible. These ideals were based very much on the perceived camaraderie and advancement experienced in townships such as Sophiatown and Alexandria. The 1950s were described as "a period of advance and struggle".[147] Lewis Nkosi says:

> While there was a fantastic array of laws controlling our lives, it was still possible to organise marches… there were racially mixed parties enjoyed with the gusto of a drowning people…[148]

Like de Ridder's comments captured at the beginning of this chapter, as well as Nkosi mentioned above, Antony Sampson (the British editor of *Drum* Magazine) noted the sense of belonging that the "new industrial proletariat" or the "urban African" felt in Johannesburg in the early 1950s.[149] He states that in "...the shanty towns there is emerging large, settled community, sometimes with three generations of town dwellers behind this".[150] This period featured a resourceful white and black middle-class that used the existing infrastructure to enjoy urban life. Public halls for example became a cheap way to accommodate the leisure needs of the communities. Hence, halls like the public hall in Polly Street, were used for a multitude of activities including art and dancing.[151]

The contents of the popular magazine *African Drum* bears testimony to this mindset of belonging and resilience of Johannesburg's proletariat during the 1950s. The *Drum's* first publications were in 1951 and within a few years had 865 000 readers.[152] As noted in its first issue in March 1951, the magazine hoped to be "…a means of

exposition of spatial injustice and segregated urban settlement in South Africa", *Fundamina*, 25(2), 2019, pp. 135-168.

[147] D. Rabkin, "Drum magazine (1951-1961): and the works of black South African writers associated with it", (UK: University of Leeds, Doctor of Philosophy, 1975), p. 2.

[148] Rabkin, "Drum magazine (1951-1961)", 1975, p. 2.

[149] Rabkin, "Drum magazine (1951-1961)", 1975, p. 2.

[150] Rabkin, "Drum magazine (1951-1961)", 1975, p. 2.

[151] S. Mdanda, "Developing a Methodology for Understanding Artistic Mentorship in Apartheid South Africa: The Case of the Polly Street Art Centre", (University of the Witwatersrand: Master of Art), pp. 6, 17.

[152] K. Lane," Living for the city: *Drum*'s magazine journalism and the popular black press", (University of Cape Town: MA Dissertation, 2006), p. 96; L. Switzer & D. Switzer, *The black press in South Africa and Lesotho. A descriptive bibliographic guide to African, Coloured and Indian newspapers, newsletters and magazines 1836 – 1976,* (Boston: G.K. Hall &Co, 1979), pp. 9, 102.

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expression and encouragement for all Africans and a source of pleasure and enlightenment to those who read or listen to the reading of others".[153] In February 1952, the name was shortened to the *Drum.* As such, it reflected and reported on the experiences of its readers, and articles included detailed investigative reporting, mixed with visuals, entertainment and sport articles, some political reporting as well as advertisements and even a pen-pal section. The various advertisements in *Drum* ranging from gramophones, clothing and jewelry reflected on the interest and the huge buying potential of the urban African market of leisure or dance related items.[154]

In 1955, however, this cautionary optimism for a more inclusive society was obliterated with the forceful removal of residents in Sophiatown from their places of habitation to regulated locations. In the next few years, an estimated 65 000 people were forcefully removed.[155] The extreme application of restrictive laws destroyed the fragile social dynamics of the city. Alain Bertaud explained that during the next few decades of apartheid, Johannesburg was divided into two parts, a "two tier city": the first consisted of whites living in heavily regulated but still market-driven residential neighbourhoods; the second consisted of a number of "black" and "coloured" townships built within rigid boundaries that were unable to normally develop and where the vast majority of people lived in state-owned rental housing.[156]

The mid-twentieth century decades were a dramatic watershed as divisions and discrimination penetrated the urban landscape. The vibrant economic hub transformed into a more rigidified pace which impacted on every aspect of daily life, including dance.

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[153] Anon., "Opinion", *The African Drum*, March 1951, p. 3.
[154] Rabkin, "Drum magazine (1951-1961)", 1975; K. Lane, "Living for the city: *Drum*'s magazine journalism and the popular black press", (University of Cape Town: MA Dissertation, 2006), pp. 3-4; Switzer & Switzer, *The black press in South Africa and* Lesotho, 1979, p. 9.
[155] M. Strauss, "A historical exposition of spatial injustice and segregated urban settlement in South Africa", *Fundamina*, 25(2), 2019, pp. 135-168; M. Cornell, "The Statutory Background of Apartheid: A Chronological Survey of South African Legislation", *The World Today*, 16(5), May 1960, pp. 181-194; L. T. Leta, "Deconstructing the dominant narrative of Sophiatown: An Indian perspective of the 1950s", *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 76(4), pp. 1-11.
[156] A. Bertaud, "The costs of Utopia: Brasilia, Johannesburg, and Moscow", *Paranoá Cadernos de Arquitetura e Urbanismo,* August 2017, p. 9.

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3.6 Conclusion

In hindsight, this rigid division of Johannesburg was a century in the making and seemed inevitable. This rapid economic development of mining and industry resulted in unprecedented economic surges which led to patterns of excess. Exclusionary policies can be traced back to the mining magnates of the nineteenth century and the powerful role they played in structuring the politics of the day. Their excessive demands for infrastructures and cheap labour to expand deep-level mining required a substantial amount of investment in industrial infrastructures, often at the expense of social infrastructure. This trend continued well after the Second World War, when secondary and heavy industries also needed a large workforce. Nevertheless, the workers and urban proletariat were far from passive onlookers during this period and actively protested the oppressive regimes. Furthermore, the suppressed communities helped to expand industries such as radio, cinema and newspapers. By 1955, it was clear that communities were not merely “temporary”, as indicated by the Sauer Commission, but that they were a permanent and vital part of sustaining Johannesburg. Social dancing was one of the many extravagant leisure activities used and reshaped by communities in Johannesburg despite the restrictive exclusionary regimes. The next chapter will discuss how the dancing infrastructure was established and how popular dances were incorporated into the city culture.

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Chapter 4: "JoJitterburg" and its "Jo'burg Jitters", 1920s to 1940s

4.1 Introduction

In September 1939, a news clip screened in one of London's newsreels cinemas, featured boisterous dancing at an event held in Johannesburg, South Africa. In the thirty second black and white clip, thirteen competitive dancing couples danced the jitterbug on a Johannesburg stage. The British commentator stated in jest that the jitterbug has "bitten the city badly and here are some of the chronic cases".[1] The clip shows white young adult partners wildly kicking their feet, waving their arms, knocking their knees, and dipping to the floor to the beat of a small live band. The brief clip ends with the commentator jokingly warning future British tourist to beware of the "Jo'burg Jitters".[2]

This event was one of the "Jitterbug Jamboree" competitions advertised in the *Sunday Times* and the *Rand Daily Mail* at the Plaza theatre and gives one a brief glimpse into the social life of middle-class Johannesburg.[3] The news reel shows that, despite the commentator's amazement at finding this dance in South Africa, Johannesburg could dance the jitterbug well. It also reveals a well-organized dance competition with competitive dancers, suggesting that dance was well established; a lively crowd, indicating interest in these imported dances; a professional band, again showing its formal nature; as well as a dance adjudicator - pointing to the established professional dance body in the country. Even more striking though is the sense of missing that the viewer experiences after the clips abrupt end. Who are these lively jitterbug dancers? Where did they practise? What did they wear? Did they only dance the jitterbug? Was this the only dancing venue? Where are the other dancers? And is this as unique an event as the commentator's surprise suggests?

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[1] British Pathé, "JITTERBUGS at Johannesburg", British news reel video clip, 07 September 1939, https://www.britishpathe.com/video/jitterbugs/query/johannesburg+jitterbug, Accessed: 03 October 2022.
[2] British Pathé, "JITTERBUGS at Johannesburg", British news reel video clip, 07 September 1939, https://www.britishpathe.com/video/jitterbugs/query/johannesburg+jitterbug, Accessed: 03 October 2022.
[3] Anon., "'Jitterbugs' at the Plaza", *Rand Daily* Mail, 24 May 1939, p. 5; Advertisement, "The Jitterbug Jamboree Dance Contest", *Sunday Times*, 04 June 1939, p. 12.

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In South Africa, and Johannesburg specifically, in later years, the terms *marabi*, township jive and Sophiatown dances were used as blanket terms when referring to dances like the jitterbug. Indeed, the swing style dances, like the jitterbug, became so deeply integrated into the local communities' dances that an attempt to untangle them from the local social dances in terms of discussion is challenging. However, simply grouping this dance in broad terms as "South African Jazz" would be a disservice to the 1930s and 1940s "Jo'burg Jitters" and the struggles they experienced in establishing a social dance infrastructure in the city. The aim here is not to dissect the differences and commonalities of the local and the international dance variations of the jitterbug. Rather, this chapter will explore the infrastructure required to dance the jitterbug, what dancing infrastructure was already in place in Johannesburg and how the changes in the economic and social structures by events such as the Second World War impacted on the dancing scene. This chapter will also consider who brought the jitterbug to Johannesburg, how it fitted into the local social dancing scene, how this dance and its various variations were perceived and where it was danced. It will discuss why, despite its American influence, it was acceptable to dance these 'dance crazes' and how dances like the jitterbug became a crucial part of city life during this period. The chapter will conclude with a brief discussion of the dancing fashion of the time and the impact the dress had on societal image. This chapter argues that social dancers actively shaped the dances and the infrastructure to suit their specific needs.

4.2 Jitterbug and the social dance hall

British dance historian, James Nott noted the complex relationship between social dances like the Charleston and jive and the:

> ...discourses of class, culture, gender, and national identity and how they overlap - how cultural change, itself a response to broader political, social, and economic developments, was helping to change notions of class, gender, and national identity.[4]

Indeed, social dancing is deeply intertwined with the identity of society and in South Africa, being able to dance the jitterbug in Johannesburg did not happen by chance. Dances, like the jitterbug, as well as the lindy hop that preceded it and the bebop that

[4] J. Nott, *Going to the Palais: A social and cultural history of dancing and dance halls in Britain, 1918-1960*, (Oxford: Oxford University press, 2020), p. 3.

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followed was not an isolated whim to follow an Americanised fashion. South Africa's social dance history has its own distinctive social relations that should be framed within a wider global arena. Within this context, the swing dances that came to South Africa were inspired by the American 'dance crazes' that became a global phenomenon and were intricately linked to commercialisation of social dancing.

Swing dances was a general term used to refer to a group of couple dances that developed at the same time as the swing style of jazz music in the 1930s and 1940s. Swing music was played at a medium tempo and included melodic riffs or short repetitive rhythmic passes. Swing dances and music emphasised the off or weaker beat giving it its characteristic swaying feel.[5] While Swing music is a form of jazz music it was played in a higher register with large scale bands and not the typical three to four jazz bands. Swing dances included the Charleston, Lindy hop and shag. Dance historians describe the jitterbug as a modified, tamer version of the Lindy hop. The Lindy hop was an acrobatic social couple dance which developed in the dance clubs of Haarlem in New York in the 1920s. It was a lively two-step dance danced with four movements (movements included that of the hips, thighs, and buttocks…even the head and neck). It started off with two steps, but also included a section where couples broke away from one another and invented their own steps.[6] The dances were danced to live swing bands and were danced to a fast beat requiring large floor space. The Savoy Ballroom in Haarlem, USA, is credited with being the birthplace of the Lindy hop and many of the other swing dances and became the hub for Jitterbug dancers in the 1930s and 1940s. The jitterbug was an energetic quick-tempo couple dance, danced to swing music. The term "jitterbug" could also refer to a swing dancer in general. In their encyclopaedia on the Second World War and the post war years in America, Young and Young noted that the jitterbug:

> ...involves many steps and constant motion, so much so that the Savoy had to replace its hardwood floors every three years. World

[5] C. Conyers, "Swing dances", 23 February 2011, https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/ search?q=swing+dance &searchBtn=Search&isQuickSearch=true, Accessed: 17 February 2023; C. Lehman, "What is Sing music", https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-swing-music-definition-history-artists.html, Accessed: 17 February 2023.
[6] George "Shorty" Snowden, a regular dancer at the Savoy claimed that he was the inventor of the "lindy"; Green, "Dancing in borrowed shoes", pp. 51-52; G. Seldes, "Shake your feet", New Republic, 4, November 1925, pp. 283-284 cited in H. Spring, "Swing and the Lindy Hop: Dance, venue, media and tradition", *American Music*, 15(2), Summer 1997, p. 186.

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> War II facilitated the spread of the jitterbug to Europe. In the 1950s, the dance became the basic framework for couples dancing in the early days of rock 'n' roll.[7]

The Savoy ballroom was one of several successful commercial dance halls built to allow the new social dances to flourish. It opened in 1926 and spanned a whole city block. Crucially, as stated by Barbara Engelbrecht:

> The Savoy Ballroom was one of the more important ballrooms where black musicians and dancers converged and defined a period: music and dance at the Savoy drew attention to the fact that the tradition of black musical and dance forms were interrelated, and together were responsible for the swing phenomenon.[8]

The Savoy opened every night of the week and during the 1920s and 1940s catered for upwards of 700 000 dancers annually. It could hold 4 000 dancers at a time.[9] Engelbrecht also commented on the commercial relationship between the swing dancers, the Savoy dance hall, and the recording industry in the USA:

> The immense popularity of both Swing music and the Lindy Hop among the whites was due in large part to the impetus the burgeoning recording industry and radio gave to it. Both industries were controlled by whites who appropriated these uniquely black forms that were beginning to catch the public's fancy.[10]

This connection with the radio and media industry not only allowed the USA recording industry to grow, but also ensured that the swing dances became part of a global culture, spreading across US borders to places like Europe, UK, South Africa, and Australia. Like the ragtime dances of previous decades, the jitterbug also spread via artists, film reels and musical recordings across its boundaries.[11]

The jitterbug's acceptance in other countries was however far more nuanced and, although popular, did not always have the widespread appeal like it did in the Savoy. Nott, for example noted that with the arrival of the jitterbug in Britain shortly before the

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[7] W. H. Young & N. K. Young, *World War II and the Postwar Years in America: A Historical and Cultural Encyclopedia,* (California: Santa Barbara, ABC-CLIO, 2010), p. 258.
[8] B. Engelbrecht, "Swinging at the Savoy", *Dance Research Journal*, 15(2), Spring 1983, p. 4.
[9] Engelbrecht, "Swinging at the Savoy", 1983, pp. 3-10.
[10] Engelbrecht, "Swinging at the Savoy", 1983, p. 8.
[11] D. Doyle, "The Complex History of British Swing Dancing", https://syncopatedtimes.com/the-complex-history-of-british-swing-dancing/, Accessed: 17 February 2023.

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start of the Second World War it was only cautiously accepted at commercial dance halls like the Hammersmith Palais de danse, the first palais de danse in the country. This was a business venture of American businessmen Howard Booker and Frank Mitchell and opened in 1919.[12] Its central positioning close to the tram and rail lines allowed for easy access to the dance hall. The hall was luxurious, with a purpose-built sprung dance floor, a large space to accommodate 2000 dancers, a restaurant, a café as well as a bandstand on both ends of the dance floor allowing multiple bands to play.[13]

Whether it was the jitterbug, or the quickstep of two decades before that, what made this and other palais de danse successful was not just their central locations and dance centered venue, but also that they kept up a modern and up to date musical offering. The novel dance tunes were infectious, fun, and relatively easy to learn. Moreover, the up-tempo beat and freedom of expression was a welcome change from the strict tempo, style, and conventions of the earlier decades of dance and appealed to the young urban workers.[14] Dancers of previous decades utilised spaces like hotels and clubs hosting paid dance events and dinner dansants that mostly catered for the upper middle-class. This not only required money, but also social status to participate. Entrepreneurs saw the opportunity and need for large spaces where working and middle-classes could enjoy their free time and spend the money they had. The commercial dance halls had a dedicated high quality sprung dance floor, in-house dance band and often sold alcohol and food. In her book entitled: *From the dance hall to Facebook: Teen girls, mass media, and moral panic in the United States, 1905-2010*, Shayla Thiel-Stern noted that it was the music and dances in particular that were the drawcard to the dance halls. At these halls that appeared in urban areas in the USA and UK from the early 1900s, young workers could dance the ragtime dances like the one step for a low admission fee.[15] The dance hall was, as noted by the UK based

[12] Nott, *Going to the Palais*, p. 18.
[13] Nott, *Going to the Palais*, p. 18.
[14] K. Nathaus & J. Nott (eds.), *Worlds of social dancing. Dance floor encounters and he global rise of couple dancing, c. 1910-1940*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2022).
[15] S. Thiel-Stern, *From the dance hall to Facebook: Teen girls, mass media, and moral panic in the United States, 1905-2010,* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2014), pp. 24-25.

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Birmingham Daily Gazette, a place to "...escape from the everyday, matter-of-fact world to a realm of romantic make-believe...[where]... dancing itself is the thing".[16]

At the time, dancing halls were big business with about 11 000 dancehalls and nightclubs opening between 1919 and 1926 in Britain alone.[17] Apart from the immediate lucrative income from the British dance halls, the 1930s and 1940s also saw, as noted by Nott, "…a commercialization of social dance, with record companies competing to release the catchiest dance tracks and grooviest steps."[18]

Dance halls and the up-to-date dance music that they offered were undeniably popular. However, since their inception the venues and the dances themselves, were met with a moral panic and restrictions from authorities, religious and community groups. In the US for example, Paul Goalby Cressey, in his 1932 study of the dance halls in Chicago, emphasised the moral decay of the 'taxi-dance hall' warning about the "promiscuous acquaintanceships".[19] Thiel-Stern also highlighted how much of the media associated the dance hall and young girls' experience there to "evil".[20] This negative perception of the commercial dance hall not only came from religious and governmental groups, but also often, as Nott explained in his study on dancing in Britain, from within the dancing fraternity itself.[21]

4.3 Dancing organisations and dancing halls

Social dancing was integral to Johannesburg and the Witwatersrand social activities from colonial times and was reinforced by influential members of society. For example, Governor Generals, the official British representatives in the Union, hosted garden parties where political elites and socialites could interact on and off the lavishly decorated dance floor. The waltz, which had been popular since its debut in the

[16] R. Staveley-Wadham, "A Look at the History of Dance Halls – Wedding Bells and Questionable Morals", *The British Newspaper* Archive, 15 October 2019, https://blog.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/2019/10/15/a-look-at-the-history-of-dance-halls/., Accessed: 24 January 2023.
[17] Doyle, "The Complex History of British Swing Dancing", 2020.
[18] Doyle, "The Complex History of British Swing Dancing", 2020.
[19] P. Goalby Cressey, *The Taxi-Dance Hall: A sociological study in commercialized recreation and city Life,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), pp. 237-293.
[20] Thiel-Stern, *From the dance hall to Facebook*, 2014, pp. 24-25.
[21] Nott, *Going to the Palais*, p. 114.

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previous century, was often included in these dance events, as were syncopated ragtime dances such as the foxtrot and one-step. Small bands provided music for these dancing functions. Ballroom dancing grew increasingly popular not only for social gatherings such as these but also to raise funds for various reasons. Dancing events took place, often, in private houses, club halls, garden parties and hotels.

By the early 1920s Johannesburg also had a well-established competitive dancing organisational body that played a key role in both establishing a dance teaching body and creating linkages with internal dance organisations. The South African Dance Teacher's Association (SADTA) was founded as early as 1923, but initially focused on ballet and operatic dances.[22] A ballroom dancing branch was only established in 1927. However, ballroom competitions, as noted in the local press and news reels like the *African Mirror*, improved the standard and were already organised for professional, amateur and, mixed professional and amateur couples in 1924.[23] The SADTA formalised and structured ballroom dancing in the country by: organising regional and national competitions based on the British dancing syllabi through its regional branches; introducing and overseeing examinations; establishing and regulating formal teachers training; and ensuring regular contact either through exchange programs or inviting of international acclaimed dancers to adjudicate local competitions.[24] The SADTA had a large local following and accomplished dancers and dance teachers that would train, manage and actively report and comment on the growth of ballroom in South Arica. By 1927 for example, there were already 137 ballroom dancing teachers in Johannesburg alone.[25]

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[22] Anon., "The month's dancing. A Johannesburg review", *Rand Daily Mail,* 23 April 1923, p. 10.
[23] Anon., "S.A. Dancing Teachers ballroom championship", *Rand Daily Mail*, 22 November 1924, p. 7; "South African Dance Champions: Mr. J Strydom and Miss M McLaren of the Transvaal win the National Ballroom Dancing Championship at Cape Town", *African Mirror* no 962, 07 October 1931, NFA, Pretoria.
[24] A. Green, "Passionate competitors: the foundation of competitive ballroom dancing in South Africa (1920s-1930s)", *TD: The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa,* 5(1), July 2009, pp. 123-143; "Have you seen the "Lilt": The latest overseas dance craze, demonstrated by Miss Barbara Miles, World Champion Ballroom dancer, partnered by Signor Canale", *African Mirror no 964*, 1931, NFA, Pretoria.
[25] Treble Violl, "Dancing and the ballroom: 'Sprightly Spingboks', 'Trebla', Dancing do's and don'ts", *Rand Daily Mail*, 11 June 1927, p. 7; A. M. Green, "Similar steps, different venues: the making of segregated dancing worlds in South Africa, 1910–39", in, K. Nathaus & J. Nott (eds.), *Worlds of social dancing. Dance floor encounters and he global rise of couple dancing, c. 1910-1940*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2022), pp. 87-107.

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Apart from the SADTA, another ballroom dancing association known as the Amateurs Dancers Association (ADA) was founded in 1933 in Johannesburg. The aim of this organisation was to promote a high standard of dancing amongst amateur, white, social dancers specifically.[26] The SADTA and ADA were of course not the only formal dance bodies in South Africa. Other dance bodies that were founded in South Africa during this time were ballet companies like the University of Cape Town Ballet Company founded in 1934 by Dulcie Howes, and the Festival Ballet Society founded in 1944 in Johannesburg by Marjorie Sturman, Ivy Conmee and Poppy Frames. These Cape Town and Johannesburg based companies would eventually become CAPAB (Cape Performing Arts Board) and PACT (Performing Arts Council of the Transvaal) in the 1960s respectively.[27] The tension and conflict between the various South African dancing bodies only became a feature of more recent decades. Between the 1920s and 1940s many teachers belonged to and were adjudicators for the various bodies. During this time there was a committed focus on establishing a steadfast and solid dancing culture in the Union of South Africa.

There were also several local black South African social dancing clubs that organised local and regional events during this time. *Umteteli wa Bantu* noted both the regularity and large support base of social dancing. For example, in 1937:

> The annual dance given by Mr. J. S. Senokoanyane, of the Barolong Dancing Club, at the Communal Hall, Eastern Native Township, was a great success. More than 600 people attended, among whom were talented African dancers. Presents were given to the host, including 30 big cakes. The adjudicators of the dressing and dancing competitions were four Johannesburg ballroom dancing experts.[28]

Unfortunately, this article does not elaborate on who these “Johannesburg ballroom experts” were, but articles both in *Umteteli wa Bantu* and later articles in the *Rand Daily Mail* suggest that adjudicators from the SADTA officiated at events in the township areas. Given the lack of archival evidence, the founding date of the Bantu Ballroom Dancing Association or the Bantu Ballroom Dancing Teacher's Association is unclear,

[26] Green, "Dancing in borrowed shoes", p. 105. Lancer, "The dancing world: New dance club for the Rand", *Rand Daily Mail,* 18 November 1933, p. 6.
[27] J. Allyn, *Ballet in South Africa. Dance for Life,* (UK: David Philip, 1980).
[28] Gossip pen, "Social news of the week", *Umteteli wa Bantu,* 10 April 1937, p. 4

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but in *Umteteli wa Bantu* mention to the Bantu Ballroom Dancing Teacher's Association appears from as early as 1940.[29] It appears as if, like their white ballroom counterparts, there were several regional bodies of this association such as the Border Bantu Ballroom Dancing Association; East London Bantu Ballroom Dancing Association; and Bloemfontein Bantu Ballroom Dancing Association. Like its white counterparts, this ballroom organisation ran various local and regional competitions that smaller clubs participated in.[30] *Umteteli wa Bantu* reported in 1940 on members of dancing clubs, the “cream of African dancing fans”, who were enjoying a social dancing event at Jack Phillips’s Inchcape Hall. It stated that:

> …not a small number of the dancers there are members of dancing clubs whose picturesque names range from the ‘High Recommendation,’ ‘League of Nations International,’ ‘Kengsington East’ and ‘Filling Wanderers,’ to mention only a few. Dancing, for these clubs, is a serious affair. Any dance sponsored by one of the Club members must— I use the word with full force—be a competition, in dancing and dressing —both ladies and gentlemen. Prizes are mostly in cash and kind: entrance fees are always cash of course…[31]

A formal national body, the Non-European Ballroom Dancing Association, was founded in the next decade and its role will be discussed in the following chapter.[32]

The coloured community also had a strong social dance following across South Africa. In 1933 for example, British immigrant Helen Southern-Holt, established an opera, dance and theatre company specifically for the coloured community in District 6, in Cape Town, called the EON group.[33] In 1940, under the direction of members of the SADTA and organised by the EON Group, ballroom classes for amateurs were arranged in the centre of Cape Town.[34] The EON Groups' amateur ballroom division encouraged all amateur coloured ballroom dancers to participate in the ballroom dance teacher's

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[29] Anon., "News from various quarters", *Umteteli waBantu* [sic.] 13 April 1940, p. 5; Anon., "News from various centres", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 08 July 1944, p. 13.
[30] Anon., "News from various quarters", *Umteteli waBantu,* 13 April 1940, p. 5; Anon., "News from various centres", *Umteteli wa Bantu,* 08 July 1944, p. 13.
[31] Gossip Pen, “Organised social activities in Johannesburg. Bantus Sports Club, Social Centre, Inchcape Hall”, *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 27 April 1940, p. 4.
[32] Green, 'Dancing in Borrowed Shoes', p. 166; Anon., "Native Ballroom Contest", *Rand Daily Mail,* 01 November 1950, p. 12.
[33] Anon., "Eoan Group School of Performing Arts", https://www.eoangroup.com/, Accessed: 18 October 2022.
[34] Anon., "Eoan Group Activities. Ballroom classes for amateurs ", *Cape Standard,* 12 December 1944, p. 4.

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examinations to get a formal dance teacher certification. In the Johannesburg region, although a formal ballroom dance organisation is not mentioned specifically in the local white press, however between 1913 and 1926 several applications for the licensing of “Dancing Hall for Coloured Persons” were made to the Municipal Council of Johannesburg pointing to the popularity of social dancing amongst this population group.[35] This included for example applications for the "Union Dancing hall...A Dancing Hall for Coloured persons" by S.M. Cohen as well as the "Inchcape Hall (this hall was also known as the Ritz hall)...Public Hall for Coloured Persons" by James Grant Gibson both in Doornfontein in 1926.[36] The press also refers to the "coloured dances" in Johannesburg.[37]

Furthermore, *The Bantu World* noted in 1932 how prevalent organised ballroom dancing was amongst the coloured people and how coloured musicians and entrepreneurs shaped ballroom dancing within this "non-European group".[38] By this time, the coloured dancing band, the Jazz Revellers, had been performing for three years, travelled across South Africa, and was, according to this paper "...undoubtedly...the most popular band in Johannesburg".[39] Band members included Sid 'Doc' Meyer; Stan 'Baby' Lambert; Johnnie 'Col.' Souris; Ike 'Goggles' Augustus; Sonny 'Surgeon' Grotewold managed by Chris 'Duke' Adams. The article also noted the growth and quality of the dances:

> Modern Ballroom Dancing especially for the past few years, has become more popular than ever, and the standard of dancing among non-Europeans in this country has reached a very high level, and there is no doubt that it is largely due to the tireless efforts of the band, which has always made it a matter of duty to provide the very best musical fare.[40]

It appears as if, like other white and black cultural clubs and societies, such as the Rand Club and Bantu Men's Social Centre (BMSC), that ballroom dancing became a regular

[35] J. Taylor, "Municipal Council of Johannesburg", *Rand Daily Mail,* 05 June 1913, p. 3; D.B. Pattison, "Municipal Council of Johannesburg", *Rand Daily Mail,* 18 November 1922, p. 3.
[36] D.B. Pattison, "Municipal Council of Johannesburg", *Rand Daily Mail,* 19 November 1926, p. 3.
[37] Anon., "Between ourselves. A daily record of things seen, heard...and remembered", *Rand Daily Mail*, 21 May 1924, p. 11.
[38] Anon., "Non-European orchestra renders dancing a very popular pastime", *The Bantu World,* 07 May 1932, p. 9.
[39] Anon., "Non-European orchestra renders dancing a very popular pastime", *The Bantu World,* 07 May 1932, p. 9.
[40] Anon., "Non-European orchestra renders dancing a very popular pastime", *The Bantu World,* 07 May 1932, p. 9.

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club activity amongst this racial group as well. In 1921 for example, the Paladins Organisation, an Anglican boys organisation initially focused on games and gymnastics for boys from the Anglican community and held its meetings at the BMSC and the Ritz Hall. The Paladins grew in popularity and increased its activities as well as its membership to become a "Coloured Boys Organisation which would cater for boys of all denominations, and from all walks of life".[41] In accordance with the War Measures Act of 1940, this organisation was declared an "approved organisation"[42] (meaning that it was allowed to hold events despite restrictions imposed by war times) by the Department of Defence in 1940 and in 1949. The Paladins were affiliated with the Transvaal Association of Non-European Boys' Club and by the end of the 1940s held daily activities at the Polly Street Centre that included, amongst others, boxing, ballroom dancing and bugle-bands.[43]

This formalisation of ballroom dancing through the creation of organisations like regional clubs and the above mentioned SADTA, drastically reshaped the informal dancing scene in South Africa of the previous century. Officiating dance events required that a certain standard be kept and within a few years several dance schools opened in Johannesburg. Many of the dance teachers had close ties with the British dance fraternity and prided themselves in being members of the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dance (ISTD). Both the Johannesburg dance teachers and the local dance commentators closely followed the lives of the British dance masters. Josephine Bradley, Victor Silvester and Phyllis Haylor are often credited with developing the competitive based "English Style of ballroom dancing".[44] Even though only a small

[41] "A brief description and history of the Paladins", WITS [University of the Witwatersrand], Johannesburg: ZA HPRA AD1715-19-19.31-19.31.3, South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR).

[42] The War Measures' Acts declared by the South African government after the outbreak of the Second World War restricted social activities and in particular gatherings that could be regarded as union activities. W. Visser, "Politics under conditions of war: The effect of the war measures acts on political struggles within the South African mine workers' union, 1939-1947", *Scientia Militaria*, 44(1), 2016, p. 210.

[43] "A brief description and history of the Paladins", WITS, Johannesburg: SAIRR, ZA HPRA AD1715-19-19.31-19.31.3.

[44] The English or International style of partner dancing is based on competition ballroom technique and styling and was developed during the 1920s and 1930s in London. It includes the Standard dances (waltz, tango, foxtrot, quickstep, and Viennese waltz) and the Latin dances. R. Powers, "The Evolution of English Ballroom Dance Style", https://socialdance.stanford.edu/syllabi/English_ ballroom_style.htm, Accessed: 02 March 2023;

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percentage of UK dancers danced this style[45] - most preferring the more relaxed form of social dancing - Johannesburg white dance commentators highly valued this competitive precision in dancing advocated by the British dance experts and their instruction was often printed verbatim in the local press and heralded as the dancing golden standard.[46]

The SADTA focused on the standardisation of the style and tempos of the traditional ballroom dances (foxtrot, quick step, waltz and tango).[47] It had little appetite to incorporate the international ragtime and swing dances into their competitions. Only when dances like the jive and jitterbug were included in the British competitions did the SADTA incorporate some "dance crazes" into the local syllabus.[48]

Not unlike the rest of the world, in the twentieth century the city scapes were changing rapidly to cater for the mass influx of people and Johannesburg was no different. Gerard-Mark van der Waal noted the city moving from a mine dump to metropole with sky rises comparing it to New York with is bustling city life. Indeed in 1927, when Johannesburg gained city status, this urban region was fast turning into an expansive cosmopolitan area with an increasing population, several hotels, halls, and public spaces where competitive and social dancing was thriving.[49]

During this time there was also a change in the economic, social, and ideological perceptions of the Johannesburg region's urban community. The period between the late 1920s and early 1940s saw community being exposed to and striving towards a more global consumer-based culture. In his analysis of the 1930s, literary specialist Tlhalo Raditlhalo comments on how the arts in South Africa "hinted at the need for

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Anon., "The dancing feeling", 2016, https://dancingfeeling.com/international-ballroom-style/, Accessed: 02 March 2023.

[45] Powers, "The Evolution of English Ballroom Dance Style".

[46] E.M.B., "In the dance world. The new Viennese Waltz explained. Old fashioned dances popular", *Rand Daily Mail,* 21 November 1936, p. 18.

[47] Green, "Dancing in borrowed shoes"; Green, "Passionate competitors", 2009, pp. 137-138.

[48] Green, "Passionate competitors", 2009, pp. 137-138.

[49] Green, "Dancing in borrowed shoes", pp. 33-74. For a detailed map of Johannesburg in 1927 that indicates some of the city's public spaces see E. H. Waugh, "Town Council of Johannesburg road map", (Johannesburg: Town Council of Johannesburg, 1927), https://wiredspace-extra.wits.ac.za/items/5756a317-b356-4a72-b92c-42a5de29c259, Accessed: 04 January 2023.

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African self-awareness and self-determination".[50] In his study on the music of Johannesburg during 1900s to 1960s Coplan also emphasised the "...self- consciously urban community: Africans who were *of* Johannesburg and not merely *in* it" [emphasis ad ded],[51] thus also highlighting the active role that black South Africans played in shaping their communities.

Given the rapidly changing nature of Johannesburg society,[52] it can be argued that the acceptance of the new dances would have happened even without the official dancing organisations's rubber stamp of approval. Indeed, both social dancers and their dance teachers actively participated in shaping the dancing scene to suit their needs in stark contrast to the mimicking of the dances that was so characteristic of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.[53] The local press noted the economic and skills benefits that dance instruction had:

> From a business point of view, the new dancing has proved to be a gold mine. Apparently perfectly easy, it is subject to so many variations that to remain an expert dancer is difficult unless regular instruction however short are taken. In the old days, it was a case of once a dancer always a dancer. To-day, a few months away from dancing centres will place even the most expert dancer on the out-of-date list. Teachers of ballroom dancing in Johannesburg are most up-to-date, and keep in touch with every new development...[54]

During the 1920s and 1940s around the world, public dance halls became very much part of the city scape because of the popularity of the new ragtime dances like the jive and jitterbug. These halls epitomized the new urban commercial culture and highlighted how social activities and shared spaces were selected and adapted to suit the local and expanding urban community. Dance halls were, as noted by Nott, venues either run commercially as dancing venues or as public venues that were extensively used for

[50] T. Raditlhalo, "Modernity, culture, and nation" in Robert Ross, Anne Kelk Mager and Bill Nasson (eds.), *The Cambridge history of South Africa. Volume 2. 1885-1994.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2011). p. 580.
[51] D. Coplan, "The African musician and the development of the Johannesburg entertainment industry, 1900 - 1960", *Journal of Southern African Studies,* 5(2), April 1979, p. 135.
[52] C. Van Onselen, *Studies in the social and economic history of the Witwatersrand, 1886-1914*, (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1982), p. xv; P. Bonner; I. Hofmeyr; D. James & T. Lodge (eds.), *History workshop 4*: *Holding their ground. Class, locality and culture in 19th and 20th century South Africa,* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1982), p. 107.
[53] Anon., “Controlling dancing affairs: S.A. Dancing Teachers’ Association”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 02 October 1931, p. 14.
[54] Anon., "Ballroom dancing in Johannesburg", *Rand Daily Mail,* 21 May 1925, p. 15.

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social couple dancing.[55] The dance hall entrepreneurs mainly aimed their products, services, other offerings, and advertisements at the growing middle-class market that had disposable income and leisure time. These purpose-built dance halls typically boasted a specialised floor installed specifically for dancing, in-house orchestra, a restaurant, as well as viewing and seating areas. It offered contemporary music and employed professional dancers as teachers or dancing partners. To add to the glamour of these venues, dance halls adopted the French name "palais de danse".[56] South Africa followed this trend with palais de danse being built in the 1920s in Cape Town, Durban, and Johannesburg.

Apart from the competitive dancing infrastructure that was in place, Johannesburg also had a vibrant and expanding commercial dancing infrastructure. This included several hotels, including the Carlton; club halls, such as the coloured Union Club, the white Rand club and the Bantu Men's Social Centre; community halls like the Western Native Township Hall and Sophiatowns' Undermoon Hall; and commercial dancing halls, such as the Inchcape Hall, the Astoria Palais de Danse and the Loveday Palais de Danse. All of these offered a social dancing experience for a fee. The physical location of the commercial dance halls played a crucial part in both its initial and future success. In stark contrast to the private dance parties of a century earlier, these dance halls were very public spaces, often built in the heart of the city for easy access. The new Johannesburg commercial halls were also specifically set up to include more people at a cheaper rate. "The aim is...", explained the South African dance commentator in the early 1930s "...to make it a place for people who usually patronise expensive hotels, but in these hard times can't afford hotel prices...".[57]

The Inchcape (sometimes spelt Inchape or Inschape) that was in Selby, Turfontein at the bottom of Eloff Street extension on the southern edge of Johannesburg's business district, was opened between 1921 and 1922.[58] In the 1930s it was demolished and

[55] Nott, *Going to the Palais,* 2015, p. 3.
[56] Nott, *Going to the Palais,* 2015, pp. 17-18.
[57] Treble Violl, "Dancing and the ballroom. 'Divertissement'- new dance floor, the tango, palais de danse, Scottish dancers", *Rand Daily Mail*, 02 January 1932, p. 3.
[58] R. J. Bunche, *An African American in South Africa: the travel notes of Ralph J. Bunche, 28 September 1937-1 January 1938*, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992), p. 351; Anon., "Both sides of native life. Rotarians' night visit. Slum and cultural aspects", *Rand Daily Mail*, 13 May 1931, p. 10.

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moved to City and Suburban Street an area with a "sizeable black community".[59] This dance hall was managed by Jack Philips under three different names to cater for the different racial groups who used this venue: the Ritz; the Inchcape; or the Majestic. During his visit to Johannesburg Ralph J. Bunche noted the different names and explained as follows how the names were used by different racial groups:

> Jack Phillips told me that he has to use 3 names for his hall because of the racial situation here. The native people will not use the Ritz Palais de House because colored people use it; the colored will not use Inchcape Hall because natives use it; and old people will not use either — they use the Majestic. And some prefer to use just No. 5 Polly Street on their announcements. The different names all appear on lighted globes in front of the building and all are lighted at once.[60]

This epitomizes the bizarre tensions within the racially segregated social dancing landscape. Indeed, in newspapers of this time Inchcape dance competitions and events and dance competition and events at the Ritz are advertised on the same page.[61] From early on the Inchcape offered dancing as part of its musical programme.[62] This "rendezvous for African and Coloured pleasure-seekers" could host several hundred dancers at a time.[63] The local press vividly describes the physical location and the inside of the hall itself as follows:

> Ordinarily, the Inchcape Hall, that stands among the scrap-iron yards and railway sidings of Eloff Street Extension, is loud with the blare of native orchestras and many confused noises of native men and women that seek entertainment at its periodic concerts and dances. Its walls are hung with photographs of native football teams, native concert parties and bands, and extravagantly-worded 'amicable invitations to hilarious nights' at which 'all ladies and gents' are requested to 'endeavour their utmost to be attending'.[64]

[59] Advertisement, "To-day. Dairy of events...", *Rand Daily Mail,* 24 November 1937, p. 14.
[60] Bunche, *An African American in South Africa,* p. 180.
[61] Anon., "Competition dance", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 09 March 1940, p. 4; Anon., "Competition dance at the Ritz", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 09 March 1940, p. 4.
[62] Advertisement, "The Abantu-Batho Musical Association of Kimberley....Prices: 4/6 and 3/0 Excellent Variety Programme— Dancing after 11 p.m. A.P. Lekoma, Hon. Secy", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 27 November 1926, p. 4.
[63] Anon., "Impressario", *Rand Daily Mail,* 04 September 1963, p. 8; Gossip Pen, "Town and country news: Benevolent Society dance", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 04 April 1936, p. 5.
[64] Anon., "Polyglot audience at Inchcape Hall", *Rand Daily Mail,* 31 December 1928, p. 9.

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Phillips and his Inchcape Hall were much loved and the media praised his friendly social demeanour and how he "masterfully managed" the hall.[65] The local press highlighted the organisation and participation of the local community at one of the dance events of 1931 at the Inchcape Hall as follows:

> The time being now very nearly midnight the party walked round to the Inchcape Hall. In the large hall, decorated with paper festoons, the coloured band was playing some joyous European dance music, and native girls, some of them with dresses down to their ankles, were dancing with partners most skilfully in the orthodox fox-trot style.[66]

In the 1930s the Inchcape Hall moved to Polly Street but in November 1951 it burned down marking the end on an era.[67]

On 6 August 1932, the Astoria Palais de Danse, converted from the 1927 Astoria theatre, was opened. This flagship palais de danse was in Noord Street in the Johannesburg CBD. The owners, African Caterers, appointed Clifford Burke, manager of the Palais de Danse in Hammersmith, England, to run the hall. The exact floor size of the original Astoria is unknown, but the whole stand on which the theatre stood originally was a large 50 by 100 feet (465m2),[68] and the dance floor was most probably just over 2000 feet. Within six months after its opening the Astoria's dancing floor was expanded to 2600 square feet creating space for roughly 600 dancers reflecting on its growing popularity.[69] It had an in-house dance band "Gerrardo's Astorians", that provided male and female dance partners for those who required them and had an American soda fountain. Special lighting was installed in the hall that changed with every dance. The venue had a sprung floor and patrons could enjoy light refreshments as well

[65] Anon., "Social notes, entertainments and music: popular jazz band fully enjoys their vacation in the golden city", *The Bantu World*, 09 July 1937, p. 9.
[66] Anon., "Both sides of native life. Rotarians' night visit. Slum and cultural aspects", *Rand Daily Mail*, 13 May 1931, p. 10.
[67] D. Coplan, *In township tonight! Three centuries of South African black city music and theatre,* 2nd edition (Sunnyside: Jacana, 2007), pp. 202-203.
[68] Anon., "Palais de danse building sold", *Rand Daily Mail,* 18 May 1935, p. 13.
[69] Advertisement, 'New and Larger Astoria palais de danse", *Rand Daily Mail,* 01 November 1932, p. 8.

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Loveday and Astoria

Polly Street

Inchcape (1930s)

BMSC

Inchcape (1920s)

Figure 2: Locations of Johannesburg’s palais de danse, 1927

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Figure 3: Entertainment centres located in Johannesburg, 1938

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as supper. The commercial dance hall offered afternoon and evening dancing sessions as well as dance tuition.[70]

The Loveday, that also opened in 1932, was located close by in 73 Loveday Street between Bree and Jeppe streets in Johannesburg CBD. The *Rand Daily Mail* noted that the Loveday was "...very conveniently situated in the heart of the city, within very short walking distance of Johannesburg's Theatreland [sic.]".[71] Indeed, pinpointing the street addresses of the palais de danse addresses on a period street map of Johannesburg (See Figures: Johannesburg map of 1927 and 1938 with the approximate location of some of the city's palais de danse) shows that both the Astoria and Loveday were in the city centre within a short distance from one another and also close to hotels like the Royal and Carlton Hotels, as well as the Town Hall, Wanderers sports ground and theatres like the Plaza, Bijou and Standard theatres and luxury department stores including Stuttafords.[72]

Like the Astoria, the Loveday had a purpose-built spring dance floor, professional dance partners for hire, a dedicated dance band (Teddy Garrat and 'The Harmony Kings') and a restaurant at the venue. The Loveday could cater for 600 dancers at a time and could seat 1000. During the first half of the 1930s it was regularly filled to capacity.[73] Clifford Burke moved from the Astoria to open and manage the Loveday.[74]

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[70] Anon., "Hammersmith comes to Johannesburg. Opening of new palais de danse", *Rand Daily Mail,* 06 August 1932, p. 5; Advertisement, "Palais de Danse", *Rand Daily Mail,* 06 August 1932, p. 9; Anon., "Hiring dancing partners. Novelty appeals to Johannesburg", *Rand Daily Mail,* 08 August 1932, p. 5; Advertisement, "Stupendous success at opening of the Palais de Danse", *Rand Daily Mail,* 08 August 1932, p. 6.

[71] Anon., "New super palais de danse for city. Room for 600 on the floor - and seating for 1,000. Swirling amid rocks and foam", *Rand daily Mail*, 2 November 1932, p. 12.

[72] A detailed map of Johannesburg in 1927 that indicates some of the city's public spaces appear in E. H. Waugh, "Town Council of Johannesburg road map", (Johannesburg: Town Council of Johannesburg, 1927), https://wiredspace-extra.wits.ac.za/items/5756a317-b356-4a72-b92c-42a5de29c259, Accessed: 04 January 2023. Also see C. E. Goad, "Insurance plan of Johannesburg: Transvaal province, South Africa", 2 (26, 27 and 30),January 1938, https://wiredspace-extra.wits.ac.za/items/b1b2cc61-7e0e-4155-809d-ce4722abbbaa, Accessed: 06 January 2023.

[73] Anon., "City's new dance hall. Large crowd enjoys opening night", *Rand Daily Mail,* 05 November 1932, p. 14.

[74] Anon., "New super palais de danse for city. Room for 600 on the floor - and seating for 1,000. Swirling amid rocks and foam", *Rand daily Mail*, 2 November 1932, p. 12.

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Like their USA and UK counterparts mentioned earlier in this chapter, South African entrepreneurs tapped into the commercial opportunities of the dance hall. In his memoirs of his life in the 1930s South African Naboth Mokgatle noted the commercial nature of dances at the Inchcape Hall:

> The social life I had chosen as an alternative to politics used to take me as far afield as Johannesburg on some nights to dance in the Inchcape Hall at Mai Mai, Wemmer, dancing with African beauties working in the City of Gold. At times I went with others to places like Benoni, Brakpan and Springs to dance. That was an expensive business; we went by taxi and had to pay to get into the hall and for refreshments inside to show the girls that one was kind and generous. I was always broke, owing friends money and finding it difficult to settle my debts.[75]

In his study of the black community living the Witwatersrand in the 1930s, Ray Phillips also highlighted the financial purpose of the dance halls as follows:

> Other dances, with or without concert features, are held by individuals with the purpose, usually, of *financial gain* (emphasis added). Outside the Location halls, of which there are eight, the principal halls available for dancing parties are the Springbok Hall, Vrededorp, and the New Inchcape Palais de Dance, known also as the Ritz. Both of these are in Johannesburg. The Springbok Hall is operated by a prominent Indian property owner, who has a caretaker at the hall who exercises some supervision. The Ritz is under the capable management of Jack Phillips, a very efficient and popular Eur-African [sic.] who provides excellent supervision and direction for the functions at his Palais de Dance. The European type of dance is followed exclusively. Order is generally good except where liquor is available in the neighbourhood. The Springbok and Ritz are available every evening for Non-European engagement. Admission to an ordinary dance is five shillings per couple.[76]

Five shillings per couple for the entrance fee compared well with the price of bread which ranged from six pence per loaf to 3 pence for stale bread in the 1930s. The entrance fee for a couple amounted roughly to one bread.[77]

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[75] N. Mokgatle, *The autobiography of an unknown South African,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. 210.
[76] R. E. Phillips, *The Bantu in the city,* (South Africa: Lovedale press, 1938), p. 293.
[77] E. Hellmann, *Rooiyard. A sociological survey of an urban slum yard*, (Northern Rhodesia: The Rhodes-Livingston Institute, 1948), pp. 30-31; Green, "Dancing in borrowed shoes", p. 96.

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Like Burke, Jack Phillips[78] was most likely not originally from South Africa pointing to the globalisation of Johannesburg. Phillips calls him an "Eur-African" while later commentators state he was most likely from Jamaica.[79] This designation also points to the colour-coded nature of all things “dance”.

The connection with the West also extends to the names of the hall. The white palais de danse in Johannesburg used the names of the successful British dance halls including Loveday and Astoria. In Johannesburg's townships bands took on names like the “Harlem Crazy Girls Steppers”,[80] “Harlem Rhythm Girls”,[81] “Harlem Brothers”,[82] “Junior Harlem Hot Shots”[83] and the “Harlem Swingsters”.[84] Fashion outlets, cinemas and Johannesburg children were also named after this iconic city - Harlem.[85] Indeed, already in 1937, *The Bantu World* likens Orlando to Harlem describing it as follows:

> Orlando the Harlem of Johannesburg. When the township of Orlando was established about six years ago, some prophets declared that it would become the Harlem of South Africa, and that like Harlem, the Negro Metropolis in New York, it would be a city within the city of Johannesburg. But the pessimists shook their heads and said: “Harlem was not the creation of legislative effort on the part of the United States Government but the product of a voluntary segregation on the part of the Negro people.” To this the optimists replied that while it is true that Harlem was not the product of legislation, there is no reason why Orlando should not become the metropolis of the Africans to Southern Africa. What is wanted is that Africans should dig themselves in and become a self contained community...The Africans are determined to rise in every possible way and they are prepare to use their numerical superiority for the benefit of their race.[86]

Sophiatown also was nicknamed “Little Harlem” by its inhabitants and this nickname is often highlighted by cultural historians and journalist when comparing the similarities of

[78] Jack Phillips’s picture appeared in Gossip Pen, “Organised social activities in Johannesburg. Bantus Sports Club, Social Centre, Inchcape Hall”, *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 27 April 1940, p. 4.
[79] Phillips, *The Bantu in the city,* 1938, p. 293; Anon., "Impressario", *Rand Daily Mail,* 04 September 1963, p. 8.
[80] Anon., "Who's who in the news this week", *The Bantu World,* 12 November 1938, p. 19.
[81] N. Qalazive, "O-funindlela bhai. Imbhutho ye Haarlem Rhythms", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 15 October 1938, p. 13.
[82] Pinkie, "Film premiere", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 05 April 1952, p. 7.
[83] Anon., "Good response at talent show", *Umteteli wa Bantu,* 30 July 1955, p. 7.
[84] Advertisement, "Wilfred Sentso and his Synco Fans at the B.M.S.C. on Thursday 22nd May 1947 Jazz Maniacs and the Haarlem Swingsters", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 10 May 1947, p. 2.
[85] Pinkie, "Film premiere", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 05 April 1952, p. 7.
[86] Anon., "Orlando. The Harlem of Johannesburg.", *The Bantu World,* 01 May 1937, p. 4.

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the 'Harlem Renaissance" in the US and the associations with the African American culture when studying jazz in Johannesburg.[87] In analysing this sentiment in their publication *Music, Performance and African Identities* Toyin Falola and Tyler Fleming caution against what was "wished for or remembered" as an idyllic city with endless opportunity and what was the "harsh reality" of everyday life.[88]

4.4 Jo'burg's dancing 'Jitters'

The Jitterbug Jamboree competitions referred to at the start of this chapter highlighted the dances that were danced by Johannesburg society in the new commercial dancing spaces. It was not only the international press that noticed the popularity of the jive dances, but the local media also commented on the new dance favourites. On 10 June 1939, the *Rand Daily Mail* reported on the prevalence of dances in an article entitled "JoJitterburg has 18 Jitterhannesbugs". The article noted that:

> …it is probably the altitude…. Or, perhaps the International Situation…Anyway, Jitterburg, sorry I mean Johannesburg, has eighteen supercharged Jitterbugs – nine couples who can jitter as shrewd a bug as anyone in Harlem. I saw them in action at the Plaza Theatre last night. To the "hot" music of a special dance band under Johnny Jacobs, they stamped, twisted, and performed the weirdest contortions. It was the final of the "Jitterbug Jamboree" and it provided a surprise for the audience to find in the city so many followers of the dance craze that is sweeping America. While the band crashed out "Tiger Rag" the couples worked themselves into a frenzy of energy, kicking stamping and shaking their bodies in time to the music. Some of the men lifted their women partners bodily and swung them into the air, one couple crashing headlong on the stage. It was a queer sight and the audience for the most part watch heartily. When the couples paraded after their performance there was a round of applause. The winning couple were a brother and sister, Mr. S. G. Sampson and Miss Sampson. They had blackened their faces and were dressed as coons. Their reward was 10 £. Mr. Sidersky and Miss M. Dorfman were second and Mr. B. Hunt and partner were third. There were three consolation prizes. Asked the "secret of his success" Mr. Sampson

[87] Adam [sic.], "The swing slate: A blog about Lindy Hop and Westcoast swing. Sophiatown: the revival of South Africa's 'Little Harlem'", 16 August 2017. https://theswingslate.blogspot.com/2017/08 /sophiatown-revival-of-south-africas.html, Accessed: 30 January 2023.
[88] T. Falola & T. Fleming, *Music, Performance and African Identities* (New York: Routledge, 2012), p. 193.

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> advised the audience through the microphone to "swallow a worm!"[89]

Similarly, in the film news reel the *African Mirror* a film clip featured how the Jitterbugs had invaded Johannesburg referring to: "The latest American dance craze is demonstrated in a competition organized at the Plaza Theatre, Johannesburg".[90] Like the earlier mentioned UK news clip, this newspaper article and the *African Mirror* seem to mock the Johannesburg dancers with words like "bug", "contortions", "frenzy", "weirdest" and "worms". This rather negative if not condescending perception of the dance was not unique and will be explored later in this chapter. On a positive note, the description does highlight the prevalence and popularity of the jitterbug, as it describes an audience, a designated dance competition and band, artistic feats of the dancers themselves who "swung" their partners through the air, as well as prize monies. The article also makes several references to the historical American link of the dances to Harlem and association with its African American heritage where the dances "blackened their faces and dressed as coons".[91]

Indeed, the jitterbug was introduced to Johannesburg via two distinct streams that explain both the *Rand Daily Mails* article's focuses on the American association of this dance and its scepticism (the scepticism was created by the dance masters) towards it. One stream is the direct link through imported music and dancing shows, predominantly American, and the other that of the cautious traditionalist UK dance masters. The more popular introduction of the jitterbug to the local scene was through the American styled music heard on the radio and played on the gramophone, as well as performances seen both in the cinema shows and by exhibition dancers. In Johannesburg, local listeners and spectators experienced jive directly from the American and British stage, dance halls and dance bands. As explained in chapter 3, by 1927 Johannesburg already had a well-established radio infrastructure through the African Broadcasting Company that allowed 20 000 listeners to tune in.[92] The radio featured a range of dance music alongside its regular programming, including the jive dances. One of these was the

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[89] Anon., "JoJitterburg has 18 Jitterhannesbugs", *Rand Daily Mail*, 10 June 1939, p. 12.
[90] "'Jitterbugs' invade Johannesburg", *African Mirror* no. 1362, 12 June 1939, NFA, Pretoria.
[91] Anon., "JoJitterburg has 18 Jitterhannesbugs", *Rand Daily Mail*, 10 June 1939, p. 12.
[92] Anon., "To Cater for 20 000 Listeners: Early Start of New Broadcasting Co. Theatres and jives To Be Linked Up", *Rand Daily Mail*, 28 March 1927, p. 8.

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American bandleader, singer, songwriter and actor Cab Calloway (1907-1994) who was featured on one of the local radio stations every Tuesday and Friday morning in 1939.[93] Calloway and his African American band played at the popular Cotton Club in Harlem, USA and was credited with popularizing the jitterbug signature "Zoot Suit".[94]

Some of Calloway's jitterbug hits included the songs "Minnie the Moocher"; "Jitterbug" and "Are you Hep to the Jive".[95] Another band that was also famous for their jitterbug jive and who was also featured on the local radio station included "Bennie Goodman and his orchestra".[96] Local Goodman jive dance favourites included "Why couldn't it be poor little me?" and "Love me or leave me".[97] Goodman was nicknamed the "King of Swing" by USA national magazines *Time* and *Vanity Fair* and was credited for bringing swing into national (USA) prominence through his extensive tours and regular radio broadcasts.[98] Glen Miller and his Orchestra was another American swing band that featured on the local stations. It was formed in 1938 and gained prominence in 1939 with his national USA radio show and live swing performances that were heard by millions of Americans.[99] Jazz reviewer, Scott Yanow, explained that Miller had 16 records that were number one on the charts and that 69 records were on the top 10.[100] This included the 1939 hit "In the Mood".[101] Both the *American Music Research Center* and the *Syncopated Times* noted the pivotal role that the radio played in launching and sustaining the careers of international swing dance

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93 Anon., "Vatican music- Lourenco Marques phenomenon", *Rand Daily Mail*, 14 January 1939, p. 7.
94 To be discussed later.
95 Anon., "Cab Calloway. Songs", https://www.google.com/search?q=songs+by+cab+calloway&rlz=1C1GCEA_enZA1008ZA1008&oq=songs+by+cab&aqs=chrome.1.69i57j0i512j0i22i30l8.7885j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8, Accessed: 18 April 2023.
96Anon., "Highlights from other stations: America: 11:30 Benny Goodman show", *Rand Daily Mail,* 06 July 1938, p. 15.
97 Advertisement, "New Columbia Records. Super Swing music", *Rand Daily Mail*, 19 January 1937, p. 13.
98 R. G. Giordano, *Social dancing in America: a history and reference* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2007), pp. 87-88.
99 Giordano, *Social dance in America,* 2007, p. 115.
100 S. Yanow, "Glen Miller: Profiles in Jazz", *The syncopated times: Exploring the world of hot Jazz,* 31 January 2023.
101 Fragments of "In the mood" was played by a number of African American bands before it was copyrighted by Joe Garland. Ca. O'Dell, "In the Mood"—Glenn Miller (1939)", Library of Congress. https://www.loc.gov/static/programs/national-recording-preservation board/documents/IN%20THE%20MOOD.pdf, Accessed: 24 April 2023.

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bands like Glen Miller and his Orchestra.[102] Miller was enlisted in 1942 and placed in command of the Army Air Force Band where he organized a marching military band, dance band as well as a small jazz band that was aired on the radio and credited with being "just as instrumental in the war effort as any other American industry".[103] Locally, Glen Miller's music was also broadcast in Johannesburg on the "A programme" radio in 1943, 1945, 1946 and 1947.[104]

By 1939, the radio playing jitterbug dance music became a regular feature on daytime radio. One media outlet reported how common place it was for a jitterbug to be heard on the Johannesburg radio. On one occasion British Comedian, Leslie Henson, recalled visiting a department store in Eloff Street after performing at the Empire Theatre in June 1939 for an advertising campaign. As he was admiring the many electrical appliances including, washing machines and fridges in the store, a radio started playing a jitterbug tune. "Bang went half a dozen feet and hands in perfect harmony as if the thing [the jitterbug dance] had been rehearsed a hundred times".[105]Jitterbug music playing was often advertised along with appliances and leisure activities (like dancing) associated with modern urban lifestyle in Johannesburg.

By 1941 there was a wide public call for more swing music to be played on the radio. One of Johannesburg's jive enthusiasts writing under the pen name "JITTERBUG" wrote:

> If we were given only half-an -hour of 'swing' every night it would take up a negligible portion of the programme… 'swing' fans do not ask to monopolise programmes; just a little tolerance from the 'highbrows' is all we ask. If 'swing' is not wanted why do broadcasts by Charles Berman, for instance, and the Pretoria Rhythm Boys prove so immensely popular? Let the radio give us some modern music by

[102] Anon., "Glen Miller Collections", https://www.colorado.edu/amrc/glenn-miller-collections, Accessed: 24 April 2023; S. Yanow, "Glen Miller: Profiles in Jazz", *The syncopated times: Exploring the world of hot Jazz,* 31 January 2023.
[103] Giordano, *Social dance in America,* 2007, p. 115.
[104] Anon., "Broadcasting times. Johannesburg To-day", *Rand Daily Mail*, 16 October 1943, p. 4; Anon., "Broadcasting times. Johannesburg To-day", *Rand Daily Mail*, 26 June 1945, p. 5; Anon., "Broadcasting times. Johannesburg To-day", *Rand Daily Mail*, 09 March 1946, p. 8; Anon., "Broadcasting times. Johannesburg To-day", *Rand Daily Mail*, 25 December 1947, p. 6.
[105] Anon., "Leslie Henson breezes into busy city store. Impromptu fun with electrical appliances and musical instruments", *Sunday Times*, 11 June 1939, p. 19.

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> Artie Shaw, Tommy Dorsey and that 'king of swing,' Benny Goodman for just half-an-hour at night, and we ask no more…[106]

Supporting this "Swing vs Symphony" debate another Johannesburg jitterbug supporter, S. Levin, explained:

> We, happily enough, are in an age of progress. Heavy classical music has had its hey-day, when ninety-nine per cent of the population were in favour of it. But that age is past. Antagonist of Swing music (I use no inverted commas, as swing is a world-recognized word) say that it is not true music. But it is rhythm, and rhythm music takes the stage in this world of us youth... for all the catering we get is a quarter-of-an-hour of Roy Martin every fortnight. Charles Berman once a week for half-an-hour, and a few records here and there. Why cannot we have more pieces like "Nightmare," which…we as Swing fans heartily endorse…We desire Charles Berman, Ray Martin and "Cousin Clarabelle…"[107]

Even more accessible and popular than the radio was the gramophone that, as explained in earlier chapters, became a regular feature in both white and black Johannesburg homes from the 1920s.[108] Locally, prominent South African musicians like the Merry Blackbirds and Hugh Masekela[109] who played during the 1930s and 1940s, recalled how they listened to these dancing records on gramophones. Masekela remembered how as a young boy his family played the "…treasured 78-rpm" on his wind-up gramophone whenever he came home for the holiday. They would dance the jitterbug and sing "…full-throated with the records, especially the ones by the Glen Miller Orchestra, featuring the Modernaires…".[110] *Umteteli wa Bantu* also noted how the Merry Blackbirds entertained the Coloured and Indian communities at the Lyric Bioscope (Fordsburg) in October 1944 by playing some of Glen Miller's famous pieces including "In the Mood".[111]

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[106] Anon., "Want tolerance from 'highbrows'. Listeners who ask for more 'swing'", *Rand Daily Mail*, 06 March 1941, p. 8.
[107] Anon., "'Swing' recognized the world over. Fans only want due share of it", *Rand Daily Mail*, 12 April 1941, p. 8.
[108] Green, "Similar steps, different venues: the making of segregated dancing worlds in South Africa, 1910–39", p. 88.
[109] Masekela was a South African trumpeter and music icon.
[110] H. Masekela & D. M. Cheers, *Still Grazing: The Musical Journey of Hugh Masekela*, (Auckland Park, South Africa: Jacana, 2015), p. 9.
[111] Anon., "Black Birds go out entertaining", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 28 October 1944, p. 4.

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The record company Columbia also distributed dance records on which Calloway and Goodman bands played their popular dance hits.[112] Other dance records that were also sold locally included the George Scott Wood and the Six Swingsters who recorded "The Jitterbug" and the vivacious "Jumpin' Jive" in 1941.[113] As well as "Stealin Out", "Sweet Georgia Brown"; "Back Bay Boogie" and "Sugarfoot Stomp" by Benny Goodman,[114] and "Tuxedo Junction" and "Chattanooga Choo Choo" by Glen Miller.[115]

In 1942 Walter Nhlapo reported in *The Bantu World* how local bands played the popular songs like that of that of Glen Miller and others:

> After the enjoyable concert, the jitterbug trucked in the hall, clamoured out of their seat, shagged here, there and everywhere, sang, whistled or hummed "Tuxedo Junction," "Five O'clock Whistle," "Sweet Lady Mine," "Shining," "Down Argentine Way." The two-hour-45 minutes dance was played by 2 bands instead of 4 bands which were billed: Jazz Maniacs and African Rhythmers were in attendance. Absent was Rhythm Clouds. Late was Merry Blackbirds.[116]

Another aspect of the USA inspired stream was the imported film which exposed Johannesburg society to the jive dances of the time. These films featured popular USA and UK swing bands as well as couples jiving to their sounds. Ballantine noted how, regardless of South African government constraints:

> ...movies had an impact difficult to overestimate. For jazz and vaudeville artists, films were an apparently infinite source of things to be emulated or developed: ideas, melodies, songs, routines, dance steps, styles of presentation, ways of dressing, ways of playing - and they also provided ways of estimating local achievement.[117]

One of these was the 1934 film "The 'Big Broadcast'. The film was about a love affair of a radio broadcaster and featured popular radio, dance and film stars of the time.

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[112] Advertisement, "New Columbia Records. Super Swing music", *Rand Daily Mail*, 19 January 1937, p. 13.
[113] 'Gramanola' (pseudonym), "A reviewer amongst the records", *Sunday Times*, 26 January 1941, p. 29.
[114] Gramanola, "A reviewer among the records", *Sunday Times*, 16 March 1941, p. 29; Anon., "More terrific releases. You've been waiting for these", *Rand Daily Mail*, 10 December 1947, p. 5.
[115] Advertisement, "Aubrey Cohen. Long-awaited new records", *Rand Daily Mail*, 14 April 1948.
[116] W. Nhlapo, "Spotlight on social events. Jitterbug crazes.", *The Bantu World,* 01 August 1942, p. 5.
[117] C. Ballantine, *Marabi nights. Jazz, 'race' and society in early apartheid South Africa*, (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2012), p. 26.

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Another drawcard of the film was “Cab Calloway and his Orchestra” as one of the main drawcards of the film.[118] Johannesburg theatres were filled up with dance enthusiast eager to see the new modern dance moves featured in the 1930s and 1940s. In 1934 the Colosseum theatre featured the legendary Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers in the film “Flying down to Rio”,[119] which was followed in 1935 by the film “Top Hat” where the skills of the dancing pair were again highlighted.[120] At the end of the decade in 1939 jitterbug scenes became a regular feature on the cinema circuit. The film “Going Places” featuring Dick Powell and Anita Louise performing the jitterbug to the song “Mutiny in the Nursery” was screened in the Plaza theatre in April 1939.[121] Other films that featured jitterbug dancing included: “They all kissed the bride” that was screened in 1943 and featured Allen Jenkins as a jitterbug loving truck driver in the Colosseum;[122] “The Sun Valley Serenade” and “Orchestra Wives” screened at the Twentieth Century theatre in 1942 and 1943 that featured Glen Miller and his orchestra;[123] "George Washington slept here" that was screened in the Colosseum in April 1944;[124] Laurel and Hardy's "Jitterbugs" that was featured in the Clarendon Cinema de Lux in 1944 and featured the "exponents of the real jitterbug".[125]

Ballantine interviewed members of the South African Pitch Black Follies who recalled how their band leader, Johannes Masoleng, encouraged members to attend the Hollywood shows that featured at the local film theatres:

> He liked us to go to musical shows. Ja, all musical shows. We’d go there – he’d take the cast, you know. He used to like us to go a lot to Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire’s shows. You see? To get the style of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers…[126]

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[118] Anon., “The ‘Big broadcast’. Fascinating film for radio fans”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 19 January 1934, p. 13.
[119] Advertisement, “Colosseum. Flying down to Rio”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 09 May 1934, p. 8.
[120] Anon., “Round the Christmas shows. Fine entertainments everywhere”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 23 December 1935, p. 8.
[121] Anon., “What’s on. Films and the Stars”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 17 April 1939, p. 7.
[122] Advertisement, “They all kissed the bride”, *Sunday Times*, 07 March 1943, p. 7.; Anon., “Cinema: Stage: Radio. The ubiquitous gunner”, *Sunday Times*, 14 March 1943, p. 11.
[123] Advertisement, “20th Century. Sun Valley Serenade”, *Sunday Times*, 03 May 1942, p. 15; Advertisement, “20th Century. Orchestra Wives”, *Sunday Times*, 30 May 1943, p. 8.
[124] Anon., "Film guide", *Rand Daily Mail,* 17 April 1944, p. 4.
[125] Advertisement, "Clarendon", *Rand Daily Mail,* 19 August 1944, p. 2.
[126] Ballantine, *Marabi nights*, 2012, p. 27.

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Peter Rezant from the Merry Blackbirds also recalled how excited they were to see and hear Glen Miller's band in "Sun Valley Serenade" and "Orchestra Wives".

> When this picture of Glen Miller came out, where the band played 'Chattanooga Choo-Choo', we were right on top of the mountain at the that time. Right on top! When that music came out, we played it – 'Blue Serenade' and all those serenades and so forth. But 'Chattanooga' was the big number and 'In the Mood' was big…those were the big numbers. So when the crowds would hear that, after the picture had been shown, oh, they would go mad, mad, mad, mad! The police couldn't stop them away from the doors in the places outside Johannesburg where we would go to, when they hear that sound. They, they relate the sound to the picture now.[127]

The jive dances were thus intrinsically linked to the theatre, films and recording industries. Dance music seen on film and played on the radio and the RPM records all introduced patrons to the new dancing styles. Concurrently the radio and records helped to popularized both the internal and local swing bands and turned into household names. Indeed, Ballantine noted how dance bands like the Merry Blackbirds were "…styled initially in imitation of the U.S. swing bands that were becoming known in the country through recordings and films…".[128]

Furthermore, live jitterbug dancing competitions like the Jitterbug Jamboree were also often hosted after films, making the dancing part the drawcard to the theatre houses. In his article entitled "'They'll be dancing in the aisles!': youth audiences, cinema exhibition and the mid-1930s swing boom", Tim Snelson noted that individual film houses in the USA like "Paramount's success was seen not only in its canny booking policies, but in establishing itself as a designated 'jitterbug hangout'" where it held jitterbug competitions to allow the younger crowd to dance on stage after the film show and that this ensured the success of the ticket sales".[129] Johannesburg followed a similar trend. Paramount's romantic comedy "Café Society", for example, that was

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[127] Ballantine, *Marabi nights*, 2012, pp. 27-28.
[128] C. Ballantine, "Peter Rezant: Doyen of South African Jazz-Band Leaders", *South African Music Studies*, 34(1), p. 229.
[129] T. Snelson, "'They'll be dancing in the aisles! Youth audiences, cinema exhibition and the mid-1930s swing boom", *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television,* 2017, 37(3), pp. 464, 466.

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shown at the Plaza theatre in Johannesburg, also included a jitterbug dance contest where contestants could win more than £30 in prizes.[130]

Exhibition dances were another way in which the South African community could experience the popular American commercial dances. African American dancer and choreographer, Buddy Bradley, who started his career in the US and then moved to the UK, noted in 1939 that the “musical comedy stage was undergoing a radical transformation” and that the dance performances on stage had actually split between ballet and the jitterbug.[131] This transformation was also evident on the Johannesburg dancing scene. Dance variations like the “Big Apple”, that combined a number of jive dances, was for example performed as popular exhibition dance by dancing professionals at Johannesburg dancing schools and hotels. Already in 1938 this was a feature at Miss Pat Tufnell’s studio and the Orange Grove Hotel.[132]

The second stream of the jitterbug that reached Johannesburg was through the UK dancing press, visiting dance instructors and adjudicators. These jive dances were a toned-down modified version of the USA dance that was practised in the grander British palais de danse and not necessarily that danced or preferred by the general British public. In April 1940, for example, London Ballroom master Alex Moore, sent a modified form of the jitterbug dance to Johannesburg. His version was danced as a 16-bar jitterbug sequence to the “Jitterbug Jive” by Pieter Fielding. While his prescribed sequence was undoubtedly a good introduction to the jitterbug, danced with head movements and side passes as it was recorded here, it appears to miss that breakaway dance section and allowance for improvisation which characterized the dance's unique nature.[133] Judging from the film clip of the "Jo'burg Jitters", as well as newspaper reports, the Johannesburg dancers did not readily accept the modified variations and had more individual stylistic sections of their own. It was only slightly later, when Josephine Bradley, a respected member of the Ballroom Branch of the

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[130] Advertisement, “Tonight! Jitterbug Jamboree…Café Society”, *Rand Daily Mail,* 08 June 1939, p. 16.
[131] Anon., "New vogue for in Swing for crazy dancing. 'Jitterbug' phase in ballroom and musical comedy stage", *Rand Daily Mail,* 22 May 1939, p. 7; M. Sterns & J. Sterns, *Jazz dance: the story of American vernacular dance*, (New York: Da Capo Press, 1994), pp. 160-162.
[132] E.M.B., “In the dancing world: Success of amateur tests”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 19 March 1938, p. 8; E.M.B., “First amateur ballroom tests next month”, *Rand Daily Mail,* 12 February 1938, p. 6.
[133] Anon., "Jitterbug Jive", *Rand Daily Mail*, 11 May 1940, p. 14.

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Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing from 1924 to 1947 who helped to codify dancing, approved of this dance that Johannesburg white dance commentators were more willing to accept it.[134]

As mentioned earlier, the local dance writers followed the British dancing careers and opinions closely and were strongly influenced by what influential UK dancers like Bradley said and did. The *Rand Daily* described her as the "foremost authority on ballroom dancing in the world".[135] It appears as if it was Bradley's regular visits to the colony and in-person training that would sway the white dancing critics. She was regularly invited to adjudicate and dance at South African national and local dancing events and her positive attitude towards the jitterbug appears to have swayed the lukewarm welcome that the dance initially received in the liberal press.[136] In her study entitled "'The dancing front': dance music, dancing, and the BBC in World War", Christina Baade described how Bradley loved jitterbug dancing and how she managed to adapt and introduce it to the British palais de danse as the jive in 1943 (crucially she still respected the English style).[137] Likewise, her approval of this dance was soon reported on in the Johannesburg press. "I think that…", Bradley stated to the Johannesburg press in 1942, "…the eccentric dances of today like the jitterbug and the boogie-woogie will have an effect similar to that of the eccentric dances of the past…they left something behind to be incorporated".[138] Like UK dance master Victor Silvester, Bradley also founded a strict tempo dance orchestra and she was one of the first British women to lead a band between 1920 and 1950. She produced several gramophone dancing records and while many were that of the foxtrot and quicksteps, in 1940 Polliack's and Mackays also sold records from Columbia and Regal-Zono records where

[134] Nott, *Going to the Palais*, pp. 101-102; B. Mayer, "Who was Josephine Bradley MBE?", DanceArchives, 26 March 2013, https://archives.dance/2013/03/who-was-josephine-bradley-mbe-by-brigitt-mayer-karakis/#:~:text=Josephine%20Bradley%2C%20Victor%20Silvester%20and,1893%20%E2%80%93%201985, Accessed: 02 March 2023; E.M.B., "Repercussions from national championships", *Rand Daily Mail*, 26 September 1936, p. 6.
[135] E.M.B., "Repercussions from national championships", *Rand Daily Mail*, 26 September 1936, p. 6.
[136] Pas Seul, "In the dance world: Exams and tests by Josephine Bradley", *Rand Daily Mail*, 11 October 1941, p. 8.
[137] C. Baade, "'The Dancing Front': Dance Music, Dancing, and the BBC in World War II", *Popular Music*, 25(3), October 2006, p. 361.
[138] Pas Seul, "In the dance world: Four dances are here for keeps", *Rand Daily Mail*, 24 January 1942, p. 6.

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Josephine Bradley's orchestra was advertised alongside records of the "Six Swingsters" in Johannesburg.[139] With the popularity of the jive dances escalating, Bradley formed the "Josephine Bradley and her own Jive Rhythm orchestra" that recorded with Decca Records "Torpedo Junction" in addition to her band, "Josephine and her strict dance tempo orchestra".[140] By 1949 "Josephine Bradley's orchestra with the Andrew Sisters" who sang the "The Jumpin' Jive" was aired on Johannesburg radio, thereby further endorsing approval of the jive dance.[141]

While jitterbug jiving sessions in the USA were often an exclusive jiving session, in Johannesburg (apart from the Jitterbug Jamboree competitions) jitterbug was danced especially during 1939 and the early 1940s along with the more traditional ballroom dances. Commenting on social dances in Johannesburg in 1943 *Ilanga Lasa Natal* noted:

> Johannesburg is abound with straight ballroom dancers and jitterbugs. These cliques wear off their shoes to the irresistible strains of the Merry Blackbirds, Jazz Maniacs, Rhythm Clouds and Synco Down Beats. Some of these bands have given a good account of themselves as "jive" or "swing" exponents in European clubs.[142]

Given its origins, the Johannesburg jitterbug dancers felt a close connection to their North American counterparts and regarded the American and European youth with their jitterbug dancing as the new modern global culture. "Surely, forty million Frenchmen can't be wrong", wrote an ardent Johannesburg swing supporter, "...we moderns, which according to the broadcasting referendum are in the majority, are entitled to more…".[143]

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[139] Advertisement, "Brunswick. New records by Josephine and strict dance tempo orchestra", *Sunday Times*, 09 January 1938, p. 17; Anon., "Columbia and Regal-Zono records", *Rand Daily Mail*, 27 September 1940, p. 10.
[140] Anon., "Josephine Bradley and Her Jive Rhythm Orchestra - Torpedo Junction (1943)", https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fnTnt0e6Yhw, Accessed: 28 April 2023; Gramanola, "A reviewer among the records", *Sunday Times*, 16 March 1941, p. 29.
[141] Anon., "Broadcasting times. Johannesburg To-day", *Rand Daily Mail,* 23 November 1949, p. 10.
[142] L. A. Stewart, "Black South African urban music styles: the ideological concepts and beliefs surrounding their development 1930-1960", (University of Pretoria: DPhil (Music), 2007) pp. 5-27.
[143] Anon., "'Swing' recognized the world over. Fans only want due share of it", *Rand Daily Mail*, 12 April 1941, p. 8.

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While the connection with America was undeniable, explaining the presence of the jitterbug in Johannesburg as a blatant copy or replication of the American dances would be an inaccurate simplification. Dance commentators of the late 1930s and 1940s highlighted the Johannesburg dancers' adaptation of the jive:

> I am taking the opportunity of further pointing out the acute difference between and American "Jitterbug" contest and that held in Johannesburg. In America every contestant has to remain on the floor space allotted for the "Jam", and one particular couple is given the opportunity of dancing apart from the rest of the crowd on any portion of a stage or dance floor, or directly in front of the band. Nor would contestants be permitted to blacken their faces, enter from a separate entrance, or in a way be given an advantage in the way of shinning over the other entrants. In America all couples take to the floor and stay together for the "swing" session, exactly as is done in the local ballroom.[144]

It thus appears as if in Johannesburg, dancing the jitterbug allowed for far more individualistic interpretation during the "jamming sessions".

Despite its almost immediate popularity in dancing circles, Johannesburg based dance commentators were convinced that the jitterbug was just a phase that would soon be over. They described it as a "craze", a "vogue" and a "madness", thereby highlighting their perceived notion that it would be a temporary passing.[145] Reporting about the 'jitterbugs' at the Plaza theatre the *Rand Daily Mail* stated that the:

> …'jitterbug' craze, which has been growing in Johannesburg in recent weeks, has created many enthusiasts for crazy steps of the 'Yam,' the 'Shag', the 'Big Apple' and the 'Truckin'…[146]

According to the commentators the reason for the popularity of this dance was because:

> ...[p]opular dancing usually expresses the spirit of the times, and the restless 'jitterbug' phase has come as a result of the restless days through which we are passing.[147]

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[144] Anon., "In Defence of "Jitttterbugs". Real Thing Not Seen on Rand. The True Spirit of Swing.," *Rand Daily Mail*, 15 June 1939.
[145] Anon., "'Jitterbugs' at Plaza", *Rand Daily Mail,* 24 May 1939, p. 5; Anon., "New vogue for in Swing for crazy dancing. 'Jitterbug' phase in ballroom and musical comedy stage", *Rand Daily Mail,* 22 May 1939, p. 7.
[146] Anon., "Jitterbugs at Plaza", *Rand Daily Mail*, 24 May 1939, p. 5.
[147] Anon., "New vogue for in Swing for crazy dancing. 'Jitterbug' phase in ballroom and musical comedy stage", *Rand Daily Mail,* 22 May 1939, p. 7.

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Indeed, some ascribed it to the War and explained that "dances tend to become less serious during war times".[148]

While many of commentators were convinced that the jitterbug was a temporary War time fad, it soon became clear that the jitterbug and its jive adaptation that were seen on the traditional ballroom floor, were here to stay. Furthermore, instead of curbing the jive dances, the War fuelled its popularity. Not only were bands like that of Glen Miller, who was conscripted to help the War time morale, heard and seen regularly on the local media streams, but soldiers returning from the War also brought along with them a love for the popular American and UK jive dances and all its variations.[149]

Local jitterbug champions were celebrated in the local press and served to further fuel the dances in the local halls. In 1939 a *Sunday Times* reporter interviewed the young Johannesburg jitterbug champions Lily and Simmy [sic.] Samson.[150] During the interview these two jitterbug experts explained both the importance of music in the jive, as well as the importance of improvisation that they used in the dancing session. The article further noted that Simmy worked in a gold mine in Johannesburg.[151] Likewise, *The Bantu World* and *Umteteli wa Bantu* reported on talented jive dancers that entertained the locals at social dancing events. This included the "Jitterbug Aces... Blackie and Partner" who demonstrated dance variations including the "Susie Q," the “Wiggle Wiggle” and the “Big Apple” at a social dancing competition in 1944.[152]

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[148] B.B.F. "In the dance world. Brilliant pageant for the mask ball. Much prized trophies at stake", *Rand Daily Mail*, 11 May 1940, p. 14.
[149] Anon., “Broadcasting times. Johannesburg To-day”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 16 October 1943, p. 4; Anon., “Broadcasting times. Johannesburg To-day”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 26 June 1945, p. 5; Anon., “Broadcasting times. Johannesburg To-day”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 09 March 1946, p. 8; Anon., “Broadcasting times. Johannesburg To-day”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 25 December 1947, p. 6; Anon., “Ties to rival red tape. Pretoria males goes gay”, *Sunday Times,* 13 January 1946, p. 13.
[150] Anon., "Jitterbug champions try to tell me all about it but I still don't know", *Sunday Times,* 11 June 1939, p. 14.
[151] Anon., "Jitterbug champions try to tell me all about it but I still don't know", *Sunday Times,* 11 June 1939, p. 14.
[152] Anon., "Bloemfontein dancing association opened”, *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 10 June 1944, p. 4.

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Typically, the jiving session started after the initial traditional ballroom session of the evening and the jitterbug would take over the late night and early morning hours. Edward Selelo, a member of the band the Jazz Maniacs, who formed the Savoy Havanans in 1940, recalled during an interview with the *Rand Daily Mail* "…those were the days of the jive and jitterbug, when the music at weekends would play from 7pm to 4am".[153]

Jiving became increasing popular as the decade progressed and by 1949 the media linked it to a cult with a dedicated public following. The press noted that the:

> …city's 'hepcats' streamed to the theatre [Plaza Theatre] from office, shop and warehouse, gladly foregoing their lunch for a performance of works which are as much food and drink to them as Bach, Beethoven or Mozart are to the lover of classical music.[154]

4.5 Jitterbug fashion

The influence that the jive dances had was also visible in the fashion of the day. With its colourful fabric and specially adapted fit to allow freedom of movement it was easy to identify the local jiving fans. Selelo for example recalled how:

> Those were days when the girls wore wide, flaring skirts and flat shoes to the townships' dance hall. The in-thing was to swing your girlfriend on the dance floor until her skirt billowed, showing a finely trimmed leg, as you danced to the Jazz Maniacs.[155]

The public were even encouraged to copy the dress of jive champions to be successful in their dancing attempts. The *Rand Daily Mail* reported that at a "hepcat" (a 1940's jazz term referring to a person that knows about the latest fashion) dancing session, Johannesburg "jive kids" kicked off their high heels and danced in their nylon to a jive jam session. At this session was South Africa's junior jitterbug champion Marjorie Segal.[156] The *Sunday Times* also highlighted the dancing skills and the importance of the clothes that Segal wore. At a social event held in 1949 the paper explains that:

[153] Anon., "Bouncy Era of the Jitterbug Beat," *Rand Daily Mail*, 20 February 1981, p. 13.
[154] Anon., "Hepcats Jive at Hot Club's Jam ("It must be Jelly") session", *Rand Daily Mail*, 18 January 1949, p. 7.
[155] Anon., "Bouncy Era of the Jitterbug Beat," *Rand Daily Mail*, 20 February 1981.
[156] Anon., "'Hepcats' jive to assist charity", *Sunday Times*, 13 February 1949, p. 12.

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> …dressed in everything from the latest 'look' in evening frocks to the approved costume of bobbysoxers[157]…although most of the males were suitably dressed for the occasion in knee-length jackets, highly decorated silk shirts, and rather pinched ankle-length slacks, many of the women did not seem to have the right idea. If it would helped them at a future session this is what the young Marjorie Segal wore: "White shoes, red socks, a short flared green skirt, a yellow blouse and a flowing red ribbon in her hair. But what is much more to the point, Marjorie can really jive".[158]

The Zoot suits, that became synonymous with the jiving American youth also became part of the Johannesburg leisure scene. The Zoot suit was synonymous with dance clubs and ghetto lifestyle of the Harlem night clubs and became the signature of the Second World War. It consisted of knee length jackets with exaggerated shoulders and pants with pleats that flowed out at the knees and were tapered down and narrowed at the ankles to allow free movement when dancing the jitterbug. Along with the outfit, the youth also wore a:

> …porkpie or wide-brimmed hat; pointed or thick-soled shoes, and a long danglin keychain…the zoot suit was associated with racial and ethnic minorities and working-class youth, celebrated in the world of jitterbug, jive and swing, and condemned by government authorities seeking to conserve precious textiles for the war effort.[159]

Groups from the Rand adjusted the fashion to make it even more elaborate. In 1943 the press noted how this was done.

> Variations of the Bantu "zoot suit," so popular on the Rand, have made their appearance lately among the Beau Brummels[160] of the locations. Long square-shouldered padded coats, reaching to the knees and often tailored in material of leopard skin colouring and marking have become an essential feature of the wardrobes of those seeking the heights of sartorial elegance. This season's fashion change in the "zoot" suit comprises a large "V" on the back,

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[157] A "bobby soxer" was a slang term referring to what was an American subculture of young teenage females who wore bobby socks with their loafers or saddle shoes. R. Sickels, *The 1940s, American Popular Culture through History*, (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2004), p. 36.
[158] Anon., "'Hepcats' jive to assist charity", *Sunday Times*, 13 February 1949, p. 12
[159] K. Peiss, *Zoot Suit. The Enigmatic Career of an Extreme Style*, (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), p. 2; Anon., "'Zoot suits' riots in Los Angeles", *Rand Daily Mail*, 11 June 1943, p. 1.
[160] A "beau brummel" is a slang reference referring to an extremely dandy or fashionable person.

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> extending from the shoulders to the hem. It is being increasingly worn by the gallants of the East Rand.[161]

By 1946 the *Sunday Times* reported that even in the more conservative, white, circles local manufacturers experienced a demand for the colourful zoot tie.[162] The tie had "…hand-painted pin-up girls on them, or colourful landscapes or in stripes and hues that would make a rainbow grow pale with envy".[163] According to this article, general stores have not yet included the zoot suit proper for their civil servant customers because of bureaucracy. It noted that the zoot suit with its "dazzling blaze of colour might have a demoralising effect on controls, regulations and red tape".[164] Outfitters were however expecting big consignments of American goods and planned to copy the dancing outfit because of the increased demand. The article further reported that the:

> …principal propagators of the new creed are ex-soldiers who, in severe reaction from the great monotonous uniforms they have worn for so long, are making up for all the colour they have missed during the war... [165]

By 1947 the illustrious zoot suit also found its place in the South African Dancing Championships held in Johannesburg City Hall. The commentator noted that "…the best fun of the evening was the jiving…one of the lads wore a rather jolly zoot suit which caught the eye…".[166]

The fashion not only symbolized the new dances, but also influenced the confidence level of its wearers. The Zoot suit mainly became synonymous with the urban youth that fought to find a new place in society after the Second World War.

> The Native servant's "day off" is a revelation. To-day's "nanny" casts off her apron and, dressed smartly down to sheer stockings and high-heeled shoes, saunters out with new-found confidence. The garden and kitchen boy undergo a startling transformation when

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[161] Anon., "Very suitable", *Sunday Times*, 01 August 1943, p. 10.
[162] Anon., "Ties to rival red tape. Pretoria males goes gay", *Sunday Times,* 13 January 1946, p. 13.
[163] Anon., "Woman's diary. Dear Father Christmas', *Sunday Times*, 24 December 1950, p. 18.
[164] Anon., "Ties to rival red tape. Pretoria males goes gay", *Sunday Times,* 13 January 1946, p. 13.
[165] Anon., "Ties to rival red tape. Pretoria males goes gay", *Sunday Times,* 13 January 1946, p. 13.
[166] Anon., "Champions of jive and strict tempo", *Sunday Times*, 01 June 1947, p. 15.

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> they put aside their uniform for an American-type "zoot" suit, bright tie, suede shoes and sombrero-type hat.[167]

In a sense this dress code or attire transformation reflected on the "liberalizing" space dance opened up for the people of so-called colour. Undeniably, the jitterbug and its distinctive clothing became a symbol of the new social groups being formed in this time, however this association was not always positive. In her 2011 study on the assimilation of the Zoot suit into urban communities, Kathy Peiss links the clothing and the dances to "gangsterism" in Johannesburg. She highlights the popularity of the American gangster films *Stormy Weather* and *Cabin in the Sky* where actors danced the jitterbug in their Zoot suits. She further states that the word "tsotsi", popularly used in SA when referring to a thief, might derive from the zoot suits 'ho tsotsa' meaning "to sharpen" referring to the pants that were worn at these dances and refers to "looking to narrow sharply" or to "dress flashily sharp".[168] Some agreed with this association with criminality. In a contemporary news report of 1948, the press warned women against the:

> …half-grown Natives, usually the 'Zoot-suit' type, working in gangs of twos, threes and fours shadowing women until they get into a crowd, then loosening the zips of handbags and helping themselves.[169]

Not all contemporary commentators however agreed with the negative association with the Zoot suit and its dancers. In 1950 a journalist writing under the pen name "Zonkitot" noted that "tsotsi" was simply the local way to pronounce the jitterbug outfit. The writer suggests that the word "tsotsi" was an example of onomatopoeia where the word mimicked the sound the clothes made when dancing the jive. He stated:

> The word "tsotsi" is derived from "zoot-suit". Natives are inclined to change English words to suit their tongue. "tsotsi" is not the Bantu word for "loafer," nor for "trousers" as alleged in the Press".[170]

[167] S. Mirwis, "The shifting army of servants. Where is that 'good old nannie' now?", *Rand Daily Mail*, 22 October 1954, p. 8.
[168] Peiss, *Zoot Suit*, 2011, pp. 163-64.
[169] Anon., "A warning to women. Artful dodgers at work on city streets", *Rand Daily Mail,* 14 May 1948, p. 10.
[170] Zonkitot, "Meaning of 'tsotsi'", *Rand Daily Mail*, 14 July 1950, p. 10.

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Later social commentary indicated that while there was no doubt that the extravagant zoot suit was worn by some of the delinquent youth, it was also a part of the new language formation and new urban social status and mindset being formed during this era. Derrick Thema explains in his recollection of Sophiatown *Kortboy: A Sophiatown Legend* that conventional wisdom has it that the origin of "tsotsi" was a "Sotho corruption of 'zoot suit'….narrow stove-pipe trousers…worn by slick black folk who considered themselves hip."[171] Importantly, Masekela also noted that this influence of the American dance, music legends and fashion not only influenced the way people dressed in the townships in the Witwatersrand "…but were the role models for what is today the urban township social life-style".[172] Thus even the fashion of dance had an impact on societal views, be they positive or negative. As is evident, within this segregation and apartheid era, South Africa's social dance vocabulary also developed a unique duality also reflecting the emerging racist undertones.

4.6 Conclusion

Within twenty years of its first palais de danse being built, Johannesburg saw a radical transformation in its social dancing scene. By the end of the 1940s Johannesburg both had a steadfast formal ballroom body, as well as a growing commercial social dancing sector in its white, black and coloured communities. Commercial social dancing was made popular through the radio, films, gramophone records, exhibition dancers and fashion that reached the Witwatersrand via the UK and the USA. The Johannesburg dancers, entrepreneurs and influencers managed to adapt the dances, dance venues, music and fashion to fit into their everyday lives. This assimilation and adaptation not only ensured the longevity of the dances, but also helped to create a new urban society that chose what they would dance, how they would dance, when they would dance and what they would wear to the dances. This was in stark contrast to the traditionalist patriarchal pre-First World War society. While the popularity of the jive dances was undeniable, it was also met with a range of restrictions and regulations both on governmental and societal level. The next chapter will discuss what restrictions were but

[171] D. Thema, *Kortboy: A Sophiatown Legend*¸ (Cape town, Kwela books, 1999), p. 98; Anon., "The way to Soweto. Part 2. The gangs", *Sunday Times*, 19 September 2004, p. 12.
[172] H. Masekela "A history of Jazz. The beat of the bordellos" in *Two Tone. South Africa's first Jazz Magazine*, n.d. (circa 1991/1992), p. 5.

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in place, why society and the State felt it was necessary to regulate social dancing and how the social dance fraternity overcame adversity and managed to continue with their dances, despite the radical and racial divide.

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Chapter 5: Restricted, restrained and resisted, 1920s to 1950s

5.1 Introduction

When a visiting Russian choir arrived in Johannesburg in 1936, they wanted to know:

> 'What…do people do here on a Sunday?' 'Nothing', they were told. 'No theatre open? No shops, no dance halls?' 'All closed'. 'All closed.' They commented in four languages. 'What a sad country!'[1]

Sunday restriction on social dancing was not the only measurement taken by governmental authorities to control leisure activities. Indeed, by the early 1930s, just as the jive dances were becoming more popular, a plethora of restrictions and controls were implemented by authorities that both directly and indirectly impacted on dancing. The restrictions were based on moral perceptions of leisure as commented on by the Russian choir in the above quote, but were also linked to societal, economic and political control. These latter national and municipal constraints stood in sharp contrast to the capitalistic Johannesburg society that was rapidly expanding and adopting Western media, products, and views. This chapter will focus on how social dancing was controlled both on governmental levels and from within society, and how the dancing fraternity managed to resist this.

5.2 Statutory dance restrictions

National legislation had a direct impact on the movement, place, and space of the South African population and as such impacted local social dancing events. As referred to in Chapter 3, the Natives in Urban Areas Act, Act 21 of 1923 (amended in 1927, 1930 and 1937)[2] and the Natives Law Amendment Act of 1937, criminalised contact between races, regulated movement and confined the living and entertainment space of many South Africans in designated urban areas.[3]

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[1] Anon., "Don Cossacks think S.A. a good country to get married in. But Sunday – What a sad lot of people", *Rand Daily Mail,* 03 February 1936, p. 11.
[2] "Act No. 25 of 1930: Natives in (Urban Areas) Act", *Statutes of the Union of South Africa* 1930, (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1930), pp. 178-201.
[3] R. Davenport, "African Townsmen? South African Natives (Urban Areas) Legislation through the Years", *African Affairs*, 68(271), April 1969, pp. 95-109; N. J. Xaba, "A Comparative Study of Afrikaner Economic Empowerment and Black Economic Empowerment: A Case Study of a former South African Parastatal in Vanderbijlpark", (University of Stellenbosch, DPhil, 2020), pp. 91-96; A. Plant, "The Reports of the South African Economic and Wage Commission (1925)",

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One of the most notorious implementations of these laws was the pass system. From 1923 black workers coming to Johannesburg had six days to find work on a workers permit and then had to register under the Natives in Urban Areas Act of 1923.[4] This required them to carry a service contract, proving that they had a legitimate reason (e.g. work) to be in the city.[5] This system allowed any municipal or police officer to question and bring black workers without a pass to court where the magistrate quickly deported them. Taking the Urban Areas Act even further, the Johannesburg town council introduced a night curfew in 1924, restricting the movement of African men between 10:00 pm and 4:00 am. In 1925 this was also extended to African women.[6] Only black workers who had a night pass were exempt from this curfew. If caught after curfew hours at events like social dances, fines were issued, and offenders could be jailed.[7] Dancers and musicians of the time recalled how the night pass especially affected social dancing. Ernest Mochumi, pianist, and trumpeter of the dance band the Jazz Maniacs, explained that:

> We couldn't help breaking the law because we knew that once the police find us we were all arrested. But we could not stop it. They used to sometimes come to the halls and stop the dance and ask for night pass. Then those who got the night pass are safe, those who got no night pass are all arrested. The following day they just pay half-a-crown, sometimes five bob (in fines). [8]

The Economic Journal, 36(144), December 1926, pp. 669-680; L. Maqutu, “The Management of African Workers' Wages at South African Mines: Law and Policy Before 1948”, *Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal*, 25(1), 2022, p. 114.

[4] “Act no. 21 of 1923. Natives (Urban Areas) Act”, *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 1326, 01 June 1945, pp. iii-xxiv.

[5] “Act No. 25 of 1930: Natives in (Urban Areas) Act”, *Statutes of the Union of South Africa* 1930, p. 186; E. Koch, “Doornfontein and its African Working class, 1914 to 1935: A study of popular culture in Johannesburg”, (University of the Witwatersrand, MA thesis, 1983), p. 108; Davenport, “African Townsmen?”, April 1969, pp. 95-109.

[6] Koch, “Doornfontein and its African Working class”, 1983, p. 108; C. J. Ballantine, *Marabi nights: jazz, 'race' and society in early apartheid South African*, (Scottsville, South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2012), p. 91.

[7] Koch, “Doornfontein and its African Working class”, 1983, p. 108; One of the *Drum* journalists were jailed for five days in the Central Johannesburg prison when he was caught during curfew hours without a night pass in January 1954. His ordeal was captured in an article entitled: Anon., “Mr. Drum goes to jail”, *Drum*, March 1954, p. 11.

[8] Koch, “Doornfontein and its African Working class…”, 1983; Ballantine, *Marabi nights*, 2012, p. 91.

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Passes were issued at the end of each event. This created a “log-jam” at the end of the evening to get a pass from officials.[9] During his visit in 1937 African-American Ralph Bunche described how the communities organised all night social events (from 08:30 pm to 04:30 am) to avoid the curfew hours. He also highlighted the everyday logistical challenges the dancing community faced. The:

> …entertainers and the bandsmen, crowd around the secretary’s counter after the function asking for ‘special passes’ so they can get home safely. Lithebe writes the passes out for: ‘Willie’, ‘Lucy’, ‘May’, ‘George’…[10]

Bunche further commented on how the cost of the hiring of the halls increased if the dance was within the curfew hours. At a visit to Orlando, he recalled:

> Pitch darkness as we drove through dirt streets with lights off. The natives pay dearly for their amusement-2/6 for this ‘concert and dance’ tonight. The people giving the affair have to pay £3/15 (the manager says £5), for five piece band, and £2/10 for the hall (the hall rents for £2/10 up to midnight and £5 till 4 o’clock)…[11]

Adding to the control measures and administration of the running of the halls, owners of Black and Coloured halls were required to ask permission from the License Officer especially when other races were attending social dancing events. Local by-laws for example prevented white females from attending “native places of amusement”.[12] In a 1936 letter from the “License Officer”, Jack Phillips, owner of the Inchcape Palais de Dance was notified that he was allowed to hold a performance at his dancing hall on the condition that “no white females be employed” thereby limiting the European attendance and funds coming into the hall.[13]

Other acts that impacted greatly on running of the city’s entertainment industry was the Cinematograph Film Ordinance Act, Act no. 21 of 1917 (that established a Board of Inspectors in Cape Town) and the Entertainments (Censorship) Act, Act 28 of 1931 (that established a National Board of Censors).[14] These acts set out to:

[9] Ballantine, *Marabi nights*, 2012, p. 91.
[10] R. J. Bunche, *An African American in South Africa: the travel notes of Ralph J. Bunche, 28 September 1937-1 January 1938*, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992), p. 212.
[11] Bunche, *An African American in South Africa*, 1992, p. 212.
[12] Bunche, *An African American in South Africa,* 1992, p. 181.
[13] Bunche, *An African American in South Africa*, 1992, p. 181.
[14] “Government notice no. 160 of 1917. Cinematograph Film ordinance Act, Act no. 21 of 1917”, *Government* Gazette, no. 521, 22 August 1917, Cape of Good Hope province; “Act No. 28 of 1931, Entertainments (Censorship) Act”, *Statutes of the Union of South Africa* 1931, (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1931), p. 132.

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> …regulate and control the public exhibition and advertisement of cinematograph films and of pictures and the performance of public entertainments.[15]

These acts were explicit regarding what could and could not be shown in the theatres. It prohibited amongst others "…excessively passionate love scenes, nude figures, improper improvisation of the King...".[16] The national board of censors further had to ensure that films did not "...prejudicially affect the safety of the State, or is calculated to disturb peace or good order, or prejudice the general welfare or be offensive to decency".[17] The vetting process was extensive. In 1926 for example, the Board of Inspectors reviewed the film "Her dancing partner" and approved the film with the condition that certain parts and subtitles be removed. This included the

> …scene from where the man takes a servant girl's coat off... (as well as) the scene showing Hamilton kissing Lucille on the sofa and embracing her…(and) …the subtitle containing the words 'It's unthinkable she could never be unfaithful to him'…[18]

While the Acts' detailed prohibition list regarding what was allowed on films and in literature left no room for ambiguity, it was vague on the place or definition of "public entertainments".[19] It simply prohibited any public entertainment that is offensive to religious convictions or "feelings of any section of the public" or is contrary to the "public interest or good morals".[20] Given its nature, the dancing venue was generally accepted to be a place of "public entertainment". In practise this meant that under the Entertainments Censorship Act, "members of the police" could patrol dance functions at any time.[21] In her sociological study on the Rooiyard "urban native slum", Ellen

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[15] "Act No. 28 of 1931, Entertainments (Censorship) Act", *Statutes of the Union of South Africa*, (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1931), p. 132.
[16] "Government notice no. 160 of 1917. Cinematograph Film ordinance Act, Act no. 21 of 1917", *Government* Gazette, no. 521, 22 August 1917, Cape of Good Hope province.
[17] "Act No. 28 of 1931, Entertainments (Censorship) Act", *Statutes of the Union of South Africa*, (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1931), p. 136.
[18] "S.S.3. of the Cinematograph Film Ordinance, no 21 – 1917. Her dancing partner, 11 September 1926", PAS 3/62, P5/38/623, Kaapse Argief Bewaarplek (KAB), 1926.
[19] "Act No. 28 of 1931, Entertainments (Censorship) Act", *Statutes of the Union of South Africa*, (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1931), p. 139.
[20] "Act No. 28 of 1931, Entertainments (Censorship) Act", *Statutes of the Union of South Africa*, (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1931), p. 139.
[21] "Act No. 28 of 1931, Entertainments (Censorship) Act", *Statutes of the Union of South Africa*, (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1931), p. 139; A. M. Green, "Dancing in borrowed shoes: a history of ballroom dancing in South Africa (1600s-1940s)", (University of Pretoria, Master's thesis, 2008), pp. 51-52.

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Hellman described the sudden impact that the Censorship Act had on social dancing, stating that:

> …before the ban on organising parties, dances and concerts was enforced, a number of men and women found their entertainment in attending these functions on Saturday nights and Sundays...[22]

Another Act relating to scrutiny of dance related commodities was the Customs Management Act 9 of 1913. This Act replaced the numerous colonial statutes on border control duties after Unification in 1910.[23] Under the Customs Management Act and its amendments (including the Customs Tariff Amendment Act 36 of 1925, Customs Tariff Amendment Act 18 of 1940, Customs Act 35 of 1944 and the Customs Act 55 of 1955) goods including literature and films could be prohibited to be imported or sold in the Union if it was regarded as “indecent”.[24] As argued by Ellison Kahn, the use of the word “indecent” was often used alongside the word “objectionable” and “morally questionable”.[25] Thus, apart from the defined restrictions in the Act like that of “nudity” and “portrayal of nightlife” members of the censorship board had the power to decide what was appropriate for society.[26] Dancing material that was restricted under this Act included issues of the *Jitterbug* dance magazine because of the American magazine’s “objectionable literature” discussing crime and sex in 1935;[27] the *Jive* dance magazine

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[22] E. Hellmann, *Rooiyard. A sociological survey of an urban slum yard* (Northern Rhodesia: The Rhodes-Livingston Institute, 1948), p. 157.
[23] L. Mills, “Stop the Press: Why Censorship Has Made Headline News (Again)”, *Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal*, 1(2007), p. 5.
[24] “Act no 9 of 1913. Act to provide for the management of customs of the Union of South Africa”, *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette Extraordinary*, no. 361, 05 May 1913, pp. ii-xxix; “Government notice no. 1510, Customs Act, 1955, Objectionable literature”, *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 5730, 17 August 1956, p. 13; “Government notice no. 1355, Customs tariff Amendment Act, 1939, Objectionable literature”, *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 2677, 08 September 1939, p. 20; “Government notice no. 1510, Customs Act, 1955, Objectionable literature”, *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 2227, Act 36 of 1925, 12 October 1934, p. 68; “Custom Tariff Amendment Act 18 of 1940, *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 2765, 14 May 1940, p. lxxxiv.
[25] E. Kahn, "When the Lion Feeds - and the Censor Pounces: A Disquisition on the Banning of Immoral Publications in South Africa," *South African Law Journal*, 83(3), August 1966, pp. 278-336
[26] “Act no 9 of 1913. Act to provide for the management of customs of the Union of South Africa”, *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette* Extraordinary, no. 361, 05 May 1913, pp. ii-xxix; “Government notice no. 1510, Customs Act, 1955, Objectionable literature”, *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 5730, 17 August 1956, p. 13; “Government notice no. 1355, Customs tariff Amendment Act, 1939, Objectionable literature”, *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 2677, 08 September 1939, p. 20.
[27] “Government notice no. 1355, Customs tariff Amendment Act, 1939, Objectionable literature”, *The Union of South Africa* Government *Gazette*, no. 2677, 08 September 1939, p. 20; “Crime & Sex ‘literature’ banned”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 26 August 1939, p. 14.

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in 1956 which portrayed half nude females;[28] and pictures by Philip Gotlop entitled "A Dancing Darling" in 1952 that also portrayed half nude figures.[29]

Fines for selling, importing, distributing, or exhibiting these goods was punishable with a 50 to 200 pound fine or between 3- and 12-months imprisonment.[30]

The Customs Tariff Act and its various amendments also hampered the dance floor by specifically targeting dancing commodities like dancing shoes. In 1934 and 1937 for example, imported dancing shoes were charged an additional five per cent of the value of the shoes on top of the regular duty fees under the Exports Subsidies Act, Act no. 49 of 1931.[31] In 1940 and 1947 under the Customs Tariff Amendment Act, Act No. 18 of 1940, additional customs fees on dancing shoes increased to twelve percent of its value.[32] By 1955 import tariffs on dancing shoes had risen to 30% of the value on the shoes.[33] Under the War Measures Acts prices on certain goods like coffee were capped at 2 s. 5 ¼ d per pound, dance related commodities like a popular perfume named "On with the dance" was also capped at 3*s* 2d per ¼ ounce.[34] The strict enforcement of the Custom Tariff Acts and the Entertainment Censorship Acts against dancing shows how government tried to have total control over all facets of daily life. Furthermore, it is plausible to contend that the heightened strictness in implementing these economic regulations reflected on the evolving commercial nature of social dancing from the late

[28] "Government notice no. 1510, Customs Act, 1955, Objectionable literature", *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 5730, 17 August 1956, p. 13.
[29] "Government notice no. 1961, Customs Act, 1944, Objectionable literature", *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 4916, 29 August 1952, p. 14.
[30] "Government notice no. 1355, Customs tariff Amendment Act, 1939, Objectionable literature", *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 2677, 08 September 1939, p. 20; "Government notice no. 1961, Customs Act, 1944, Objectionable literature", *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 4916, 29 August 1952, p. 14.
[31] "Act 49 of 1931, Exports Subsidies Act", *The Union of South Africa Government* Gazette, no. 1990, 30 November 1931, p. iv; "Government notice no. 1456 of 1934", *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 2227, 12 October 1934, p. 68; "Government notice no. 1993 of 1937", *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 2490, 24 December 1937, p. 10.
[32] "Act 18 of 1940, Customs Tariff Amendment Act", *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 2765, 21 May 1940, pp. ii-iv; "Government notice no. 2421 of 1947", *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 2765, 21 May 1940, p. lxxxiv**;** "Government notice no. 1993 of 1940", *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 3896, 18 November 1947, p. 14**.**
[33] "Government notice no. 1381 of 1955", *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 5513, 08 July 1955, p. 184.
[34] "Government notice no. 762 of 1945", *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 3482, 04 May 1945, p. ii**.**

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1920s onwards. Indeed, social dancing transitioned from a sporadic leisure activity of the preceding decade to a sustainable commercial activity in the cities, making it a lucrative taxable commodity.

While these laws made the running of dancing businesses difficult, it did not stunt the growth of social dancing or completely prevent contact with other races in the social dancing setting. Intercultural exchanges between, black, white and coloured dancers and musicians occurred at fundraisers, public halls and at some dancing competitions at clubs. At fund raising events, like the Spring Fair held in Turffontein for the "Southern Suburbs War Funds" in aid of the "SA gifts and comforts SA red cross and Merchant Nay Funds", the organisers invited Johannesburgers to "dance in the open…to the band of the Merry Black Birds".[35] For example Peter Rezant, doyen of SA jazz, recalls how the Merry Blackbirds played for white and mixed audiences especially at fundraising events.[36] White officials also adjudicated black ballroom dancing competitions. The *Bantu World* reported that the Doreen Fowles, an accomplished local ballroom dancing teacher, adjudicated during a "mecca dancing event" at the Inchcape Hall in February 1936.[37]

Black dance bands, like the Merry Blackbirds also played at some white Johannesburg dance clubs, albeit "unofficially".[38] Rezant recalled how at a night club in Nortcliff the manager would let the white band play first (for about an hour) and then his band would follow until the end of the night. Rezant and his band played social dancing hits like Glen Miller's Chattanooga Choo Choo', 'In the Mood', his big band vibrant dance music being the attraction. Rezant also recalls that they were paid far less money than the white bands.[39] While the dancing patrons welcomed the band, the members of the white dance union were unhappy about sharing the stage with their black counterparts.[40]

[35] Advertisement, "Southern Suburbs War Fund", *Rand Daily Mail*, 02 October 1942, p. 4.
[36] C. Ballantine, "Peter Rezant: Doyen of South African Jazz-Band Leaders," *SAMUS: South African Music Studies,* 34(35), 2016, p. 242.
[37] Anon., "Miss D. Fowles present prizes. Competition dance held at the famous Inchcape Hall", *The Bantu World*, 24 February 1934, p. 3.
[38] Coplan, *In township tonight,* 2007, p. 200.
[39] Ballantine, "Peter Rezant…", 2016, p. 243.
[40] Coplan, *In township tonight,* 2007, p. 200.

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Rezant however also remembers how the white dance band union used the police and legislation to force them out of some of these venues:

> They got to the police and told them that they’re objecting to blacks playing at places where liquor is being served – licenced places, white spots, and so forth. They suggested to the police that when the licence for the venue is due, they must oppose it. So that is how they got us out. And when the National Party government came in 1948, that was the last nail in the coffin…[41]

In this quote Rezant underlines the fact that the Apartheid government's election in 1948 marked the end of interracial performance engagement. However, Coplan traces the loss of racial interaction back earlier to the 1945 amendment to the Urban Areas Act, the Native Urban Areas Consolidation Act no 25 of 1945.[42] He explained that the changes tightened influx control, making it more difficult for artists to travel and attend social dance events. Furthermore, under this Act professional performance was not considered profitable employment without white supervision, and artists financially suffered because of these severe regulations.[43]

Beyond the restrictions placed on dancing by the Union government, the provincial government newspapers recorded the logistical restrictions on the nature of running a dancing school, commercial dancing halls or social dancing events. Records in the *Government Gazette* detailed for example at what time and where dances could be held. Open-air dancing after 10:00 pm was for instance not permitted by “natives”.[44]

The *Government Gazette* further meticulously documented various facets of Johannesburg's dynamic dancing landscape, offering insights into the city's entertainment and leisure sector. The records cover a multifaceted narrative, delving into the registration and transformations of small business ownerships within numerous dancing schools, guided by the Registration of Businesses Act, Act no. 36 of 1909, and

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[41] Ballantine, "Peter Rezant…", 2016, p. 244.
[42] “Act 25 of 1945, Natives (Urban Areas), Consolidation Act, 1945, *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 3501, 01 June 1945, pp. xxvi-lxxxvii.
[43] Coplan, *In township tonight,* 2007, p. 201.
[44] “Government notice no. 976 of 1922”, *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 1274, 10 November 1922, p. 236.

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the Companies Registration Act, Act no. 46 of 1926.[45] Among the noteworthy cases were the transition of "Elsie Reed's School of Ballroom Dancing" to Salome Blyth in 1930;[46] the shifting dynamics of "The Marian Grigson School of Dancing" marked by a partner's retirement in 1931;[47] and the transformation of "Scott-Williams School of Dancing" into sole proprietorship under Ella Scott's stewardship in 1936.[48] Similarly, "Dorothy Morgentaal School of Dancing" saw Morgentaal assume sole ownership in 1946;[49] while "Daphne Tilley School of Dancing" witnessed the retirement of partner Doreen Brebner in 1949.[50] Additionally, "Thelma Cripps School of Dancing" changed hands, transferring to Gloria Mary Blanche Locke in 1951;[51] with further registrations such as "Frankie Mantz, School of Dancing" in Eloff Street in 1954;[52] "American Dancing Schools" in Commissioner Street in 1954, and the establishment of "McCallum Dancing Schools" in Springs.[53] These ownership registrations and transfers indicate how prevalent the social dancing world was.

The *Government Gazette* also meticulously recorded the registration of commercial dancing halls, revealing a vibrant dancing scene in Johannesburg. By 1920, at least 15 registered dance halls, often run as a “tearoom and dancing hall” or “beer and dancing hall”, were part of the city's cultural and entertainment scene. These included landmarks like "Joel, F. Dancing Hall" in Doornfontein registered in 1913;[54] "Odgers

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[45] “Government notice no. 283 of 1912. Registration of Businesses Act, Act no. 36 of 1909”, *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 202, 16 February 1912, p. 1133; “Government notice no. 1712 of 1926. Companies Registration Act, Act no. 46 of 1926”, *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 1581, 24 September 1926, p. 627.
[46] “Advertisement: Elsie Reed's School of Ballroom Dancing”, *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 1882, 20 June 1930, p. xvii.
[47] “Advertisement: Marian Grigson School of Dancing”, *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 1986, 13 November 1931, p. xvii.
[48] “Advertisement: Scott-Williams School of Dancing”, *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 2402, 31 December 1936, p. xvii.
[49] “Advertisement: Dorothy Morgentaal School of Dancing”, *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 2623, 29 March 1946, p. 10.
[50] “Advertisement: Daphne Tilley School of Dancing”, *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 4153, 29 April 1949, p. 2.
[51] “Advertisement: Thelma Cripps School of Dancing”, *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 5688, 07 September 1951, p. 60.
[52] “Advertisement: Frankie Mantz, School of Dancing”, *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 5355, 15 October 1954, p. 45.
[53] “Advertisement: McCallum Dancing Schools”, *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 5573, 04 November 1955, p. 45.
[54] “Government notice no. 396 of 1913”, *The Union of South Africa Government* Gazette, no. 2227, 25 July 1913, p. 587.

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Polly Dancing Hall" in Alexandria in 1914;[55] and "J. Broomberg's La Rochelle Beer and Dancing Hall" registered in 1917.[56]

Chapter 4 delved deeper into the nature of the commercial dancing landscape by discussing the emergence of significant commercial dance halls like the Inchcape, Loveday, and Astoria between 1921 and 1932. Further perusing the *Government Gazette* uncovers additional dance hall registrations divided along racial lines, such as Paul Lesengego Molimogale's Dance Hall in Fordsburg in 1922;[57] T. Roux's Central Dancing Hall in Newlands in 1924;[58] I. Makan's "Star and Garter Dancing Hall a Public Hall for Natives" in Sophiatown in 1927;[59] T. Dunye's "Patida Bioscope and Dancing Hall for Coloured Persons" in Burghersdorp in 1928;[60] and H. Nomis's Grand Palais de Danse in Fordsburg in 1932.[61]

Additionally, the *Government Gazette* offered glimpses into the personal lives of dancing teachers,[62] chronicling accounts of naturalization requests, exemplified by Edoardo Canale's pursuit of naturalization in 1936, marking his journey from Italy to becoming a respected and popular ballroom dancing instructor in Johannesburg.[63] Furthermore, the *Gazette* recorded the unfortunate passing of instructors, such as Ray Schulman in

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[55] "Government notice no. 596 of 1914", *The Union of South Africa Government* Gazette, no. 502, 08 May 1914, p. 587.
[56] "Government notice no. 278 of 1917", *The Union of South Africa Government* Gazette, no. 798, 17 March 1917, p. 672.
[57] "Government notice no. 994 of 1922", *The Union of South Africa Government* Gazette, no. 1281, 15 December 1922, p. 40.
[58] "Government notice no. 537 of 1924", *The Union of South Africa Government* Gazette, no. 1403, 11 July 1924, p. 63.
[59] "Government notice no. 896 of 1927", *The Union of South Africa Government* Gazette, no. 1670, 18 November 1927, p. 343.
[60] "Government notice no. 568 of 1928", *The Union of South Africa Government* Gazette, no. 1722, 10 August 1928, p. 267.
[61] "Government notice no. 660 of 1932.", *The Union of South Africa Government* Gazette, no. 2080, 23 December 1932, p. 718.
[62] "Advertisement: Thelma Cripps School of Dancing", *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 5688, 07 September 1951, p. 60.
[63] "Request for naturalization: Edoardo Canale", *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 2279, 29 May 1935, p. xxvii.

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1934.[64] The *Gazette* even captured the ebb and flow of business, with mentions of the selling,[65] liquidation,[66] and abandonment of dancing halls.[67]

Lastly, the *Gazette* unveiled endeavours of a different kind—capital ventures related to dancing. Notably, Thomas Gwynfryn Williams registered the trademark "Dancing Feet," encompassing "appliances for the use in the teaching of dancing".[68] Local newspapers touted this innovation, which consisted of a set of six cut-outs of feet designed to complement ballroom dancing courses, aiding in the understanding of foot placement during various dances.[69] This enterprise underscored the expansion of the secondary market for social dance and, on a grander scale, the burgeoning of Johannesburg's leisure sector despite the imposing restrictions.

5.3 War dance restraint

Apart from the national legislation and municipal administration procedures, circumstances like war and unrest also impacted on social dancing. South Africa imposed Marshall law or military rule during industrial unrest, as well as the First and Second World Wars.[70] As previously stated, wartime made importing dance materials more difficult and costly. Furthermore, the immediate consequence of Marshall law was to halt all leisure activities, including theatre, film, and social dancing.[71] While circumstances beyond the dancers' control frequently determined whether dances

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[64] "Election Of Executors and Tutors: Ray Schulman", *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 2239, 21 December 1934, p. xxvii.
[65] See for example the closing of the Simmer Dancing Hall in 1925 in "Notice is hereby given that the Simmer Deep dancing-hall", *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 1505, 18 September 1925, p. viii.
[66] See for example the liquidation of Palais de danse (Proprietary) in 1933 in "Notice is hereby given that the Palais de danse (Proprietary)...", *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 2129, 14 July 1933, p. viii.
[67] See for example the abandonment of the dancing hall of Loveday Palais de Danse in 1935 in "The business of the Loveday Palais de Danse carried on by Isaac Hurvitz on Stands Nos. 1006, 1007 and 119, Loveday Street, Johannesburg, will be abandoned...", *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 2268, 26 April 1935, p. xiv.
[68] "Dancing feet. No. 1112/41, in respect of appliances for the use in the teaching of dancing", *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 2961, 14 November 1941, p. 4.
[69] Advertisement, "Set of six dancing feet for 10 6...", *Rand Daily Mail,* 24 January 1942, p. 6.
[70] G.E. Devenish, "Martial Law in South Africa," *Tydskrif vir Hedendaagse Romeins-Hollandse Reg* [Journal for Contemporary Roman-Dutch Law], 55(3), August 1992, p. 355.
[71] T. Gutsche, "The history and social significance of cinema in South Africa" (University of Cape Town, PhD thesis, 1946), p. 244.

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could take place, unlike several overseas countries, Johannesburg social dancers did not stop dancing for very long. For example, following the end of the First World War and in the grips of a depression, Germany, issued a decree authorizing the military to:

> …confiscate dance halls, bars, and similar establishments catering purely for luxuries, and to convert them into kitchens and centers for the relief of the suffering populace…there is no room in Germany to-day for guzzling, gluttony, and costly extravagance…[72]

In contrast, Johannesburg's dance enthusiast organized special fundraising dancing events to support the soldiers returning and communities affected by the War. Dances were also used to uplift morale.[73] Indeed, as noted by Thelma Gutsche, the entertainment industry in general saw a remarkable growth during times of economic distress. She noted:

> One or the most remarkable features of the immediate post-war years was that despite the high cost of living and severe economic depression, entertainment flourished...The war had introduced several new types of entertainment.[74]

Aside from these external factors, the rapid expansion of the city and inadequate urban planning, posed an additional challenge that significantly affected the availability of dance spaces within Johannesburg. As detailed in chapter 3, the city's growth was unprecedented, and this often resulted in limited time and resources being allocated towards recreational infrastructure, especially for the lower and lower-middle-class communities. Subsequently, dance halls often were multipurpose events centers that could easily be repurposed at the whim of the government.

One such a venue was the Worker's Hall in Benoni, on the East Rand. The Worker's Hall was the headquarters of the Rand Revolt in 1922 and was burnt down by the

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[72] Anon., "No dance halls or bars", *Rand Daily Mail*, 17 November 1923, p. 11.
[73] Anon., "Union Jack Lodge of the Sons of England Patriotic and Benevolent Society is holding a social and dance at Selborne Hall…", *Rand Daily* Mail, 12 November 1920, p. 5; M. Hustwitt, "'Caught in a Whirlpool of Aching Sound': The Production of Dance Music in Britain in the 1920s", *Popular Music,* 3, 1983, pp 8–10; "Minutes of a meeting held in the officers' club on the 17 March 1911 in connection with the Transvaal volunteers officers Ball", 18 March 1911, TVO. 18, 563 NASA, TAB, Pretoria; A. Green "The Great War and a new dance beat: opening the South African dance floor", *Historia*, 60(1), May 2015, pp. 60-74.
[74] Gutsche, "The history and social significance of cinema in South Africa", 1946, p. 251.

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Transvaal Scottish Regiment to suppress the revolt.[75] The hall was quickly rebuilt and became the “chief centre of Benoni’s social life…complete with the best of dance floors and modern ventilations”.[76] The hall could comfortably accommodate 300 dancers and held weekly dances.[77] When the government decided to lease out the hall to Kinemas, Ltd, to the horror of the dancing public “…the Reef’s most popular dance floor was equipped with rows of chairs, and the landscape scenes at the back of the stage were superseded by the silver screen”.[78] Since Benoni had no other public halls - its town hall was only built a decade later- dancers were cramped into the Hotel Cecil Hall and the municipal supper room.[79] The dancers however, were not deterred and quickly adapted by switching to dance the waltz and foxtrot that required slightly less space and was more uniformed in its movements than the popular but lively and improvised dance movements of the Charleston and “Black Bottom”.[80]

Apart from the Workers Hall and other venues like the Inchcape, the “Polly Street Adult Education Centre” in Johannesburg was another hall earmarked as a multipurpose venue. The Polly Hall, offered a range of other activities alongside the regular ballroom dancing sessions including arts and crafts, church services, sewing classes and boxing.[81] The 1952 to 1953 report of the non-European Affairs department detailed the average weekly attendances of the these activities presented at the Polly hall: ballroom dancing (40); music, arts and crafts (50); church services (300); general education (500); women’s sewing classes (300) and choir practice (100).[82] This shows not only how dire the need was for more places of leisure, but also how ballroom dance had to co-exist with other activities to be sustainable.

[75] Anon., “Benoni Worker’s Hall. Who burnt it”, *The Advertiser, Adelaide*, 19 December 1924, p. 13.
[76] Anon., “No dance hall at Benoni. Lack of space in present buildings. Youth of the town suffers”, *Rand Daily Mail,* 18 July 1928, p. 14.
[77] Anon., “No dance hall at Benoni. Lack of space in present buildings. Youth of the town suffers”, *Rand Daily Mail,* 18 July 1928, p. 14.
[78] Anon., “No dance hall at Benoni. Lack of space in present buildings. Youth of the town suffers”, *Rand Daily Mail,* 18 July 1928, p. 14.
[79] Anon., “No dance hall at Benoni. Lack of space in present buildings. Youth of the town suffers”, *Rand Daily Mail,* 18 July 1928, p. 14.
[80] Anon., “No dance hall at Benoni. Lack of space in present buildings. Youth of the town suffers”, *Rand Daily Mail,* 18 July 1928, p. 14.
[81] "A brief description and history of the Paladins", WITS, Johannesburg: SAIRR, ZA HPRA AD1715-19-19.31-19.31.3.
[82] “City of Johannesburg. Annual report of the Manager of the Non-European Department. 1st July 1952 to 30 June 1953”, WITS, Johannesburg: SAIRR, ZA HPRA, A2628-A7, pp. 15-16.

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This repurposing of the dancing halls was crucial in ensuring its longevity. In contrast, as discussed in “Similar steps, different venues: the making of segregated dancing worlds in South Africa, 1910–39”, the success of the big white commercial dance halls, the Loveday and Astoria, was short-lived.[83] Apart from the general mismanagement of the halls, the white commercial dance halls refused to adapt their offering to the needs and interests of the local black dancing community.

5.4 Promiscuous dance restrictions

It was a logistical nightmare for the dance proprietors and the dancers to overcome the bureaucracy imposed by the numerous pieces of legislation. However, eradicating the notion of the dancing halls as irreligious, alcoholic, “promiscuous” and “criminal dens” that were not in the “public’s best interest” was arguably the greater difficulty.[84] The above quoted experience of the visiting Russian choir provided an outsider's perspective on the social impact that legislation, such as the Sunday Observance Act, had on the bustling entertainment industry. Indeed, religious leaders’ criticism of behaviours at dances and sometimes even the condemnation of dance itself, transformed Johannesburg into a "sad country".[85]

From the inception of the first white administration in the Johannesburg region the ZAR government felt it was necessary to enact legislation. Act 28 No. of 1896 Part 8 was promulgated to prohibit people from working, participating in group leisure activities, hiring out public areas, and gambling on Sunday.[86] According to this legislation it was

[83] A. M. Green, “Similar steps, different venues: the making of segregated dancing worlds in South Africa, 1910–39”, in K. Nathaus & J. Nott (eds.), *Worlds of social dancing. Dance floor encounters and the global rise of couple dancing, c. 1910-1940*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2022), pp. 100-102.
[84] Anon., “Not suitable for natives. Missionaries’ objections to certain films. Opinions regarding censorship”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 12 December 1922, p. 10.
[85] Anon., “Don Cossacks think S.A. a god country to get married in. But Sunday – What a sad lot of people”, *Rand Daily Mail,* 03 February 1936, p. 11.
[86] The act states: “Alle Landrosten, Vrederechters, Veldcornetten, Assistant-Veldcornetten en Politie-beambten hebben het recht om personen uiteent te drijven, op Zondag op een openbare of open plaats verzameld, om er te spelen of te dobbelen… en om in beslag te nemen, te vernietigen, of op andere wijze te beschikken over de werktuigen, instrumenten of dieren daarbij gebruikt…kunnen worden gearresteerd en worden gestraft met gevangenisstraf van ten hoogste zes maanden of met eene geldboete van ten hoogste honderd pond sterling, bij wanbetaling te vervangen door gevangenisstraf zes maanden niet te bovengaande.”; J.A. Schagen van

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specifically prohibited for a manager, leaser, or owner of a public location to allow public dances on Sundays.[87] Contravening this Act was punishable by one month in jail or a 50 pound fine. Moreover, if "naturelle" (natives) had "bier-en danspartijen" (beer and dance parties) on a Sunday they could be arrested and jailed for six months or fined a 100 pounds.[88] This Act was fairly strictly implemented and by 1911 a Sunday Observance Commission was appointed by the Governor- General to actively monitor any work or unauthorized leisure activity on Sunday.[89] During religious holidays like Passover, Good Friday and Christmas day no social dancing events were permitted.[90]

By 1932 the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) advocated for even stricter Sunday laws. They argued that the nation was put in "danger" because of the "present tendency toward lax morals".[91] In an attempt to address the church-going concerns and lack of perceived Christian values, sermons were preached at popular movie theatres venues like the Orpheum on Sundays. The Sunday attendance of the black community, claimed the ministers perhaps overzealously, were higher than when the most popular film was shown at the venue.[92] At sermons like these, dancing and alcohol were specifically targeted as contributing to "demoralizing behaviour". This was despite

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Leeuwen, "Act 28 No. of 1896 Part 8", *De locale wetten en volksraadsbesluiten der Zuid-Afr. Republiek,* (Pretoria: Staatsdrukkerij van de Z. A. Republiek, 1896), pp. 274-275.

[87] According to Act No. 28 of 1896 part 7, quoted in J.A. Schagen van Leeuwen, De locale wetten en volksraadsbesluiten der Zuid-Afr. Republiek, benevens de proclamaties van ZHEd. Den Staatspresident en de belangrijke Gouvernements-Kennisgevingen gedurende het jaar 1896, (Pretoria: Staatsdrukkerij van de Z.A. Republiek, 1807), p. 274. "De eigenaar, huurder of bestuurder van een publieke biljardkamer of andere publieke plaats van ontspanning, die toestaat of toelaat dat aldaar op Zondag het een of ander spel wordt gespeeld, of dat aldaar openbare vermakelijkheden worden gehouden zoals schouwburg-voorstellingen, café-chantants, publieke danspartijen, concerten, behalve voor gewijde muziek, harddraverijen, worden gestraft met gevangenisstraf van ten hoogste één of geldboete van ten hoogstevijftig pond sterling, bij wanbetaling te vervangen door gevangenisstraf een maand niet te boveng ande".

[88] J.A. Schagen van Leeuwen, "Act 28 No. of 1896 part 8", *De locale wetten en volksraadsbesluiten der Zuid-Afr. Republiek,* (Pretoria: Staatsdrukkerij van de Z. A. Republiek, 1896), pp. 274-275; Green, "Dancing in borrowed shoes", p. 67.

[89] "Notice no. 1345 of 1911. Sunday observance commission", *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 141, (Pretoria, 11 August 1911), p. 841; "Notice no. 809 of 1911. Sunday observance commission", *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 151, (Pretoria, 15 September 1911), pp. 1666, 1673.

[90] B.B.F., "In the dance world. Dance festival in full swing", *Rand Daily Mail,* 12 April 1941, p. 5; Advertisement, "Liberty Club. Special Mid-week dance", *Rand Daily Mail,* 05 April 1944, p. 2; Advertisement, "New Casa Mia Hotel. Christmas night, no dancing", *Rand Daily Mail*, 14 December 1951, p. 10.

[91] Anon., "Congregational Union assembly supports efforts to outlaw war: Dr. J. D. Jones' Messages", *The Bantu World*, 05 November 1932, p. 11.

[92] Anon., "Congregational Union assembly supports efforts to outlaw war: Dr. J. D. Jones' Messages", *The Bantu World*, 05 November 1932, p. 11.

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folk[93] and traditional[94] dancing being intrinsic in many South African cultures. In 1932, for example the Anglican Synod "condemn dancing as a dangerous social evil" hoping to limit social dancing events by one every six months.[95] The Synod held that the "church must call for repentance not only from personal sins but from corporate sins, those which especially beset the present economic order".[96] For the religious leaders, as noted by social commentary of the time, these "corporate sins" included alcohol, gambling, mixed swimming and dancing.[97] Social commentary in the Calvinistic Afrikaner society also condemned dancing as leading to promiscuous behaviour, being immoral and also one of the main causes in destroying marriages.[98]

The Sunday observance legislation was frequently enforced abruptly and with little forewarning. In 1934, residents in the Western Township were informed that:

> …it is learnt from authoritative channels that Sunday dances are no more to be held in the local Hall. Residents who desire to use the hall for concerts, and dancers, etc., are advised to use the other days of the week. As usual the hall will be available for public meetings, social gatherings, and other meetings where no dancing and admissions will be permitted, on Sunday. They would not be allowed to use the local hall for dancing on a Sunday.[99]

Also, in Rooiyard a sudden dance ban was introduced in 1933. Hellman explained how and why this came about:

> Till November 1933, this form of entertainment flourished; but when complaints of disturbance reached the authorities in increasing numbers, the owner of Rooiyard prohibited the continuance of this form of entertainment [that mainly took place on a Saturday and Sunday] by making the convenors subject to twenty-four hours'

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[93] See for example article on Afrikaner volkspele in A. C. van Vollenhoven, "Afrikaanse volksang- en volksdanbeweging, 50 jaar (1941-1991)", *South African Journal of Cultural History,* 6(1), January 1992, pp. 46-54.
[94] See for example the importance of dancing performance in the Zulu culture as recorded in V. Erlmann, *Nightsong: performance, power, and practice in South Africa*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).
[95] Anon., "Anglican Synod condemns liquor bill urges social service for Bantu", *The Bantu World,* 29 October 1932, p. 11.
[96] Anon., "Anglican Synod condemns liquor bill urges social service for Bantu", *The Bantu World,* 29 October 1932, p. 11.
[97] P.J. Pienaar, "Dans, gemengde baaiery, kaart-speel en wyn-drink", *Die Huisgenoot*, April 1920, p. 378.
[98] Hermanus, "As mama in die danssaal is", *Die Huisgenoot*, Januarie 1922, pp. 378-388; Anon., "4711 Eau de Cologne, Die laaste opskik", *Die Huisgenoot*, November 1923, p. 23; Anon., "The church and dancing", *South African Dancing Times*, 6(10), May 1938, p. 10.
[99] Anon., "Western Township News: The Communal Hall", *The Bantu World*, 26 May 1934, p. 23.

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notice. Before this ban was enforced dances were popular and profitable.[100]

In 1939 a provincial consultative committee was created to discuss specifically banning dancing on a Sunday.[101] This council found that it should be up to the discretion of the provincial committee to decide whether clubs transgressed any observance laws, placing the power again within the moral judgements of a few. It did caution however that: "…such action [dancing on a Sunday] would deeply offend the religious sentiments of a large number of its citizens…".[102]

The Sunday Observance Act was not racially exclusive. Owners of the white owned Veldskoen Night Club in Johannesburg, for example, Francois Cilliers and D. Gainer, were sentenced under the Sunday Observance Act in 1950. Two police officers and a firefighter testified that "…there were about 100 couples dancing at the club [when they arrived in civilian clothes on Saturday to attend the dance and when they left] at 01:30 am the next morning, Sunday. Dancing was still going on...".[103] According to the defense the case was one that was vitally important for the four Afrikaans Clubs in Johannesburg.[104] Cilliers stated that the Veldskoen Club was founded in 1942 and that the people requested that dancing continue after midnight. Even though the owner was unable to gain authorization to keep the club open for dancing early on Sunday mornings, the club frequently allowed dances into the mornings. He argued that his club was conducted in the same manner as "several other night clubs in the city that allowed dancing after Saturday midnight".[105] He also explained that club members paid an upfront membership fee and was personally vetted by him to be "decent [members of society] and neatly dressed" when admitted to the club.[106] The magistrate was

[100] Hellman, *Rooiyard*, 1948, p. 45.
[101] "Provincial consultative committee: Dancing on Sunday proposed prohibition", 23 December 1940, BNS.16/8/85, SAB, Pretoria.
[102] A. W. Broeksma (Attorney -General) - The Deputy Commissioner, 08 December 1939, BNS.16/8/85, SAB, Pretoria.
[103] Anon., "Night club man fined for allowing dancing on Sundays", *Rand Daily, Mail,* 01 April 1950, p. 11.
[104] Anon., "Night club man fined for allowing dancing on Sundays", *Rand Daily, Mail,* 01 April 1950, p. 11.
[105] Anon., "Night club man fined for allowing dancing on Sundays", *Rand Daily, Mail,* 01 April 1950, p. 11.
[106] Anon., "Night club man fined for allowing dancing on Sundays", *Rand Daily, Mail,* 01 April 1950, p. 11.

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unsympathetic towards the plea and stated that the Act will be strictly enforced and met with heavy fines if clubs transgressed.[107]

Political leaders also sometimes objected to Sunday dances. In writing to the ANC president Dr. Xuma in 1941, Rev. J.A. Calata strongly objected to the suggestion of a concert and dance on a Sunday evening at the BMSC for the ANC's presidential address, pointing out that he does not approve of dancing on a Sunday.[108]

The Sunday Observance Act opened another avenue to control leisure activities, but it could not curtail all Sunday dances. Not unlike the owners of the Veldskoen club, dancing continued, despite the risk, to some extent in the city on a Sunday. Bunche described this as follows:

> On Saturday nights like tonight they rent the hall till midnight for 4 2/10 and take a chance on the violation of the Sunday closing ordinance after then. The dance will continue till 4 am. They also pay 15s for the rent of the piano.[109]

Some parents also felt that Sunday dancing was an excellent alternative keeping the youth out of trouble. A parent wrote to the *Umteteli wa Bantu* saying that given the limited leisure options in the cities:

> As a parent I deplore the banning of sport and dancing on Sundays, for, although not condoning the breaking of the Sabbath, I do feel that allowing young people to take part in dancing and other sports helps to keep them out of mischief. What else is a child to do during his hours of leisure but drink and get into bad company? Not only do Sunday dances help children to make new friends and learn new methods of expressing themselves, but most dances are run for some deserving charity… If jive and tango are the vogue, then our children must keep up with changing ideas. In future let's have dances and sports meeting unhampered by pettiness; think of our children and what it means to them.[110]

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[107] Anon., "Night club man fined for allowing dancing on Sundays", *Rand Daily, Mail,* 01 April 1950, p. 11.
[108] Rev. J.A. Calata (Society of St. John the Evangelist) - President-general A.N.C, 07 November 1941, WITS, Johannesburg: ABX 411107a.
[109] Bunche, *An African American in South Africa*, 1992, p. 212.
[110] Anon., "Must dancing be banned?", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 18 February 1950, p. 8.

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The *Bantu World* also reported on some Sunday dance activity.[111] It was however more expensive to travel on a Sunday, the fee increasing from 6d to 1s, to townships like Orlando. Bunche surmised that this was done to discourage "visits of location natives to town on Sunday and other natives to the location".[112]

Dancing's association with the misuse of alcohol was another contentious issue adding to the perception that social dancing halls were "unsafe" and "evil". Undoubtedly, the selling of alcohol at popular dancing venues like hotels, clubs and restaurants was a draw card. Under the Liquor Licensing Ordinance Act no. 32 of 1902,[113] the Wine, Spirit and Vinegar Act of 1913 and the amendment Act no. 37 of 1930,[114] the selling of alcohol at venues had to be declared and registered. Violating these laws was met with swift and harsh punishment. By 1930 this included up to a thousand pounds fine and imprisonment with hard labour for a year.[115]

Alcohol formed a big part of Johannesburg culture, and it was not always a negative connection. For example, at upmarket venues like the BMSC a weekend of soccer matches often ended with a dance where alcohol formed a part of the evening celebration. "This concert-and-dance party" explained Peter Alegi "…highlights the profound connections between sport, music, dance, and liquor in South African popular culture".[116] Furthermore, Hellman noted how more structured forms of amusement like dances and concerts, were made possible by the illegal alcohol trade in the Johannesburg urban "slum yard", Rooiyard. She found that:

> The illicit beer-trade has also been instrumental in giving rise to a more organised form of recreation in the form of dances and concerts, the primary purpose of which is to attract custom and to promote beer sales. On Saturday nights dances and concerts were

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[111] This included the grand reception held at the BMSC after a stage performance on Sunday 08 October 1933. Anon., "News items from different Centres", *The Bantu World*, 14 October 1933, p. 15.
[112] Bunche, *An African American in South Africa*, 1992, p. 163.
[113] "Ordinance no. 32 of 1902", *Ordinances of the Transvaal Colony*, (Government Printing and Stationary Offices, Pretoria, 1903), pp. 116-151.
[114] "Wine, Spirits and Vinegar, 1913, Amendment Act no. 37 of 1930", *Statutes of the Union of South Africa,* (Cape Town: Government Printer, 1930), pp. 450-458.
[115] "Wine, Spirits and Vinegar, 1913, Amendment Act no. 37 of 1930", *Statutes of the Union of South Africa* (Cape Town, Government Printer, 1930), p. 456.
[116] P. C. Alegi, "Playing to the gallery? Sport, cultural performance, and social identity in South Africa, 1920s – 1945", *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 35(1), 2002, p. 25.

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> arranged in Rooiyard, often in as many as six or eight different rooms... European dancing was most commonly the rule...[117]

For the most part however the connection that social dancing events had with alcohol was destructive. By 1936 Johannesburg had 72 hotels (many with dancing floors) and 10 beer halls.[118] To prevent the misuse of alcohol at events and drawing the wrong crowd (e.g., violent drunkards) the social dancing halls authorities advised that:

> …[liquor] licenses should be discouraged from the practice of holding cheap or free dances on their premises. It has been observed that this class of dance attracts an undesirable type of person and that brawls are frequently the outcome.[119]

Apart from these cheap hotels, the beer halls in the townships were other notorious dancing flashpoints. Paul La Hausse noted how affordable and popular these beer halls were:

> …You get there, pay your 10 cents, you get your share of whatever concoction there is – and you dance. It used to start Friday night right through Sunday evening. You get tired, you go home, go and sleep, and come back again, bob a time each time you get in. The piano with the audience making a lot of noise…[120]

In contrast, the "middle-class Africans…", explained Coplan, "…avoided the rough dance halls where pianists or rhythm trios pounded out early *marabi* for knife-and liquor-toting customers…".[121] Many regarded the dance halls as "the nursery of hooliganism" that was "…chiefly patronised by the less educated elements of the African community".[122] Some parents even forbade their children from visiting these dance halls fearing for their safety. *Umteteli wa Bantu* further warns against the common presence of drugs at the halls. It states:

> …the younger generation today smokes this foul weed in dance halls, cafes, shebeens and dirty little rooms in Newclare and Sophiatown...I realise now how much of the hooliganism in our

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[117] Hellman, Rooiyard, 1948, p. 45.
[118] Anon., "Big improvement in illicit liquor position on rand. Police and licensees complimented. Cheap dances in hotels criticized", *Rand Daily Mail,* 03 December 1936, p. 15.
[119] Anon., "Big improvement in illicit liquor position on rand. Police and licensees complimented. Cheap dances in hotels criticized", *Rand Daily Mail,* 03 December 1936, p. 15.
[120] P. La Hausse, *Brewers, Beerhalls and Boycotts: A History of Liquor in South Africa*, (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1988), p. 43.
[121] Coplan, *In township tonight*, 2007, p. 153.
[122] Anon., "Must dancing be banned?", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 18 February 1950, p. 8; Anon., "Johannesburg day by day", *Umteteli wa Bantu,* 22 April 1939, p. 18.

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> townships is due to drugs. I have seen, during the past week, numbers of young boys and girls, as well as grownups, selling and smoking dagga in dance halls. It gives them that bounce and carelessness they seem to need for jiving.[123]

A 1951 article in the *African Drum* entitled "Inside Johannesburg's underworld", highlights the criminal element at places of leisure.[124] It emphasized how many Africans were attacked in the township areas and that crime was rife in the shebeens, beer halls and liquor houses:

> … the "tsotsi and his fellow thugs" are more familiar to the Johannesburger than the policeman, they parade themselves openly and arrogantly in the streets, dressed in their conspicuous 'uniforms' and with little fear of the law…[125]

Coplan ascribed this situation mainly to the government's restrictive laws that did not allow for development. He explained how these tsosti's or gangs that dominated the areas often had their favourite dancing halls which they financed, patrolled and controlled. Incidences like these reinforced the perception of social dancing halls as "evil".[126]

Like the religious leaders, many social commentators of the time did not see dancing events as the prosperous business venture that it was, but rather as an excuse to make quick money from selling alcohol while patrons entertained themselves dancing. A 1932 article in the *Bantu World* highlights this association with dance and alcohol as destructive. In "Drink and vice ruining health of Bantu Race. Liquor and immorality doing the Native more harm than the injustice of the white man", University of Pretoria Professor Edgar Brooks condemned the "many dances and other entertainments [that were] run for private profit". He called for "public-spirited African Entertainers and musicians" to organise evenings of fun for the benefit of the local non-European Hospital. He also called on the Church guilds and societies and local leaders to do their part to "fight the terrible evils of drink and immorality which are doing more to cause disease than even bad housing, or wages too low to allow of a thoroughly

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[123] Anon., "Dagga drags", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 17 March 1951, p. 8.
[124] Anon., "Inside Johannesburg's underworld", *African Drum*, October 1951, pp. 5-6.
[125] Anon., "Inside Johannesburg's underworld", *African Drum*, October 1951, p. 6.
[126] Coplan, *In township tonight*, 2007, pp. 118-119.

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healthy diet".[127] Thus dance was impacted on by law, by church and by morals of the day.

5.5 Dance resistance and rejections

In addition to political and social challenges, the social dancing scene experienced internal conflicts within the dancing community, akin to a "moral panic".[128] These opinions were offered by well-known musicians and dance commentators in Johannesburg. They agreed with London dance masters Victor Sylvester and Josephine Bradley in 1928 when they bemoaned the spread of what they referred to as "freak dancers", that a number of dance teachers had introduced.[129] Later on many, including the British dance master Sir Alex Moore, viewed the swing dances as a temporary fad that would pass when the effects of War ended. Reassuring the Johannesburg dancing fraternity that they need not worry about the jitterbug's permanent nature, Moore states in 1940:

> …if the 'Jitterburg [sic.]' is a nuisance and behaves as if he is in a Harlem night club, by all means turn him out…nothing he [the jitterbug] does will ever kill the most beautiful style of dancing [traditional ballroom style dances like the waltz] the modern world has ever known. The only thing he is likely to do is to bring a little humour into the ballroom at a time when it is most needed…[130]

An easy, fun dance that "fits Mr. and Mrs. Everybody" is what one local dance instructor, Morry Blake, believed to be the ultimate dance.[131]

Established Johannesburg musicians, dance teachers, and dance band leaders were also sceptical about the new dancing fads' endurance. They believed that traditional

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[127] E. Brooks, "Drink and vice ruining health of Bantu Race. Liquor and immorality doing the Native more harm than the injustice of the white man", *The Bantu World,* 21 May 1932, p. 2.
[128] K. Nathaus & J. J. Nott, "Dance floor encounters and the global rise of couple dancing: an introduction to the worlds of social dancing", in K. Nathaus & J. J. Nott (eds.) *Worlds of social dancing: dance floor encounters and the global rise of couple dancing, c. 1910-40*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2022), p. 2; Green, "Dancing in borrowed shoes", pp. 101 - 150; Lancer, "In the dancing world: two famous dancers", *Rand Daily Mail,* 29 December 1934, p. 6; Coplan, *In township tonight!* p. 128
[129] Treble Violl, "Dancing and the ballroom", *Rand Daily Mail,* 08 December 1928, p. 12.
[130] B.B.F. "In the dancing world: War effects on English ballroom styles", *Rand Daily Mail*, 13 April 1940, p. 5.
[131] Treble Violl, "Dancing and the ballroom", *Rand Daily Mail,* 08 December 1928, p. 12.

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dances like the waltz and foxtrot, dance favourites in Johannesburg, would persist since unlike the jive they appealed to both sexes and all ages and had “grace and rhythm”.[132] Bertha Egnos,[133] a pianist of the time, was among those who criticised the "ungraceful contortions" of contemporary dances like the jive.[134] She felt that:

> Only those old and primordial Jazz dances - the Waltz and Foxtrot - have been able to maintain their popularity and to boast of some degree of longevity. The reasons for the success of the Waltz can be readily appreciated. It is the only dance in vogue today which was in existence in pre-Jazz days, and is consequently popular with old and young alike…[135]

Alec Benjamin,[136] another jazz pianist, claimed that Johannesburg dancers found these new moves too difficult, attributing their unwillingness to "laziness" and "lack of time" for practise.[137] He further found that:

> The public does not readily take to learning new steps. We have to choose our numbers to meet the demands of the great majority of dancers on the floor. And to-day they are asking for tunes which they know well...many have not the time to devote to concentrate on the study of even such delightful dances such as the tango and the rumba. They prefer to carry on with a rhythm with a tempo suitable for fox-trots, quick steps and waltzes. These have met the wide popular taste since the war – and look like meeting the public needs for a long time to come.[138]

Teddie Garratt, a well-known dance band leader, criticised bands for forcing new tempos on the typical dancer and executing it “badly”.[139] He emphasised the necessity of music

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[132] Anon., “Can you croon with your feet? ’Sardine’ dance”, *Sunday Times*, 12 November 1933, p. 17.
[133] Anon., “In the radio world. First impressions of a B.B.C. audition”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 05 February 1935, p. 6. In 1961 Bertha Egnos wrote an “All Black musical show called Dingake” along with coloured writer Eddie Domingoe that celebrated the life of Jack Philips a “big name in non-White entertainment in Johannesburg; Anon., “New Non-White musical due”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 31 August 1961, p. 6.
[134] Lancer, “Is a new dance rhythm needed? Old and the new”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 26 November 1932, p. 6.
[135] Lancer, “Is a new dance rhythm needed? Old and the new”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 26 November 1932, p. 6.
[136] Advertisement, “it’s all the ‘Z’ aid. J J J A A A Z Z Z Z”, *Rand Daily Mail,* 23 July 1932, p. 6.
[137] Lancer, “Is a new dance rhythm needed? Tragic failures”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 26 November 1932, p. 6.
[138] Lancer, “Is a new dance rhythm needed? Tragic failures”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 26 November 1932, p. 6.
[139] Anon., “An outstanding band. Mr. Teddie Garrat’s fine combination”, *Rand Daily Mail,* 02 November 1932, p. 12.

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that corresponded to well-known dance moves like the waltz. Garratt warned the jive band leaders that the music that their bands play does not have:

> …sufficient of the 'um-chuck' or the 'um-cluk-chuck' about them. From inquiries made these views are strongly supported by many patrons of the Loveday Palais de Danse. If dance bands were to persist in playing tunes which did not fit in with popular steps many people would have either to sit out or keep away.[140]

Furthermore, Gaby Peimer,[141] a contemporary South African Jazz pianist, music teacher, and composer, maintained that most dance band albums sold in the 1930s were only supposed to be bought for listening. He encouraged dancers to rather just listen to the new jive dance albums and stick to dancing the familiar waltz dances.[142]

While live dance bands were the most popular and preferred choice for dance events, contrary to Peimer's beliefs, radio and gramophone played an important role at many dancing events. For those who could not afford band fees ranging from 5s 6d, the gramophone became a "makeshift band" that took up less space in the congested shebeens and public halls. *The Bantu World* commented on the gramophone's accessibility and use, stating that "couples swayed gracefully in one another's arms..." while "musical items were rendered by a very capable gramophone which went all out, bravely demonstrating the fact, that orchestras had no terrors for it".[143]

Undeniably, jive and swing music were popular features on the national radio station. In 1947 a dancer using the pseudonym "Disgusted with the S.A.B.C." noted how dance music was broadcast on the radio stressing how important listening to this music was to the community:

> I must complain about the unjust treatment meted out to 'swing' fans by the S.A.B.C. There are only two programs of 'swing' music a week – one on Saturday mornings [requests] and the other on Wednesday evenings at 10… Last Wednesday I tuned in at the time

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[140] Lancer, "Is a new dance rhythm needed? An empathetic 'No'", *Rand Daily Mail*, 26 November 1932, p. 6.
[141] Anon., "Too noisy for jazz pianist – All right for gigli", *Rand Daily Mail*, 26 August 1952, p. 7; Advertisement, "Gaby Peimer schools of music: Gaby Peimer. The Jazz Master", *Rand Daily Mail,* 11 November 1933, p. 13.
[142] Lancer, "Is a new dance rhythm needed? An old fallacy", *Rand Daily Mail*, 26 November 1932, p. 6.
[143] Anon., "Enjoyable part at Doornfontein: Popular couple invite friends to make merry", *The Bantu World*, 05 November 1932, p. 9; Green, "Dancing in borrowed shoes", p. 141.

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> when swing is usually presented, but instead of hearing the music which I and many other people enjoy, we were given thirty-five minutes of insipid dance music, which the 'swing' lover dislikes as much as the lover of classics most probably does…[144]

Some listeners were however not as supportive of the dance music broadcast. For example, one listener complained that:

> …we are not all 'fans' and I am of the opinion that the majority of those who know anything at all about music resent being told that practically everyone wants 'This Thing called Swing', for they certainly do not. Anyone fond of music can have no liking for it… why do we have to listen to a lot of stuff from the 'comperes' about the heaven-sent 'composers' of such rubbish; the marvellous 'maestros' who conduct, and the talk about the wonderful 'Nasty Noisy Swing Ensemble' to say nothing of the voiceless male or female crooners associated with it?[145]

Albeit small, some right-wing dance groups were also convinced that more traditional style dances would replace the jitterbug. On their way to tour the USA, Mark Preston, Publicity Director of the Sarie Marais Company, explained that an American theatre group wrote to him stating that "…broadway patrons are sort of tired of pin-ups, and our dance halls are through with jive and jitterbug." The Sarie Marais Company consisted of Afrikaans artist who aimed to bring a "Boereorkes" (Boer orchestra), singers and dancers of "real South African vastrap"[146] and folk dances" on their USA tour. Preston was convinced that the "vastrap" would become a popular feature in the American halls.[147] While the tour appeared to have taken place, the company does not feature after its debut in the 1940s.

Some dance commentators also claimed that dances like the jive were "life threatening".[148] In 1940 the *Rand Daily Mail* reported that the warnings against the health

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[144] Disgusted with the S.A.B.C., "There was no 'Swing'", *Rand Daily Mail*, 21 April 1947, p. 8.
[145] One Who prefers Music, "Fantastic claims of 'Swing Fans'. All listners do not want it", *Rand Daily Mail*, 14 March 1941, p. 8.
[146] A typical Afrikaans styled folk dance, danced to fast music, that looks similar to the quickstep.
[147] Anon., "'Vastrap' may replace jive and jitters. Afrikaans company to tour America", *Sunday Times*, 11 August 1946, p. 15.
[148] Treble Violl, "Dancing and the ballroom", *Rand Daily Mail,* 05 September 1932, p. 6. The *Rand Daily Mail* also commented extensively on the death of prominent British dancer Wellesley Smith in October 1931 and found it to be a "great tragedy" both for the international dancing world and South Africa. Treble Violl, "Dancing and the ballroom", *Rand Daily Mail,* 31 October 1931, p. 14.

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dangers of the jitterbug were justified after a British dancer died while dancing the "senseless jitterbug". The article reported that:

> …there is the regrettable death to be recorded of a London girl which the medical evidence could not deny might have been hastened, if not caused, by the effects of the fall while engaged in one of these gymnastic dance atrocities...to point out the dangers as well as the vulgarities attached to this type of dance.[149]

To foster this anti-jive, pro-waltz mentality, some Johannesburg venues outrightly prohibited jive dancing or scheduled evenings where it was not permitted. This included the Germiston "Tuesday night's supper no jive social" in 1946. [150] At the Bantu Men's Social Centre there were also periods where social dancing was replaced with other activities. In 1942 the Bantu Men's Social Centre for example alternated "quiet game night as an alternate to dances".[151] Secondhand clothing was also sometimes sold with a note that it was "not intended for dancing" due to the intense nature of the dances. One such item was a "...beautiful lace wedding gown...with satin...bows and sequins... no dancing" attire advertised in the *Sunday Times*.[152] The resistance within the dance fraternity was not mainly against dance per se, but rather the style and form of dance which essentially reflected on the old established waltz and foxtrot resisting the new jitterbug and jive.

5.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, social dancing was intricately woven into the politics, morale and opinions of the everyday. Acts like the Natives in Urban Areas Act of 1923, curfews, and pass laws, as well as censorship acts, restricted and controlled movement, interracial contact between dancers as well as dancing products. Acts relating to custom tariffs, business registration, alcohol and observing Sundays further impacted on the economic growth and place of social dancing. These acts prescribed what was appropriate to be imported, what was permissible in movies and media, what could be served at dancing events and when and where dances could take place. For a variety of reasons, dance commentators and dancers themselves sometimes opposed and

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[149] B.B.F, "In the dance world. Weekly dances at the soldiers' club", *Rand Daily Mail,* 06 July 1940, p. 12.
[150] Anon., "Personal", *Rand Daily Mail*, 24 September 1946, p. 2.
[151] "Bantu Men's Social Centre. Annual Report. 1942. Lunch hour talks, p. 3., WITS, Johannesburg A1058-B14-01.
[152] Anon., "Wedding gowns", *Sunday Times*, 27 June 1948, p. 4.

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resisted the adoption of novel dances like the jitterbug. These opinions raised from the over-saturation of dances, the view that it was only a novelty or even the perception that dances could be promiscuous or risky. Despite this bureaucratic and moral red tape, social dancers prevailed and managed to establish a strong commercial entity.

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Chapter 6: Dancing the night away, the changing 1950s

6.1 Introduction

In the 1950s, the dynamics of social dance in Johannesburg underwent significant changes. Dancing venues became more numerous but smaller, and new dance steps were introduced at a faster pace. Social dancing was also increasingly commodified and used for promotional purposes. The evolving gender dynamics of the time were reflected in the clothing worn for dancing and the composition of dance bands. Additionally, there was an increase in regional exchanges between social dancers and dance bands from different provinces in South Africa and neighbouring African countries. Competition in social dance also grew, with existing competition bodies expanding and a new ballroom federation being formed. However, as the decade progressed, the growth in social dancing began to decline. Police raids and controls became more prevalent, impacting the logistics of social dancing. Religious groups also became increasingly hostile towards dance. Some establishments even banned certain dances, such as the jive, due to its association with criminal elements and immoral behaviour. This chapter explores the factors that contributed to the growth and decline of social dancing in Johannesburg during the 1950s.

6.2 The boom years

6.2.1 New venues and new incentives

While the start of the Second World War saw the closing of some of the big commercial dance halls (e.g. Astoria and Loveday) in white suburbia due to financial constraints, social dancing was still a popular and lucrative leisure activity.[1] In 1953, a new commercial dance hall, the Golden City palais de danse opened in Main Street, Johannesburg. This palais de danse offered dance hostesses,[2] "tea dancing Saturdays"

[1] Anon., "The Directors of the Palais De Danse", *Rand Daily Mail*, 27 February 1933, p. 8; "The business of the Loveday Palais de Danse carried on by Isaac Hurvitz on Stands Nos. 1006, 1007 and 119, Loveday Street, Johannesburg, will be abandoned...", *The Union of South Africa Government Gazette*, no. 2268, 26 April 1935, p. xiv; Anon., "Notice of Abandonment: Loveday Palais De Danse", *Rand Daily Mail*, 26 April 1935, p. 4.

[2] A dance hostess was a trained dance partner employed by the dancing venue that patrons could hire for a nominal fee to dance a selected dance with them.

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and it was open on most nights from 8 p.m. to midnight.[3] This hall was owned by John Simpson, who was born in the UK, and managed a night club in Singapore before moving to Johannesburg. Simpson explained that the dance hall was governed by a stringent set of rules, saying:

> …everybody visiting the Palais de Danse is carefully screened. We admit no drunks, or undesirable characters, and all men must wear formal dress – a dark suit. If someone gets out of hand I've got two burly bouncers to show him the door.[4]

This era was also a time for innovation and the Golden City palais de danse had telephones on the tables where patrons could phone a girl to dance. The newspaper reported on how the telephone system worked in the dance hall:

> The little redhead sitting at table 54 saw the light flash on the gold-painted telephone in front of her. She lifted the receiver to her ear. 'Hello,' she said with a smile. 'Yes, certainly you may have the next dance.' She fingered the little badge on her dress. It said: 'Dance hostess'. The tall young man at table 32 replaced the phone he had used to make the request, and a moment later was escorting the redhead to the floor. They glided smoothly into a waltz. This…little scene that happens over and over again every night at Johannesburg's brand-new Palais de Danse…is a popular rendezvous for local ballroom dancers and local young men who are keen on dancing but who have no partners…after two hours I came away charmed with the atmosphere, the music, the attractive dance hostesses and the excellent cuisine. Perhaps the novelty of the inter-table phone communication impressed me most. There are 60 tables, on each of which is a gold- or silver-coloured telephone. Above each table is an illuminated number, and if you want to dance with a girl sitting at, say, table 17, all you do is to pick up your phone dial 17 and presto! the dancing date is made. I tried this little trick myself, called up 23-year-old dark, vivacious Susan Ferreira, who was sitting six tables away from me. As we danced, she told me that she found the job of dance hostess fascinating. 'I've always loved ballroom dancing, and now I've got a well-paid job doing just that,' she smiled…[5]

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[3] Advertisement, "Golden City Palais de danse", *Rand Daily Mail,* 29 August 1953, p. 6.
[4] Anon., "Phoning for a dance (with a girl you can see) is better than a blind date", *Rand Daily Mail*, 09 July 1953, p. 7.
[5] Anon., "Phoning for a dance (with a girl you can see) is better than a blind date", *Rand Daily Mail*, 09 July 1953, p. 7.

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The cartoon below illustrates the prominence of this social dance hall - the palais de danse and the unique dance telephone prevalent in Johannesburg in 1953.[6]

PALAIS DE DANSE   By Bob Connolly

2/3
U.P.
RRRING
SPRUNG FLOOR
Bob Connolly

Figure 4: Golden City Palais de Danse, 1953

[6] The drawing depicts the cartoonist Bob Connoly playing the piano in the Golden Arrow palais de danse and looking at a caricature of what appears to be D.F. Malan phoning the United Party requesting a dance or to work together. This cartoon possibly depicts the one-third of the white-Afrikaans speaking electorate voting for the United Party in the 1953 general election. W.B. White, "The United Party and the 1953 general election", *Historia*, 36(2), November 1991, p. 79.

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The Inchcape and Polly Street Centre, which were frequented by black and coloured dance patrons, continued to be successful well after the Second World War and throughout most of the 1950s.[7] In 1947 the press reported that at the Ritz:

> Non-European patrons of the Inchcape Palais de Danse have sent £43 to the Transvaal branch of the Red Cross Society. The money was raised by a series of events organised by Mr. Jack Phillips, the proprietor, an enthusiastic worker for the society. A thermometer registering the increase in the fund was set in the middle of the dance floor.[8]

In 1947 building also started on a new leisure centre for people of colour, the Jubilee Social Centre, in Eloff Street Extension. This public centre was built, as explained by the chairman of the Non-European Affairs Commission, to "increase the amenities for Non-Europeans".[9] It had something for "every worker" including: a large restaurant, a reading room, a games room, a large hall for cinema shows and dances, as well as an employment bureau and a library.[10] Dancing also continued at the Polly Street Centre with several events, one being The Transvaal Division of Coloured Boy Scouts dance held to raise funds for their group in 1949.[11] The Natives Affairs Department built an additional four recreational halls and three open air native dance arenas between 1957 and 1959.[12] All of this reflected on the expansion of social dance in terms of both popularity and infrastructure across racial divides.

During this time, there was also a significant movement towards repurposing venues like hotels, theatres, nightclubs, public halls, beerhalls and even outside venues for social dancing. This meant that large commercial dance halls that were used exclusively for social dancing were being replaced. However, smaller halls meant an increase in the number of dance events that could take place and allowed venues to

[7] Anon., "He made a black day seem bright", *Rand Daily Mail*, 28 July 1958, p. 11.
[8] Anon., "Non-European gift to Red Cross", *Rand Daily Mail*, 14 August 1947, p. 5.
[9] "City of Johannesburg. Annual report of the Manager. Non-European affairs Department for the year ending 30th June 1959", WITS, Johannesburg: A2628-A11. Non-European Affairs Department (Johannesburg), Schedule E.
[10] Anon., "Stones laid for Jubilee Social Centre", *Rand Daily Mail,* 08 May 1947, p. 5.
[11] Anon., "Scout dance", *Rand Daily Mail*, 18 March 1949, p. 5.
[12] "City of Johannesburg. Annual report of the Manager. Non-European affairs Department for the year ending 30th June 1959", WITS, Johannesburg: A2628-A11. Non-European Affairs Department (Johannesburg), Schedule E.

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be repurposed as the need arose thus increasing the longevity. For example, the *Rand Daily Mail* reported in 1951 that:

> Owning to the large demand for dancing the management (of the Sheraton Hotel) has decided to allow dancing in the licensed Old Dutch Beer Garden to the wonderful rhythm of Scott Burger and his Astorians, supported by June Shannon and Jimmy Rayson and a floor show… dancing 8.30 to 2.30…[13]

Social dances were also a customary part of public celebrations, like the start of the New Year. For instance, in 1952 the press commented that:

> …many hotels and dancing places are holding New Year's Eve balls. There has been a great rush on tickets…and the social clubs are fully booked out for their special end-of-year dances…[14]

The *Rand Daily Mail* also regularly reported on gala dancing events at popular dancing venues in Johannesburg like the Northcliff Hotel.[15] The Johannesburg town hall often played host to dancing functions. One of these was the Venetian Ball in 1953. Tickets to the dance were sold out quickly and the programme promised "luxurious décor and dancing".[16] Throughout the 1950s "dinner and dance" evenings remained a popular part of Johannesburg suburbia night life. Some of the numerous dine and dancing options that was available in white suburbia are summarised in the table below.

[13] Advertisement, "Sheraton house of entertainment", *Rand Daily Mail,* 31 December 1951, p. 6.
[14] "Welcome to 1952", *Rand Daily Mail*, 28 December 1951, p. 5; "Scots prepare for Hogmanay celebrations", *Rand Daily Mail*, 28 December 1951, p. 5.
[15] Advertisement, "Northcliff", *Rand Daily Mail,* 31 December 1951, p. 6.
[16] Advertisement, "Venetian ball", *Rand Daily Mail*, 27 February 1953, p. 7.

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Name of restaurant or hotel	Location	Dining options	Dedicated dance band	Dance floor	Dancing hours
Casia Mia Hotel[17]	Soper Road, Berea	Buffet, fully licenced	Rhytmmelody	Large ballroom	09:00 pm to 01:00 am
Rookery Nook[18]	Jan Smuts Avenue	Chinese restaurant barbeque	Yes	Yes	Evenings
Lourenco Marques Restaurant[19]	Cnr Pietersen and Twist Streets	Portuguese Dishes, fully licenced	Harold Roy Quartet and Gilberto's Trio	Yes	Wednesday, Friday and Saturday nights
Henri's Hideaway[20]	Braamfont ein	Fully licenced	Vasco and his Italian quartet	Yes	Wednesday, Friday and Saturday nights
Eloff Restaurant[21]	Eloff Street	Bring your own liquor	Johanny Rootman's famous band	Sprung dance floor	08:30 pm to 7:00 am
Vintage at the Rosebank Hotel[22]	Rosebank	A la Carte, 40 course dinner	Hal Purky's band	Yes	Evenings
Orange Grove Hotel[23]	Houghton Estate	Fully licenced	George Hayden's band	Spacious sprung floor	Every Friday evening
Savoy Hotel[24]	de Villiers street	A la carte meals	Tappy Griffiths and His Savoy Music-makers	Yes	Every evening

[17] Advertisement, "New Casa Mia Motel", *Rand Daily Mail*, 14 December 1951, p. 10; Advertisement, "New Casa Mia Motel", *Rand Daily Mail*, 17 November 1956, p. 8.
[18] Advertisement, "Rookery Nook Fair", *Rand Daily Mail,* 12 December 1953, p. 6.
[19] Advertisement, "Dining and Dancing", *Rand Daily Mail*, 05 February 1959, p. 7.
[20] Advertisement, "Henri's Hideaway", *Rand Daily Mail,* 06 December 1958, p. 6.
[21] Advertisement, "Eloff Restaurant", *Rand Daily Mail*, 24 December 1957, p. 8.
[22] Advertisement, "Hal Purky", *Rand Daily Mail,* 06 December 1958, p. 6.
[23] Advertisement, "Orange Grove Hotel", *Rand Daily Mail*¸ 20 December 1958, p. 8; Anon., "A superb new ballroom and modern suite", *Rand Daily Mail*, 16 October 1936, p. 19.
[24] Advertisement, "Savoy Hotel", *Rand Daily Mail*¸ 29 December 1951, p. 6.

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Name of restaurant or hotel	Location	Dining options	Dedicated dance band	Dance floor	Dancing hours
252 Tavern[25]	Jeppe street	Fully licensed , family restaurant	Lesly Vig	Yes	Lunch and evening dances, Monday to Saturday
Diamond Horseshoe Night Club[26]	Bree street	Fully licenced	Yes, A French band	Yes	09:00 pm to 04:00 am
The Colony Restaurant [27]	Jan Smuts Avenue	A la carte, licenced	Yes, band members from Spain and Portugal	Yes	09:00 pm to 04:00 am
Lido Hotel and beer garden[28]	Vereenigin g Road	licenced	Star Dust Band	Open air dancing and a spacious ballroom	nightly
The Silhouette Room[29]	Leyds Street	Fully licenced	The Troubadours	Yes	8 pm to 2 am
Bal Tabarin Club[30]	de Villiers Street	Fully licenced	Douglas Finch's band and George Wooller's band	Yes	Nightly

[25] Anon., "Dining and Dancing", *Rand Daily Mail*, 16 April 1959, p. 7; Advertisement, "Family night at 252 Tavern", *Rand Daily Mail*, 30 April 1959, p. 7.
[26] Anon., "Dining and Dancing", *Rand Daily Mail*, 03 December 1959, p. 9; Anon., "Dining and Dancing", *Rand Daily Mail*, 10 December 1959, p. 10.
[27] Anon., "Dining and Dancing", *Rand Daily Mail*, 23 April 1959, p. 7; Anon., "Dining and Dancing", *Rand Daily Mail*, 06 August 1959, p. 7; Anon., "Dining and Dancing", *Rand Daily Mail*, 03 December 1959, p. 9; Anon., "Dining and Dancing", *Rand Daily Mail*, 04 December 1958, p. 10.
[28] Advertisement, "Lido Hotel", *Rand Daily Mail*, 22 December 1956, p. 6; Advertisement, "Lido new beer garden grand opening", *Rand Daily Mail*, 05 April 1956, p. 12.
[29] Anon., "Dining and Dancing", *Rand Daily Mail*, 03 December 1959, p. 9; Anon., "Dining and Dancing", *Rand Daily Mail*, 10 December 1959, p. 10.
[30] Advertisement, "The new Bal Tabarin club", *Rand Daily Mail*, 24 December 1959, p. 8.

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There was thus no shortage of social dance halls and dancing was held on most evenings and was particular popular on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday nights. Most restaurants and clubs were licenced and had extensive dining options. Some hotels and restaurants, including the Casa Mia and Rookery Nook, also employed dance hostesses.[31]

Likewise, in the township areas social dancing remained prevalent. For example, in 1952 in a regional newspaper *Egoli* reported that the "spacious hall was filled to capacity" at a concert and dance evening held at the BMSC. Johannesburg vocalist Dorothy Masuku, as well as the Johannesburg group the Manhattan Brothers performed and the evening ended with Peter Rezant's dance band the Merry Blackbirds "treat[ing] the audience with a mixed bag of ballroom dancing and jive, thus catering for all tastes".[32] Social dancing was commonplace and even the annual report of 1952 to 1953 of the Department of Native Affairs commented on the growth of social dancing in the black communities. For example, it was reported that in one of the townships, Coronationville, weekly dances were held to raise funds for the children in the township.[33] At the sixth annual Bantu Musical festival a ballroom dancing competition was also held and the report found that the "dancing section has developed to such a degree" that a separate dance festival was introduced.[34] At the Polly Street Centre, ballroom dances presented reached an average of forty per week.[35] Jürgen Schadeberg documented much of the South African music scene through his photographs in the 1950s many of which were published in the magazine *Drum.* His photographs depict African couples dancing in close embrace at clubs in Sophiatown, lively jive moves being performed by an African couple in a suit and top hat and dance bands.[36]

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[31] Advertisement, "New Casa Mia Motel", *Rand Daily Mail*, 14 December 1951, p. 10; Advertisement, "New Casa Mia Motel", *Rand Daily Mail*, 17 November 1956, p. 8; Advertisement, "Rookery Nook Fair", *Rand Daily Mail,* 12 December 1953, p. 6.
[32] Anon., "Girl with the golden voice", *Egoli*, 27 July 1952, p. 10.
[33] "City of Johannesburg. Annual report of the Manager. Non-European affairs Department 1 July 1952 to 30 June 1953", WITS, Johannesburg: A2628-A7, Non-European Affairs Department (Johannesburg), p. 13.
[34] City of Johannesburg. Annual report of the Manager. Non-European affairs Department 1 July 1952 to 30 June 1953", WITS, Johannesburg: A2628-A7, Non-European Affairs Department (Johannesburg), p. 15.
[35] City of Johannesburg. Annual report of the Manager. Non-European affairs Department 1 July 1952 to 30 June 1953", WITS, Johannesburg: A2628-A7 Non-European Affairs Department (Johannesburg), p. 16.
[36] Anon., "Fifties Glamour South Africa", http://www.Jurgenschadeberg.com, Accessed: 05 October 2023.

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As indicated in chapter 5, a number of new dance studios were also registered during the 1950s. While some studios focused on the more traditional ballroom dances like the waltz and foxtrot, others also included popular film dances like the rock ‘n’ roll. One of these was the Tommy Williams dance studio that urged dancers to:

> A BAD (sic.) dancer can ruin the pleasure of his or her partner. You don’t want to ruin your partners. You don’t want to ruin your partner’s pleasure do you? Let us make you popular by learning all the latest dances from Rock ‘n’ Roll to waltz…Don’t sit at home in your lonely room get out and make friends the easy way. By learning to dance, you will become a more likeable person and you will enjoy the fun you have been missing for so long…[37]

On 12 February 1955 a ballroom dancing school also opened at the Jubilee Centre offering classes on Saturdays between 02:30 pm and 06:00 pm and on Tuesdays between 05:00 pm and 08:00 pm. Within a month of its opening *Umteteli wa Bantu* reported a rapid increase in class attendance.[38]

Johannesburg was quickly becoming a modern city where the traditional familial connections of a decade ago were dissipating. In this urban culture the new social connections formed through activities like dancing were crucial. Patrons were also moving away from the strict religious rules imposed by the church that played such a crucial role in the previous decades. A journalist in *Umteteli wa Bantu* cautioned against the “drift from the church” noting that by the early 1950s “...dance halls, concert halls and cinemas of all nations have far bigger audience than those of any church”.[39] One dancer noted:

> There is no necessity to be lonely as there are a number of old time dancing clubs in and around Johannesburg. At these clubs members are taught to dance the old time dances [waltz, valenta, polka], which are very graceful and do not require a great deal of energy; hence folk from the age of over 40 to 80 are able to take part and enjoy dancing. One is able to dance every night of the week at one of these clubs. There is a very sociable atmosphere, and you don’t necessarily need to have a partner to enjoy dancing, as the older members see to it that no members sit out.[40]

[37] Advertisement, “Tommy Williams Dance Studio”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 07 December 1957, p. 12.
[38] Anon., “New ballroom dancing school”, *Umteteli wa Bantu*, Johannesburg, 19 March 1955, p. 7.
[39] P. Mokwena, “The drift from the church”, *Umteteli wa Bantu,* 09 July 1955, p. 6.
[40] Anon., “Dancing for the lonely”, *Rand Daily Mail,* 03 March 1958, p. 4.

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In fact, ballroom studios, like Tommy Williams dance studio, advertised dancing as a way to cure loneliness.[41]

Dancing was promoted not only for its social benefit, but also for its physical benefits. Professional dance competitors highlighted this physical nature of social dancing. As regards the international tango and rumba Open champion of 1951, "Don Pedro" wrote to the *Rand Daily Mail* that:

> Dancing gives poise to the nerves, schooling to the emotions and a harmony of beauty to the mind. In dancing no part of the body is left idle. All get some exercise, and so the whole body benefits. It is a gentle exercise and does not unduly strain or develop one set of muscles at the expense of others…[42]

In addition, it was maintained that being an accomplished ballroom dancer was also seen as a positive attribute for competing in beauty pageants.[43]

In terms of the rising animosity towards social dance in certain religious forums, there were some who even felt that the Afrikaans folk dancing, "volkspele" - that the government and church encouraged because it promoted their idea of Afrikaner culture - was not traditional at all. For instance, in 1957 in a letter to the newspaper a writer using the pseudonym "Tiekkiedraaier" declared that what the Afrikaners viewed as traditional was just another form of ballroom dancing borrowed from the West. The writer commented that:

> Surely it is time the Volkspelers' bluff was called! There is as little 'traditional' about this dancing as there is about Rock 'n' Roll…what we did do was dancing the good old waltz…[44]

Regardless of the pockets of reservation in some religious (cultural) quarters social dancing was an accepted leisure activity in most areas of Johannesburg. *Umteteli wa Bantu* even remarked that Sophiatown was "more civilized" than other townships because it had a "good quality of socialism [sic.] [socialising] provided by the number of

[41] Advertisement, "Dancing", *Rand Daily Mail,* 10 August 1957, p. 9; Advertisement, "Dancing", *Rand Daily Mail,* 12 August 1957, p. 11.
[42] Don Pedro, "Dancing most beautiful of the Arts", *Rand Daily Mail*, 07 February 1951, p. 10.
[43] Anon., "Reader's last chance to pick", *Sunday Times*, 09 August 1959, p. 28.
[44] Anon., "Volkspele are not traditional", *Rand Daily Mail*, 19 July 1957, p. 11.

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entertainment halls" with five alone in Sophiatown.[45] Furthermore, South African trumpeter Hugh Masekela also noted how popular music and dancing in the township nightclubs were and how it was enjoyed by all racial groups. He stated:

> The only commercially viable music of the mid 50's period, and the only style the government allowed to be played to white audiences, was the nightclub revue….we used to play all over South Africa, and were the first black show which authorities allowed to be viewed by whites and mixed races.[46]

Mayibuye, a supplement to *The Bantu World* reported in 1954 how prevalent the jitterbug still was in the dancing halls. The paper reported that in the Orlando township:

> It is another evening of song and dance. The Manhattan Brothers have finished their show. Now they are down on the floor among the dancers. Up on the stage, the Jazz Maniacs are making music. The jitterbugs are weaving their rhythmic patterns on the dance floor…[47]

During the 1950s, some of the many examples of dance functions organized through clubs and parties included the Y.M.C.A. that held regular dance evenings for teenagers at their hall in Johannesburg.[48] During another event organized by the Canadian Women's Club at the Langham Hotel in Johannesburg "modern and old-time dances" were danced. Alongside the old-time square dances, a "red Indian dance" and a "French Canadian folk dance" patrons also enjoyed the modern jive dances.[49] In 1957 dance studios like Tommy Williams's dance studio in Bree Street offered dance classes specifically aimed at teenagers.[50] Clubs continued to host special dance evenings at their halls. For example, in 1959 the Caledonian society hosted a dance that featured a cabaret show, Lancashire clog dances and a ballroom dance exhibition followed by an evening of dancing.[51]

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[45] Mouthpiece, "In the march of time", Umteteli wa Bantu, 18 March 1946, p. 4.
[46] C. de Ledesma, "Trumpet African Hugh Masekela", *Regae & African Beat*, February 1985, pp. 30-31.
[47] D. Mdlede, "'The Manhattan Brothers'", *Mayibuye. The Bantu World,* 03 July 1954, p. 8.
[48] Anon., "Teen-age dance", *Rand Daily Mail*, 18 April 1950, p. 7.
[49] Anon., "Canada calling", *Rand Daily Mail*, 17 April 1953, p. 7.
[50] Advertisement," Dancing", *Rand Daily Mail*, 17 August 1957, p. 9; Advertisement, "Tommy Williams Dance Studio", *Rand Daily Mail*, 07 December 1957, p. 12.
[51] Anon., "Flags fly", *Rand Daily Mail*, 01 December 1959, p. 9.

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A wide spectrum of political parties also often celebrated functions and election victories or raised funds with formal dances.[52] In 1952 the United Party organised its biggest fundraising event of the year at Johannesburg Zoo Lake. The newspaper reported that:

> The girls are said to be 'the United Party's best-lookers' and include nearly 30 'midinettes' (assistants) from the French community in Johannesburg. Dancing will be continuous throughout the day, with sessions of 'jive,' square dancing old-fashioned waltzing and modern ballroom dancing.[53]

Another United Party dancing event was their victory dance at the Langham Hotel in Johannesburg, with Cabaret stars including Rita Roseman and Robert MacBay.[54] Following the arrest of 156 Congress members of the ANC in 1957, some action groups also used social dancing events to help raise funds for their legal defence. The religious group "Christian Action" hosted a concert to raise funds for this cause. Besides the dance music played by "Humphrey Lyttelton and his band" and "Johnny Dankworth and his Orchestra", the main attraction of this concert was the African American guest artist Lionel Hampton.[55] Hampton played songs featuring popular dance hits of the time including "Hamp's Boogie Woogie" and "Hey-ba-ba-re-bop".[56] Hampton's lived experience in a racially divided USA resonated with the social dancers and musicians of Johannesburg. He was also subjected to exclusion and discrimination because of his race and, similar to Rezant's experience in Johannesburg, as mentioned in the previous chapter, he struggled to find work as a musician in Los Angeles and was paid about a fifth of his white counterparts.[57] Another dance event to raise funds for the treason trail defense was a "concert and jive" held at the Community Hall in Bloemfontein in 1957. A number of Johannesburg dance bands played at this dancing fund raiser including the Modernaires.[58] Dance continued to permeate the social Johannesburg landscape across race, class and politics.

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[52] Anon., "U.P. dance tonight", *Rand Daily Mail*, 23 July 1952, p. 7.
[53] Anon., "Unity Rally. Strauss will give second 'report to the nation", *Rand Daily Mail*, 04 June 1952, p. 9.
[54] Anon., "U.P. dance tonight", *Rand Daily Mail*, 23 July 1952, p. 7.
[55] "Souvenir programme. Christian Action", 1957, WITS, Johannesburg: AD1812. 1956 Treason Trial.
[56] "Souvenir programme. Christian Action", 1957, WITS, Johannesburg: AD1812. 1956 Treason Trial.
[57] A. Macías, *Mexican American Mojo: Popular Music, Dance, and Urban Culture in Los Angeles, 1935–1968*, (Durham: Duke University, 2008), pp. 43, 68.
[58] Advertisement, "Introduction to the 20th century Jazz Wagon. Bloemfontein Jazz Parade presents to you a variety Day Break Concert and Jive", *New Age*, 26 December 1957, p. 8.

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6.2.2 New dance bodies and new collaborations

Despite the local successes and growth of the social dance industry and the multipurpose dance halls and nightclubs, dance commentators in South Africa continued to uphold the British dance hall as the example of the "most successful" ballroom industry. One of the big hindrances for ballroom dancing in the city was, as the president of the National Association of Dancing Teachers in Britain noted during his tour in Johannesburg, the lack of space. Rogers explained that:

> We [Tommy Rogers and his partner and wife Hyde Lamont] were invited to tour South Africa by the S.A. Dancing Teachers Association. We found that your good amateur dancers seem to dance in a cramped space. They lack the easy freedom of movement which characterises the action of polished dancers in Britain and other countries…I attribute this to the lack of palais de danse type of dance hall, where promising young dancers can practise regularly in suitable surroundings under a band playing strict dance tempo. In South Africa the 'night club shuffle' is too much in evidence.[59]

Given the well-structured infrastructure established by the 1950s in the UK it was no wonder that SA dance commentators still looked up to the British social dance industry. Moreover, Johannesburg teachers or dancers that trained in England continued to be highly sought after.[60]

The local media also regularly reported on the success of the white ballroom dance association and especially on the close connections that were established with British dance teachers. During this decade, the SADTA also formed closer ties with dance associations in South Africa's neighbouring country, Rhodesia (today Zimbabwe).[61] In 1952, for example the media reported that:

> Mr. C. Thiebault and Miss S. Brock, of London, and a number of leading South African teachers will comprise the board of adjudicators at the national ballroom dancing championship, organised by the South African Dance Teachers' Association, on December 8 in the Johannesburg City Hall. These ballroom

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[59] Anon., "Too much 'night club' shuffle. Dancers in S.A. lack space", *Sunday Times*, Johannesburg, 08 November 1953, p. 12.
[60] A. H. Franks, "The 'English style' of dancing is being copied overseas", *Rand Daily Mail*, 29 August 1957, p. 13.
[61] Anon., "Festival, ball, and art show in Pretoria. Dance championships", *Rand Daily Mail,* 03 December 1952, p. 7.

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> championships are the finals of the provincial heats, held in nine centres of the Union and the Rhodesias [sic]. They will take the form of a ball, and trophies will be presented to winning couples by the Mayor and Mayoress of Johannesburg…[62]

In 1955 tenth anniversary of the founding of the dance magazine the *South African Dancing Times* was celebrated with a lavish grand ball and championship in the Johannesburg City Hall. Competitors not only danced ballroom dances, but also old-time dances and Latin American dances.[63]

Similarly, the black ballroom competition scene experienced immense growth in the early 1950s. Small clubs, dance teachers and dancing schools formed formal provincial federations. The exact date of the founding of each provincial group is unfortunately not clearly recorded. For example, already in 1946 *Umteteli wa Bantu* reported on the first "Eastern Province Non-European Ballroom Dancing Championship" described as a very successful provincial ballroom competition.[64] The newspaper highlighted the talented couples including George Mpamou, Sam Semela and White Nyakatonje. The article indicated how:

> In the waltz, George proved himself a master of floorcraft. He used syncopated movements to good advantage. Sam had also good movements, with White following. The Tango brought Sam to his own with a bang; he gave good display, with White after him and George following… In the Slow Fox-Trot, George again gave a superb display. In the Quickstep, White had covered the floor excellently. George gave him a good fight, gliding round the floor with an ease of movement that was admired by all.[65]

In July 1955 *Umteteli wa Bantu* reported on a general meeting of the Transvaal Non-European Ballroom Dancing Association at the Jubilee centre in Johannesburg. The meeting discussed the holding of ballroom dancing competitions and championships, and the participation of the Association in the national ballroom dancing championships.[66] The South African Non-European Ballroom Dancing Federation was established later in 1955

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[62] Anon., "Festival, ball, and art show in Pretoria. Dance championships", *Rand Daily Mail,* 03 December 1952, p. 7.
[63] Anon., "The tenth anniversary grand ball", *Rand Daily Mail*, 11 July 1955, p. 5.
[64] Anon., "News from various centre. Port Elizabeth", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 28 December 1946, p. 5.
[65] Anon., "News from various centre. Port Elizabeth", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 28 December 1946, p. 5.
[66] Anon., "Ballroom dancers to meet", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 09 July 1955, p. 9.

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by delegates from the Western Province, Eastern Province, Transvaal, and Natal. The Federation's major goal was to provide better entertainment and more national competitions for ballroom dancers. The new dance federation decided that only one entity should be recognised by the Federation in each province, and that this body must be representative of all non-Europeans. The Federation also started drafting a constitution for the new ballroom federation. It was also decided that the delegates from throughout the country will convene in Johannesburg in 1956 and that ballroom dancing competitions would be held at the same time in the city.[67]

This period also saw more intra and inter-regional exchanges with music and social dancing groups in other provinces in Africa. In 1955 for example, *Umteteli wa Bantu* reported that one of the accomplished Johannesburg music groups had a successful tour to Congo. To celebrate the groups 21 years and their recent successes the BMSC hosted a concert and dance with the Merry Blackbirds.[68] The *Drum* also reported in 1953 how the Harlem Swingsters had a successful tour to Lourenço Marques stating that the Portuguese papers reported the band was the "best entertainment group we've seen for a long time".[69] This period was also marked by closer economic ties with South Africa's African neighbours like Rhodesia. These records, as well as others like the "Western Crooners" with their 1953 jive dance hits "Bye-Bye Baby" and "Tsotsi" were also imported to Rhodesia.[70] Dance become more organised in recognised bodies and also expanded its remit across borders.

6.2.3 New dances and new music

As explained in chapter 4, Johannesburg dancers and dance bands had a longstanding history with the American minstrel groups and American inspired dances like the Jitterbug. In the 1950s this association became even stronger.[71] This is evident in contemporary advertisements inviting Johannesburg citizens to enjoy "South Africa's first all-juvenile

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[67] Anon., "Ballroom dancers form federation", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 29 October 1955, p. 7.
[68] Anon., "21 next month", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 29 October 1955, p. 7.
[69] Anon., "Business is brisk with the big boys back. Artistas Negros!", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, April 1953, p. 25.
[70] Advertisement, "BB Records. Your best buy. New smash hits for Rhodesia", WITS, Johannesburg: A 427. African newspaper advertisements, 1953-1957.
[71] C. Ballantine, *Marabi nights. Jazz, 'race' and society in early apartheid South Africa*, (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2012), p. 119.

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minstrel show" at the Plaza in 1950.[72] Ballantine also recorded how inspired the 1950s singing troupe, the Manhattan Brothers, was with their American counterparts. The group was founded in the late 1940s by Nathan 'Dambuza' Mdlele, Joseph (Joe) Mogotsi, Rufus Khoza, and Ronnie Sehume, all of whom grew up in Pimville, Johannesburg. They apparently enjoyed watching films and listening to records by African-American musicians such as the Mills Brothers, Inkspots, and Andrews Sisters.[73] During an interview, Mogotsi remembered how they incorporated the dances of American performers Fred Astaire and the Nicholas Brothers with their iconic leap and flips. He explained:

> …they used to do a tumbling sort of dance and step on the wall and you know; an acrobatic sort of thing. Which eventually we ourselves in our variety we used to practice and we managed to get it right also.[74]

Indeed, films by iconic dancers like Astaire regularly featured in "Suburban theatres" like the Claredon in Hillbrow. In June 1956 Fred Astaire and Leslie Caron performed live for example in the musical romance *Daddy Long Legs.*[75]

In 1954 the dancing fraternity was augmented by American ballroom master Arthur Murray opening a new dance studio in Jeppe Street, Johannesburg, adding to the 300 studios all over the world.[76] A 1955 advertisement highlighted the potential health and social benefits that learning to dance at "America's largest dance studios", including having fun, becoming popular, learning new dances and becoming healthy.[77] In 1956 the dancing studio promised potential clients that:

> Even if you're a beginner, your dormant ability will show to an experienced teacher. You see, you start right out dancing when you learn the Arthur Murray Way. And thanks to his exclusive 'Magic Step to Popularity' the key to all dances, you really can go dancing after just one lesson…[78]

Arthur Murray studios were also opened in other South African cities during this time including Pretoria. The studios had an exclusive following and focused much on the social

[72] Advertisement, "All-juvenile minstrel show", *Rand Daily Mail,* 28 December 1950, p. 4.
[73] Ballantine, *Marabi nights*, 2012, p. 119.
[74] Ballantine, *Marabi nights*, 2012, p. 120.
[75] Advertisement, "Suburban theatres", *Rand Daily Mail*, 09 June 1956, p. 6.
[76] Advertisement, "Arthur Murray", *Rand Daily Mail,* 14 January 1955, p. 6.
[77] Advertisement, "Arthur Murray", *Rand Daily Mail,* 14 January 1955, p. 6.
[78] Advertisement, "Arthur Murray. Leave it to us", *Rand Daily Mail,* 24 April 1956, p. 6.

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aspect of dancing, that formed a tight knit group. For example, a student noted how after joining the Arthur Murray studio and attending many of their club functions in 1953:

> Ja, ek was altyd skaam, teruggetrokke en het nooit plesier geken nie. Toe besoek ek die Arthur Murray dansskool…binne 'n kort tydsbestek het ek goed leer dans en baie vriende gemaak op die wonderlike partytjies en uitstappies wat deur die ateljee gereel is. (I was always shy, introvert and never knew pleasure. Then I joined the Arthur Murray dance school. Within a short period, I learned how to dance well and made lots of friends at the wonderful parties and excursions organised by the school).[79]

American styled dance performances also remained popular styles at halls. For example, in 1957 at the Selbourne Hall calypsos and rock 'n' roll were added to the township Jazz tribute.[80] Calypsos was performed by the local band Goodwill Galede and the all-female singing group the Skylarks. The music had a distinctive Jamaican sound, but with words in Zulu reflecting on the admixture of overseas and local elements. On this evening the local group the Harmonaires provided rock 'n' roll music for the dancers. The *Rand Daily Mail* reported that:

> The show includes every facet of non-European musical expression, from the primitive harmonies of a penny whistle group composed of children, through the unaccompanied traditional Xhosa laments to modern American Jazz. The British television producer Robert Halford-Davies, at present in the Union, is interested in making a pilot film of Township Jazz Tribute [sic] to show to overseas audiences.[81]

Another example is that of some South African Championship dancers who performed rock 'n' roll in Jack Levins' "hilarious!...sensational…Gamats Coon fiesta".[82] While all races could attend functions like these, as explained in earlier chapters, the racial restrictions prevented different racial groups from attending together. To abide by the law, the times of performances were split, and white citizens and black citizens had to buy their tickets at different venues. At the 'Coon Carnival Festival… the first official Cape Coloured Coon Carnival' Europeans could attend the show during daytime and purchase their tickets at the Ward & Salmons department store or directly at the Wembley station. In contrast "Non-Europeans" had to purchase their tickets beforehand at the Barclay shop in

[79] Advertisement, "Arthur Murray dansskool", *Die Perdeby,* 14 Maart 1958, p. 12.
[80] Anon., "Calypsos now at township jazz tribute", *Rand Daily Mail*, 23 April 1957, p. 6.
[81] Anon., "Calypsos now at township jazz tribute", *Rand Daily Mail*, 23 April 1957, p. 6.
[82] Advertisement, "Gamats Coon fiesta", *Rand Daily Mail*, 06 December 1958, p. 6.

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Diagonal street.[83] It appears as if black patrons could only attend the evening shows. The show included "hundreds of 'Coons' to entertain you with Dancing Antics, Laughter Song…" and also featured dancing after the show and prize giving with the dance band Dixie Merrymakers.[84] Furthermore, in the local press, dancers were also invited to dance in the "Hollywood Room" accompanied by Max Adler's band at the Grand National Hotel in Rissik Street, again highlighting the American influence and permeating acculturation.[85]

This period further saw the introduction of new dances imported either directly from the USA through learning the steps showcased in films, or indirectly via the UK through travelling dancers. These dances included the mambo and the bebop that were especially fitting for the South African night clubs with their smaller dance floors.[86] For example, the *Sunday Times,* highlighted local dancers in Johannesburg's fascination with the new dance. "Sophisticated night-clubbers" at the Bal Tabarin in Johannesburg "…who had gone on to the floor to dance, halted entranced before the band stand and swayed to the fascinating rhythms coming from his saxophone".[87] In addition, the British saxophonist, Johnny Dankworth, was famous for his racy bebop jazz.[88] As in previous decades, new dances were introduced through films and then taught in the dancing schools, or copied in clubs. For instance, in 1956 the film *Mambo Mambo* was shown in the His Majesty's Theatre. This Paramount Pictures movie starred Silvana Mangano playing an "exiting story of a slum girl who attains integrity through her experiences with men and her love of dance".[89] In response to the film showing, the Arthur Murray's School of dancing started to offer Mambo classes. They advertised: "See Mambo at His Majesty's and learn the Mambo and be able to dance to this exiting music…".[90]

Other extremely popular dance focused films included *Les Girls* featuring American "dance for the common man" Gene Kelly and *Jailhouse Rock* featuring American "King of Rock 'n' Roll" Elvis Presley, both screened at the Metro cinema in 1957.[91]

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[83] Advertisement, "Coon Carnival Competition", *Rand Daily Mail*, 20 December 1952, p. 6.
[84] Advertisement, "Coon Carnival Competition", *Rand Daily Mail*, 20 December 1952, p. 6.
[85] Advertisement "Grand National Hotel", *Rand Daily Mail*¸ 28 December 1950, p. 4.
[86] Anon., "A woman's diary", *Sunday Times*, 20 January 1952, p. 18.
[87] Anon., "Sax- and Johnny- stopped the dance", *Sunday Times*, 20 June 1954, p. 14.
[88] Anon., "Sax- and Johnny- stopped the dance", *Sunday Times*, 20 June 1954, p. 14.
[89] Advertisement, "Mambo Mambo", *Rand Daily Mail*, 31 August 1956, p. 8.
[90] Advertisement, "Arthur Murray's School of dancing", *Rand Daily Mail*, 31 August 1956, p. 8.
[91] Advertisement, "Metro", *Rand Daily Mail*, 31 December 1957, p. 6.

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Apart from rock ‘n’ roll, square dancing was another American style dance that gained favour amongst Johannesburg’s social dancing. This included square dancing events organised at the Northcliff Hotel.[92] Square dancing events were even held in the generally more conservative Pretoria.[93] The *Rand Daily Mail* reported that in 1956:

> Square dancing is being revived in Johannesburg. The Hollywood ‘cowboy’ singer, Tex Ritter, who recently visited the Union for a charity show has agreed to become honorary life president of the recently-formed Square Dancing Association of South Africa. On July 4 – American Independence Day – a square dance will be held in the R.H.O.B. Hall, Troyeville, Johannesburg.[94]

In 1957 the *Rand Daily Mail* further noted how rock ‘n’ roll was replacing ballroom, and spurred a new interest in social dancing in Johannesburg. The newspaper reported:

> Johannesburg dance studios are not losing money because of Princess Margaret’s approval of rock ‘n’ roll music. The week the ‘Rand Daily Mail’ carried an item about British ballroom dance teachers blaming the Princess for a decline in their incomes. The teachers said that since it was discovered that the Princess liked rock ‘n’ roll music, interest in conventional ballroom dancing had declined. Dance teachers in Johannesburg yesterday said that, while there had been a falloff in the number of pupils wanting to be taught competition dancing, there had been an increase in the numbers wanting to learn social dancing. And social dancing includes jive, rock ‘n’ roll, the ‘nite-club-shuffle’ and any new steps which happened to catch the social fancy.[95]

Even some middle-aged dancers were reported to prefer the new rock ‘n’ roll dances feeling that the traditional ballroom dances (e.g. waltz, foxtrot, and quickstep) had become “old fashioned”.[96] For example in 1957 a self-described “oldster” of fifty described rock ‘n’ roll as the:

> …culmination of…modern dancing. Dancing among the young during the past 20 years, however, has been a revolt in the right direction. The young want to dance not shuffle and dancing means movement. It means swing your limbs and swaying your body and perhaps even flinging your torso…[97]

[92] Advertisement, “Northcliff square dancing”, *Rand Daily Mail,* 10 July 1952, p. 6.
[93] Anon., “Square dancing comes to Pretoria”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 23 July 1952, p. 7.
[94] Anon., “Square dancing is back in city”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 03 July 1956, p. 4.
[95] Anon., “No dance fall-off”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 15 November 1957, p. 16.
[96] Anon., “‘Oldster’ approves of rock ‘n’ roll”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 18 January 1957, p. 12.
[97] Anon., “‘Oldster’ approves of rock ‘n’ roll”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 18 January 1957, p. 12.

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The 1950s witnessed a new era of music and dances which embraced interventions from both America and the UK.

6.2.4 New industries and new dance products

Social dancing studios remained a popular means of learning the current international dancing steps. They also continued to be a lucrative source of income for professional social dancers. For instance, in 1959 an advertisement of Jack Orkin's dance studio in Eloff street advertised ballroom dancing, Cha cha cha, samba rumba and swing classes. The prices of the classes ranged from half-hour private lessons for £1 to couple lessons amounting for £2. The studio also offered weekly social dance group classes on a Tuesday evening from 08:00 pm to 09:30 pm. Keeping up with the popular dance fashion of the time, Orkin's also offered short half an hour mid-week Cha cha cha class on a Wednesday afternoon rating at one for 2/6 per class. The studio also saw the market potential for offering social dance classes aimed at teenagers on a Wednesday afternoon and late Saturday morning for 2/- per class.[98]

Indeed, being a dance teacher offered relatively stable employment. For instance, in 1954 the local press printed an advertisement requesting assistants willing to learn how to dance to become dance teachers at:

> America's number one ballroom dancing studio offers free training to a few men and women, 21 to 28 years, to qualify them for positions as interviewers, supervisors and teachers with earnings up to £25 per week, when the studio opens. No dancing experience required.[99]

In comparison the standard wage paid to a "native" municipal worker was £8 12s 2d.[100]

Another industry that also continued to feature and prosper was the selling of instructional books on social dancing. In a recommendation column offering advice on Christmas gifts a *Sunday Times* journalist recommended:

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[98] Advertisement, "Jack Orkin", *Sunday Times,* 16 August 1959, p. 7.
[99] Advertisement, "Assistants for dancing studio", *Rand Daily Mail*, 24 October 1954, p. 16.
[100] Anon., "Pretoria Council's Native Wages critised", *Rand Daily Mail*, 12 July 1955, p. 12.

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> Now a book for the older girls. It is the ‘Girls’ Book of Ballroom Dancing’ by Vera Wilson (published by Burke). It tells you all about the history of dancing, there is a long illustrated section on ‘Learning to Dance’ which shows and describes the steps of the waltz; the quickstep; the foxtrot; the rumba; the samba; ‘cha-cha’ and rock ‘n’ roll. Another article deals with party games and dances, which should give useful ideas for planning a party and there is a very sensible section on Your Personal Appearance,’ with advice on hair-styles, make-up, dress, and shoes. The section on ‘Ballroom dancing as a Career’ should be useful to those who think of dancing as a career.[101]

Hostesses that could dance well were also sought after. For example, in 1957 the “Nightclub and Social Hostess Agency “Envoy” advertised:

> …charming and attractive social hostesses to accompany you to night clubs, dinner dansant, theatre, cinema, or any form of evening, public social entertainment, Hours 10:30 am to 10:30 pm daily, excluding Suns [Sundays].[102]

Dance bands also advertised their services in the local newspapers. One of these was “Eric Jansen’s personal Orchestra” who advertised in 1951 that they played for dances, weddings and parties and only charged “moderate fees”.[103]

Musical records featuring social dance favourites continued to be a popular commodity that was imported. Furthermore, due to technological innovations, records and the production of records became faster and cheaper.[104] What seemed almost incomprehensible a decade before, the dance band being replaced by recording now appeared more viable. Initially this benefited the social dance industry, allowing both musicians to record music more easily and the dancing public to be exposed to a cheaper form of international dance hits. Indeed, during the latter half of the decade mention is increasingly made of local musicians recording specifically for the social dance industry. For example, on 12 December 1959 the *Rand Daily Mail* reported that:

> Another prolific South African disc star is Albie Louw (piano) who has now made nine LPS. His latest is titled DANCE WITH ALBIE (H.M.V.). He has chosen a number of youth-appeal tunes like ‘Tell

[101] Anon., “If your choosing books for Christmas”, *Sunday Times,* 13 December 1959, p. 41.
[102] Advertisement, “Personal”, *Rand Daily Mail,* 18 June 1957, p. 12.
[103] Advertisement, “Personal”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 16 July 1951, p. 2.
[104] Anon., “MP3s”, *History 101*, Netflix, 25 August 2022, ITN productions.

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> Him No', 'Personally,' 'Venus' and 'Say One for Me,' but he presents them without too much rock-rhythm pollution.[105]

Popular vinyl records by Capitol-Stereo featured American bands and were a highly sought after commodity. The local press nick named the brand the "Swinging Stereo" and reported that:

> …the top American big bands are given star billing…Billy May kicks off with 'Solving the Riddle'. He is followed by Glen Gray, Ray Anthony Paul Weston and Kenyan Hopkins. Les Brown plays 'Some Enchanted Evening,' Harry James 'You're My Thrill,' Stan Kenton 'I'll be tired of You' plus Jackie Gleason and Alvino Rey. Two more big-band discs are 'Dancing over the Waves'… and 'Dance Party'. The latter features Ray Anthony, but it's not his usual swinging style you'll be hearing. Like the cover suggest, this is dream-time, slow-tempo dance music for couples who are happy just being in each other's arms on a dance floor.[106]

However, ultimately dancing bands that were already struggling because of restrictions, such as the night passes and low paying gigs, suffered because of this newer technology.

Another series of advertisements included dance records by the "De Brown Darkies" and "Los Angela's Orchestra" and "Ntemie's Alexandra All Star Band" distributed by *Trek* records that played hits like "Jiggy Jig Jive" and "Solid Jive" in 1954.[107] "Gallo (Africa)" also advertised "8 great new Jive records" featuring dance bands like the "African Dance Band of Rhodesia" whose dance albums were also sold in Johannesburg.[108] Dancing clothes and especially dancing shoes were other popular sales items. For example, for the New Year's Eve festivities the *Rand Daily Mail* advertised that the public should "…dance the New Year in with evening shoes from Dodos".[109]

The prominent social impact that ballroom dancing played was also visible in the advertisement of the time. Advertisements featuring African ballroom dancers promoting products in newspapers and magazines like *The Bantu World*, *Zonk, Umteteli wa Bantu*

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[105] Anon., "Nine discs", *Rand Daily Mail*, 12 December 1959, p. 6.
[106] Anon., "Ten bands", *Rand Daily Mail,* 12 December 1959, p. 6.
[107] Advertisement, "Trek D.C. Records", WITS, Johannesburg: A 427. African newspaper advertisements, 1953-1957.
[108] Advertisement, "Gallotone and Decca Records", July 1952, p. 6, WITS, Johannesburg: A 427. African newspaper advertisements, 1953-1957.
[109] Advertisement, "Dodos", *Rand Daily Mail*, 29 December 1954, p. 8.

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and *Drum* were common-place. These advertisements not only reflect on the importance of ballroom dancing in the community, but also highlight how social dancing was being used as a commodity. For example, in 1954 “Lewis’s B.B. kidney and bladder tablets” were being advertised in *Umteteli wa Bantu* by the winners of the “All South African ballroom dancing champions”, Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Gordon. They explained the benefits of taking these tablets as follows:

> Dancing demands energy, endurance, and tip-top health. I owe my winning of the All South African Ballroom Dancing Championships to being absolutely fit and am happy to give a big hand to Lewis’s B.B., famous kidney and blood purifying tablets, for all body pains and impure blood. They are excellent. Lewis’s B.B., famous kidney and bladder give me zip. As a dancer I find I need something I call zip. Zip means heaps of health, energy and go; also means healthy kidneys and blood. Lewis’s B.B. tablets tone up the system and keep a man right on top of his form. They are vital for everyone.[110]

In 1955 an advertisement for Golden Cross full cream sweetened condensed milk featured Reginald Gumede and Dalphine Theys, the Transvaal Non-European Professional Dancing Champions. Both are pictured in waltz pose while enjoying the condensed milk claiming that it will put a “swing in your step”.[111] (See Figure 5: Gold Cross advertisement, 1955).

A 1956 advertisement for “Karroo freckle and complexion cream” in the *Zonk* were also advertised by Miss Dolphine Thys [sic] a “…typical modern lovely and a ballroom dancing champion”.[112] The cream was advertised to make your skin light and give you the perfect make-up.[113] Likewise the white press also advertised materials through social dancing. For example, in 1959 a couple is shown while doing one of the popular swing-out steps in the jive advertising that Lux soap kept clothes looking new.[114]

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[110] Advertisement, “Lewis B.B. tablets”, *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 10 April 1954, p. 7.
[111] Advertisement, “Golden Cross. Extra richness puts the swing in your step”, *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 19 March 1955, p. 7.
[112] “Karroo creams”, *Zonk*, July 1956. WITS, Johannesburg: A 427, African newspaper advertisements, 1953-1957.
[113] “Karroo creams”, *Zonk*, July 1956. WITS, Johannesburg: A 427, African newspaper advertisements, 1953-1957.
[114] Advertisement, “Lux-washed things last longer”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 11 June 1959, p. 7.

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GOLD CROSS

EXTRA RICHNESS PUTS THE

SWING IN OUR STEP

—say REGINALD GUMEDE and DALPHINE THEYS—Transvaal Non-European Professional Dancing Champions; Former S.A. Non-European Open Dancing Champions; Former S.A. Non-European Amateur Dancing Champions.

With Reginald and Dalphine, as with other active leading people, GOLD CROSS MILK is right in the groove for real richness and strength. GOLD CROSS MILK is so wonderfully rich it makes you feel good and fit, whether you have it with your tea, porridge, on your bread, or just by itself! GOLD CROSS MILK is so extra rich and strong, it goes much further. Get GOLD CROSS MILK today.

Reginald and Dalphine enjoying GOLD CROSS MILK'S extra richness with their tea.

GOLD CROSS
CONDENSED MILK
FULL CREAM SWEETENED

GOLD CROSS

FULL CREAM SWEETENED CONDENSED MILK

gives you more strength and energy

GC-2-82

Figure 5: Gold Cross advertisement, 1955

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Peter Rezant, the band leader of the Merry Blackbirds was featured not only in the "Biro magic pen" advertisement writing his music, but also in a Vick inhaler advertisement that, according to the advertisement, relieved his head cold allowing him to lead his band.[115] Dancers also advertised Tampax tampons,[116] Lifebuoy soap[117] and Colgate cream.[118] Dance's prevalence in society was also apparent across the commercial spectrum. Products both related and unrelated to dance were aligned with this popular pastime.

6.3 The end of an era

6.3.1 Changing perception of the female body

While new dance venues, new dances, new influences, and new commodities supported and helped to grow social dancing in the 1950s, the dance fraternity faced numerous challenges which it struggled to overcome. The end of the Second World War saw a drastic shift within the gender and social dynamics on an international and local level. During the Second World War women supported both family life and industries, while men were away fighting. Upon their return, women were forced out of employment and back to the domestic domain, both by employers and by the returning heroes.[119] This notion was also evident in the Johannesburg press. "The Housewife is an asset" … reported the *Rand Daily Mail…* "the wife creates the home for her family - a refuge for the husband after a day of effort and worry".[120] This negation of the women to the house was especially evident in the dance hall fashion of the time. The "New Look" fashion of the late 1940s and 1950s was reminiscent of the Victorian Age when middle and higher middle-class women typically did not have formal employment. Unlike the more casual style preferred by men, women's fashion became very feminine, formal and opulent with slender waists, wide skirts, and high heels, symbolising the "return to a more conservative, paternalistic order".[121] For example in 1959 the *Rand Daily Mail* advised that:

> What style are you going to choose for your New Year dance frock?

[115] Advertisement, "Biro", *Drum*, July 1953, p. 16; Advertisement, "Vicks inhaler", *Drum*, May 1953, p. 30.
[116] Advertisement, "Tampax", *Drum,* September 1956, p. 68.
[117] Advertisement, "Lifebuoy", *Drum,* April 1956, p. 73.
[118] Advertisement, "Colgate", *Drum*, July 1958, p. 10.
[119] Anon., "Pointless effort", *Rand Daily Mail,* 10 July 1952, p. 6.
[120] Anon., "Yes, wives are and asset", *Rand Daily Mail,* 11 December 1958, p. 11.
[121] M. L. Damhorst; K. A. Miller & Susan O. Michelman (eds.), *The meanings of dress,* (New York:Fairchild Publisher, 1999), pp 81-86.

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> Is it going to be long, short, or are you going to compromise by wearing a combination of the two – knee-length in the front and dipping to the floor at the back?...The distinctive evening gown...is in crinkled grey crepe silk with a floral pattern…a rose at knee-height gathers the skirt, permitting a discreet glimpse of the silken hose… The short evening gown…[with] satin ribbon highlight [sic] the waistline and loop upon loop of white organdie cascade down the skirt. The model hairstyle is typical of the feeling in hair this season – flat at the sides and high on top. The ball dress…features a full skirt gathered to the back…is in hibiscus-pink slipper satin and the deeper pink satin also swathes the bust…[122]

In his study of popular music from the late 1940s and early 1950s, Ballantine also observed this shift in gender dynamics in Johannesburg. He noted how popular music was subjected to gender stereotyping and becoming more masculine.[123] While women demanded equality on many fronts, on the stage however all-female musician groups were disappearing and when women did form part of a band it was for their "sexy, decorative qualities" and not for their musical experience or ability.[124] Nathan Mdledle, member of the Manhattan Brothers, accused women (wives) of causing "endless trouble" and preventing musicians from performing at dances.

> Some nights we had to go to their homes to prove to their wives that they were really booked for a show, and were not ducking out for a night's fun alone…Wives were a big trouble. They were jealous of their husbands going out to the dances and concerts while they had to stay at home, and we often had to talk nicely and fast and to get the musicians into the car and into the show.[125]

At the same time, however Ballantine points out that while men where demeaning the roles played by women, they also expressed sorrow for the suffering felt by their women through their music.[126] Women, noted Ballantine, were simultaneously made to be "evil, infantized and objectified".[127] This duality in the social memory is especially evident in the city's leisure history. Images portrayed the modern, "perfect" and "happier" women as

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[122] Anon., "Whichever you choose – you'll still be right", *Rand Daily Mail*, 31 December 1959, p. 5.
[123] C. Ballantine, "Gender, Migrancy, and South African Popular Music in the Late 1940s and the 1950s", *Ethnomusicology*, 44(3), pp. 376, 378, 382.
[124] Ballantine, "Gender, Migrancy, and South African Popular Music", *Ethnomusicology*, pp. 376, 378, 382.
[125] Ballantine, "Gender, Migrancy, and South African Popular Music", *Ethnomusicology*, p. 383.
[126] Ballantine, "Gender, Migrancy, and South African Popular Music", *Ethnomusicology*, pp. 376, 378, 382.
[127] Ballantine, "Gender, Migrancy, and South African Popular Music", *Ethnomusicology*, pp. 376, 378, 382.

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staying at home and raising children – images that are blatantly apparent in the media and advertisement as shown above. The *Sunday Times,* for example, also asked whether the feminine sex is "better off than they were in 1870s, because despite the 1952 "…freedom, careers, equality, washing machines, a vote, nylon underwear…" a woman of the 1870s:

> …could always rely on Papa…had children who knew they were meant to be seen and not heard, servants - unlimited, meek and cheap all day to do housekeeping, and was never questioned if she decided to take an afternoon nap.[128]

Additionally, the magazine *Drum* emphasised the significance of femininity in both domestic and performative contexts. In 1954, the *Drum* conducted interviews with a dance band duo from the "African Jazz" band. Mavis, a homemaker and vocalist for the Dixie Merrymakers, was married to Bill, a cinema operator and guitarist. According to the newspaper, there was a prevailing belief among female vocalists that in order to achieve stardom in the music industry, one must possess the ability to perform energetic and captivating dance moves, reminiscent of the iconic Mae West, moving "…hip left and hip right and hip-hip hooray".[129] However, Mavis, the ideal homemaker, who is stereotyped as possessing expertise in blues music and emotive charms, but exudes an endearing sense of "feminine grace" as she stands, captivating the audience with her expressive hand gestures and captivating gaze.[130]

This 1950s image of the modern urban women relegated to be the housewife, partner to her husband, worker and mother reminds vividly of a Western women in a heterogenous monogamous relationship. This was very far removed from earlier in the century where women – white and black - were positioned more centrally in society. In the context of social dancing, this positioning was also a far cry from the traditional imagery of the African polygamous relationships, where wives were often one of many. Moreover, in terms of dancing the traditional African dances were typically group single sex dances. In the city space these were replaced by social couple dancing in line with the modern urban trend. This scenario was also evident in other parts of the African continent. As discussed in the literature review, Callaci considers this in the context of Tanzanian social dance where

[128] Anon., "A woman's diary", *Sunday Times*, 20 January 1952, p. 18.
[129] Anon., "Each has two jobs", *Drum*, April 1954, p. 21.
[130] Anon., "Each has two jobs", *Drum*, April 1954, p. 21.

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society embraced the monogamous heterosexual Western style couple dancing as a form of aspiring to racial respectability.[131]

Strikingly, apart from a few exceptions like Miriam Makeba's all-female group, the *Skylarks*, it appears as if female members of dance bands were set to be back-up singers. Furthermore, women's names were gradually disappearing in competition listings in the local press and in advertisements, often negating them to being a nameless partner in the dance.[132]

As explained in earlier chapters, the government and social leaders of the time were very concerned with the appearance of the physical body. The display of nudity or anything closely resembling it in public - whether it was on film, stage or in the print media - was not at all acceptable. This rhetoric was for instance very visible when after a very successful dancing and performance tour in the UK, a Johannesburg dancer had to publicly dispel rumours of her being photographed in the nude. The local press reported that:

> Roslyn Ellis, pretty dark-haired Johannesburg who got 'boiling mad' when a sexy picture of her appeared in a London newspaper two years ago, together with a report that she was working in a Windmill Theatre strip-act, is back home again – as an actress… [Upon her return to Johannesburg she stated to the press that] 'There was no truth at all in the story that I appeared in the nude at Windmill. I was a dancer, that is all…'[133]

Women were increasingly under scrutiny and were being relegated to the periphery of numerous levels.

6.3.2 Criminals and immoral behaviour

The criminality associated with social dances and especially Johannesburg nightclubs further appears to increase during the late 1940s and into the 1950s. Ballantine highlighted how "fights, shootings and stabbings were commonplace, and some shows

[131] See Chapter 2.
[132] Anon., "News from various centre. Port Elizabeth", *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 28 December 1946, p. 5; Advertisement, "Tampax", *Drum,* September 1956, p. 68.
[133] Anon., "Now she's an actress", *Sunday Times*, 16 August 1959, p. 7.

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even ended in riots".[134] Johannesburg singer Miriam Makeba further highlighted the promiscuous perceptions of the dance halls. She stated that:

> …being a young women on stage wasn't easy. The stage and late-night performances in clubs and dance halls were always associated with prostitution or something bad. Good families would not allow their children to become performers! It wasn't proper for women to be on stage…[135]

Makeba, for instance, also emphasised the parallels between the American gangsters depicted in the film and the criminals in Johannesburg who visited the nightclubs. Makeba noted that in the 1950s:

> Sophiatown was ruled by the gangsters, who would model themselves on the image of the slick American gangsters that were seen in the movies. They would break the laws and they didn't care. Sometimes they'd be carrying guns and harassing people. Guys with names like Kort Broek and Boetie speaking their *tsotsitaal.* They were the *klevas* [street smart person]. Every gangster had to have a glamorous girl and every performer had to have a gangster [whether you liked him or not]…[136]

Adding to this criminal perception of social dance, was its association with the American underworld and despite the fascination with the American culture and dances, not all-American social dance influences were accepted. The "Dance Marathon"[137] that were such a fashion in the USA, were never really incorporated in the South Africa social dancing scene. On the contrary, at a dancing marathon event held in 1952 people asked the authorities to stop it, describing it as "pointless" and stating that:

> It is generally agreed that dancing should be a display of rhythm and elegance, and no couple who have been shuffling about all night on a dusty floor until they are blearily-eyed, sagging at the knee, and perhaps even bare-footed, can pretend to be a shred of either…[138]

As in previous decades certain events also specifically advertised that jive dancing will

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[134] Ballantine, *Marabi nights*. 2012, p. 118.
[135] M. Makeba, *Makeba: the Miriam Makeba story*, (Johannesburg, STE Publishers, 2004). p. 28.
[136] Makeba, *Makeba*, 2004, p. 32.
[137] A dance marathon in the USA typically lasted a number of days, with a few minutes break in between and dancers could usually win prize money. Given the exertion taking place dance were typically non-descript. H. Spring, "Swing and the Lindy Hop: Dance, Venue, Media, and Tradition", American Music, 15(2), Summer 1997, p. 190.
[138] Anon., "Pointless effort", *Rand Daily Mail,* 10 July 1952, p. 6.

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not be allowed. For instance, the BMSC went to great lengths to replace all jive dancing functions and decided to "use all possible means to discouraged Jiving".[139] The 1953 BMSC minutes noted that:

> In order to combat rowdiness and fights in functions which is attributed to Jive-the Centre resolved to use all means possible to discourage Jiving -Today we are glad to announce that a start on Ballroom Dancing lessons has been made- in order to fulfil the law 'Elimination by Substitution'. In order to meet the demand of rooms for use by the above different groups a Timetable showing place and time of practice had to be drawn which seems to satisfy the members.[140]

Indeed, the animosity against the jive and its American influences persisted. For example, at a music and dance event held in Johannesburg in 1956 the organisers stated sternly:

> Programmes will include classical music of popular choice, excerpts from operas, ballet music, show music and vocalists. Dance music and jazz will not be played.[141]

However, by now dance enthusiasts were also starting to fight against this slating of dances like the jive. The *Rand Daily Mail* reported in detail on the media's misrepresentation of a Durban based social dance club in 1955. The newspaper the *Natal Daily News* claimed that young patrons were smoking dagga at the club. The owner, Mrs Murdock sued the *Natal Daily News* and Argus Printing and Publishing Co. for their defamatory remarks. Mrs Murdock stated that:

> Only a complete investigation by the police will establish the truth of just how this club is run for the clean pleasure and benefit of normal, decent boys and girls to whom jive is a recreation and interest, I have emphatically deny any dagga smoking has taken place.[142]

The church was also far less tolerant towards dancing, ballroom dancing specifically, and condemned any form of "modern dancing". As indicated by the Johannesburg press, not everybody agreed with the church that dancing was "morally degrading". The general

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[139] "Bantu Men's Social Centre. 1953. Quarterly report of to the Executive Committee", WITS, Johannesburg: AD1715, South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), 1982-1974, p. 3.
[140] "Bantu Men's Social Centre. 1953. Quarterly report of to the Executive Committee", WITS, Johannesburg: AD1715, South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), 1982-1974, p. 3.
[141] Anon., "'Recital in the sun' on records in Plein Square to-day", *Rand Daily Mail,* 24 April 1956, p. 6.
[142] Anon., "Durban dance club sues newspaper over dagga reports", *Rand Daily Mail*, 19 August 1955, p. 13.

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Johannesburg public felt that:

> …not every churchgoer will agree with the Church Commission's dictum that modern dancing destroys the Christian virtues or that Saturday night dance places dangerous temptations in the way of the young. It all depends, of course, on what is meant by 'modern dancing' and 'dancers'. Many a modern Saturday night dance programme seems to consist largely of the waltz, veleta, two-step, reels and similar innocent dances – at least one had hitherto considered them innocent dances, even if they are not always gracefully executed – and even the inclusion of a foxtrot, or one of the rather more intricate South American dances, has not noticeably impaired the morals of the dancers. Nor are these affairs outstanding for 'provocative dress, the use of strong drink, the intimate intercourse of the sexes'. …As so many normal young people like dancing, surely it would be better to see that they have the chance to dance in decency, rather than them to not dance at all. Given the chance, some of them may, indeed, 'sit out,' practice which one of the Church spokesmen finds wrong; but many a perfectly respectable marriage has been arranged out of a perfectly respectable proposal on the balcony between dances.[143]

Later in 1951 a letter to the *Rand Daily Mail* also stated that the church's notion that social dancing encouraged sexual acts was wrong. It stated:

> Ballroom dancing may 'stimulate sex,' as a commission of the Dutch Reformed Church says, but, if it does, so do good music, ballet, murals, eating and sunshine. We must eat, and we cannot abolish sunshine. Should we do away with all forms of art? Most people would consider that idea preposterous.[144]

As regards church pronouncements the writer responded to the Free State synod as follows:

> …no one can doubt its sincerity. It says that the stimulation of sex by dancing is 'taking place outside the bonds of holy matrimony,' and it is particularly concerned over dancing amongst university students. Is dancing permissible then among married couples only? Not, we think, if it is the enjoyable and healthy exercise that most people understand by 'modern dancing'. We simply cannot believe that it does university students - or other normal people - any more harm than playing or watching Rugby, or chess, and we don't think that does them any harm at all.[145]

The writer continued to point out that:

> Many a respectable grandmother who still enjoys a waltz - for

[143] Anon., "On with the dance", *Rand Daily Mail*, 03 February 1951, p. 6.
[144] Anon., "They go on dancing", *Rand Daily Mail*, 24 August 1951, p. 8.
[145] Anon., "They go on dancing", *Rand Daily Mail*, 24 August 1951, p. 8.

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> waltzing is said to keep one young in body and spirit - will be quite horrified at the commission's suggestion that it 'degrades man to the level of an animal'. Waltzing was decried in Queen Victoria's day even by those who saw no particular harm in square dances, though the Queen herself permitted and perhaps even enjoyed it – and she could hardly be called morally lax.[146]

The anti-social dance stance of the church and others would however persist throughout the decades.

6.3.3 Political challenges and closure of dancing venues

In 1953, a reader's prediction of what would happen shows how much power the government, the people, and their opinions had over dancing. Some who did not want the conservative Rev. J. B. Webb to become Prime Minister in 1953 wrote:

> …if everyone thought like Mr. Webb, there would have been no Johannesburg, which has been built up on all sorts of speculations. There could also be no horse-racing, no Stock Exchange, and, I presume, no dancing halls or night clubs. Whether Joe Webb would allow drinking, or commercial radio, etc. I do not know, but if he ever thinks of entering politics it would only be fair to let the voters know what they are in (or out) for…[147]

Undeniably, after 1948 police presence with blocks and interrogation intensified. This had a major impact on the travelling dancers, the dance bands and social dancing. Arrests were commonplace. Miriam Makeba who began her professional singing career in the 1950s as the female vocalist of the Manhattan Brothers,[148] recalled how this impacted everyday life in the townships. She states:

> In the townships if someone didn't come home in the evenings or if someone went missing, this wasn't unusual. Everybody knew where to go to look. The first place you'd go would be the police station. Next, you'd go to all the jails - they might have been arrested - and then you'd go to all the hospitals because they might have been hurt or killed…[149]

[146] Anon., "They go on dancing", *Rand Daily Mail*, 24 August 1951, p. 8.
[147] R. Haswell, "Mr. Webb and the Voters", *Rand Daily Mail,* 09 December 1953, p. 10.
[148] L. Allen, "Remembering Miriam Makeba (4 March 1932–10 November 2008)", *Journal of the Musical Arts in Africa*, 5, 2008, pp. 89–90.
[149] Makeba, *Makeba*, 2004, p. 35.

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Makeba specifically remembered how on the way back from a cinema show and dance she and the Manhattan Brothers were stopped by the police. She explained:

> …we were stopped. Of course we did not have our night passes because we had no *baas* [master] to sign them. Some pimple-faced police boys stopped us. 'Passes!' Nathan stepped forward and said with his English. 'We are the Manhattan Brothers!' Joseph nudged him and explained to the police in Afrikaans, 'Ons is sangers' [we are singers]. They didn't seem to care who were. 'Ah', the one said, 'You are singers?' He smiled, 'Okay, sing!'. They turned on the headlights of their car, showing us our stage. And there, in the middle of the dark road, right in the middle of the night in the middle of nowhere Miriam Makeba and the Manhattan brothers had to sing. They made us dance. I thought to myself that to be an oppressor must be hard work! You always had to be thinking what you were going to do next show that you are the *baas*.[150]

These political control measures and restrictions also impacted on the functioning of public halls. For example, in 1956, fifty members of the Y.M.C.A. in Durban signed a petition that objected to the decision of the B.S.C. (Bantu Social Centre) Board to bar mixed functions of Africans and non-Africans at the Centre. The petition stated that the:

> Natal African Dance Teachers' Association held a ballroom competition, their Indian and Coloured guests were rudely stopped at the entrance and told that they could not attend the function. This was the first time that we knew that a decision had been taken to bar non-Africans from attending mixed gatherings at the Social Centre. Mr. Ngidi said his Association had handed the matter over to their legal representative.[151]

Another challenge in sustaining the social dance industry was the venues and the dance hall proprietors themselves. While more and smaller venues were available musicians were often taken advantage of and most report that they were unable to make a living of being in a dance band, many having to work additional jobs to survive. "Crowded dance halls", explained the *New Age* newspaper "...have squired many a brilliant jazz musicians".[152] The newspaper commented how the musicians' biggest challenges were being a "victim of swindling promotors or of a hand-to-mouth existence".[153]

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[150] Makeba, *Makeba*, 2004, p. 35.
[151] Anon., "Protest against apartheid at Bantu Social Centre", *New Age,* 26 July 1926, p. 4.
[152] T. Makiwane, "Africa's shaky idols", *New Age,* 10 July 1958, p. 4.
[153] T. Makiwane, "Africa's shaky idols", *New Age,* 10 July 1958, p. 4.

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Sophiatown was a prime example of how political decisions could destroy dancing venues and even the dances itself. Historians today caution against the nostalgic view of Sophiatown as a "vibrant black, urbanity" filled with "jazz lounges" where all cultures interacted before the tragedy of forced removals happened and the area became known as Triomf.[154] Still, while memory of the frequency of the cultural exchanges are debatable, the removal of the people of Sophiatown impacted greatly on social dancing in the city, because of the industry's dependence on physical infrastructure and of its patrons. The important role that Sophiatown played in the social cohesion of society in Johannesburg was undeniable and consequently the disintegration of the suburb was deeply felt.

Coplan explains that in Sophiatown performing artists played a leadership role in the community.[155] In Sophiatown's society, sports, music and dancing clubs often held exhibitions, concerts and dances to collect and raise money for club facilities and members.[156] Furthermore, as also emphasised by Makeba, concert-and-dance hall events were a focal point between societal forces. For example, dance bands like the Jazz Maniacs and Harlem Swingsters each had their own large local followings in different areas at the Witwatersrand' dancing venues.[157] The removal of the people from these areas did apparently remove some criminal elements, but it also destroyed the social cohesion and support the dance industry had in these areas. Forced removals also did not involve moving the physical places of leisure along with its people. This changed the leisure spaces permanently.

An unexpected but inevitable consequence of the acts that allowed and endorsed the forced removals, the Group Areas Act, Act No 41 of 1950 and the amendment of the Riotous Assemblies and Suppression of Communism, Act no. 15 of 1954,[158] was that it also impacted on groups other than black citizens. A commentator writing in the *Rand*

[154] N. Erlank, "Routes to Sophiatown", *African Studies*, 74(1), 2015, pp. 26-50.
[155] D. Coplan, "The African Musician and the Development of the Johannesburg Entertainment Industry, 1900-1960", *Journal of Southern African Studies,* 5(2), April 1979, p. 147.
[156] Coplan, "The African Musician", *Journal of Southern African Studies,* April 1979, p. 147.
[157] Makeba, *Makeba*, 2004, p. 32; Coplan, "The African Musician", *Journal of Southern African Studies,* April 1979, p. 147.
[158] "Riotous Assemblies and Suppression of Communism, Act no. 15 of 1954", The Union of South Africa *Government* Gazette, no. 5263, 15 April 1954, pp. 3-9.

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Daily Mail nicknamed the Riotous Assemblies Act “Mr Swart’s palais de danse law” because of the restrictions it placed on the white dance halls. The writer explained that:

> One would expect this at least of the Minister of Justice who, after all, is supposed to know the law. In fact, however, the way in which the ban on gatherings has been applied constitutes one of the most extraordinary muddles we have come across in a long time…Section 4 [of the Riotous Assemblies Act], gives the Minister power to ban ‘the assembly of any public gathering in *any place* to which the public has access.’ The words ‘*any place,’* together with those which follow, have a far wider meaning…in our view they might well be construed to include a church, birthday party or palais de danse…Mr Swart changed it [the Act] himself last year in a brand-new Riotous Assemblies Act [Riotous Assemblies and Suppression of Communism, Act no. 15 of 1954]. The new Act changes section 4 to read: ‘the assembly of any public gathering during any period *in any public space* within any area on any day of the week.’ Why, then, were the public told they would require an exemption to hold a cinema performance or a dance?...The upshot of this extremely muddled performance is that in order to move a number of natives from Sophiatown to Meadowlands, the Union’s biggest metropolitan area is not merely denied the right of assembly, but deprived of rights which the Minister had no authority to interfere with…The moment you start meddling with peoples’ rights, the complexities, and the muddles, are infinite.[159]

By the end of the 1950s the local government was actively closing public leisure spaces in the city as a means of control most of which were discriminatory by nature. One of these closures was dubbed the “beerhall crisis” of 1958/1959 in the annual report of the Non-European Affairs Department. In 1958 the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development ordered that three of the beer halls in urban areas be closed after a deadly attack on a European. In this attack a steelworker was stabbed to death outside the Mai Mai Beerhall.[160] The beerhalls were the municipalities’ way to control the liquor trade, but crucially dancing was commonplace at the beerhalls and their closure left an immediate void in the leisure industry. As an alternative, the Minster opened five beer gardens on the outskirts of the city. This then also added to the logistical nightmare of travelling and attending social functions.[161]

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[159] Anon., “Mr. Swart’s palais de danse law”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 12 February 1955, p. 6.
[160] Anon., “Secret witness in beerhall murder”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 05 February 1959, p. 5.
[161] “City of Johannesburg. Annual report of the Manager. Non-European affairs Department for the year ending 30th June 1959”, WITS, Johannesburg: A2628-A11 Non-European Affairs Department (Johannesburg), p. 2.

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By the mid-1950s it was clear that the era of the commercial social dance hall in Johannesburg was coming to an end. This decline was not a uniquely South African phenomenon, although it did happen earlier in Johannesburg than in most other big cities like London. Dance historian Nott describes how British nightclubs were taking over from dance halls in the mid-1960s and then by the discos in the 1970s.[162] Coplan explained how and why this earlier decline took place highlighting both the decline of the physical infrastructure, the impact of community leaders and beliefs, as well as the destructive impact political control had on social dancing. He noted:

> The destruction by fire of the Ritz Palais de Danse, Inchcape Hall, in November 1951 both hastened and symbolized the decline of the independent African entertainment world. Apart from the BMSC and white clubs, well-supervised venues were no longer easy to find. This prompted many bands to undertake extended tours of towns around the country; but pass regulations, organizational problems, entertainment taxes, and travel expenses limited their chances of success. Combined with inevitable personality conflicts and strains on home life, these difficulties made tours a threat to group loyalty. Many bands disintegrated on the road and never re-formed.[163]

Indeed, governmental control was steadily increasing and the hope that many musicians and dancers had of being recognized as the urban African elite who could contribute greatly to the Johannesburg's arts and culture landscape, like their African-American counterparts, were disappearing. Coplan noted that:

> The decline of large dance orchestras in America in the 1950s helped to produce a similar trend in South Africa. Most directly responsible for the death of South Africa's big bands, however, were the destruction of Western Areas and regulations forbidding Africans to appear at venues where liquor was served. As Sophiatown and its dance halls were destroyed, musicians were shut out of the inner-city clubs and halls, and jazz was gradually deprived of its multi-racial audience.[164]

However, perhaps the most notable ending of the era was the death of the social dance promoter Jack Phillips.[165] As indicated in Chapters 4 and 5 Phillips was instrumental in

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[162] J. Nott, *Going to the Palais: a social and cultural history of dancing and dance halls in Britain, 1918- 1960,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), p. 93.
[163] D. B. Coplan, *In township tonight!: South Africa's black city music and theatre*, 2nd ed., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), pp. 202-203.
[164] Coplan, *In township tonight!*, 2008, pp. 202-203.
[165] Anon., "He made a black day seem bright", *Rand Daily Mail*, 28 July 1958, p. 11.

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setting up a safe commercial venue at the Ritz. As mentioned, this was also known as the Inchcape as well as the Old Majestic for black and coloured dancers in the city. This nomenclature reflects on the divided and diverse nature of the dance floor. His dance hall catered and supported the local community and coupled with the removal of the swing and jazz musicians from Sophiatown his death marked the end of the 1920s to 1950s commercial social dance hall, in the greater Johannesburg region.

6.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, social dancing in Johannesburg thrived after the Second World War, with the opening of new dance facilities and the popularity of various international dance styles. The 1950s saw a peak in social dance activities, with lavish parties held at prestigious locations. Although the British dance hall industry was viewed as the most successful, there were also local South African successes and in particular the growth of multipurpose dance halls and nightclubs in greater Johannesburg. The South African white ballroom dancing association formed ties with British and neighbouring countries' dance teachers. Likewise, the black ballroom competition scene also grew, with regional federations being formed. Johannesburg dancers had a strong association with the USA, incorporating American-based dances in public and private dance halls. Dance studios, both British and American-based, opened in the city. Social dancing events were not only a form of entertainment, but also a way for professionals to make money and learn international dancing routines. Dancing attire and shoes were in high demand during this era, along with other dance related items.

However, despite the success of social dancing, by the mid-1950s there was a rapid decline in the growth of the social dance hall industry. The perception of women was changing, as soldiers returned, they were forced out of the dance hall and into the home. Religious leaders were actively denouncing social dance as “morally degrading” and dancing events, especially in the township areas, were becoming frequented by gangs. Dancing was portrayed as being part of the “evils” of night life. Coupled with police raids intensifying and communities being displaced, visiting dance venues was becoming increasingly difficult and dangerous. The closure of the Inchcape Hall and destruction of Sophiatown signifies the start of a darker era in Johannesburg’s social dance history

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where infrastructure and society became more closed off to outside influences. With the popularity of dances like rock ‘n’ roll increasing, and more nightclubs appearing and being easier to manage there was little space left to accommodate the major traditional social dances with the required sprung floors and large dance band.

The changing nature of local infrastructure, increase in political control and new dance styles ultimately transformed Johannesburg’s night life. The accepted urban practise of leisurely dancing the night away in a purpose-built dance hall that was common-place in the 1920s, was obsolete by the end of the 1950s.

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Chapter 7: Stepping through time: A retrospection

7.1 Introduction

South Africa has a long history of social dancing, and nowhere was this more apparent than in Johannesburg with its vibrant and diverse cosmopolitan population that attracted people from all walks of life, cultural and racial groupings. The 1886 mining camp that quickly transformed into the fully established city of Johannesburg in the early twentieth century had a burgeoning and bustling entertainment scene that included a variety of leisure spaces such as hotels, palais de danse, and various dance studios. It was here, through the lens of social dance that this thesis has interrogated how "Social dancing reflects the spirit of the age more faithfully than any other art".[1]

Johannesburg, the infrastructure and its people had to adapt to the changing physical and political environment, and these changes are clearly visible in how social dancing evolved. This chapter reflects briefly on the development and place of social dancing in South Africa, as well as the social fabric of the city of Johannesburg and highlights some of the significant trends that were visible in the 1920s and 1950s as identified in previous chapters of this study.

7.2 Borrowing from the colonialists

Social dancing was integral to the very inception of South Africa's early colonial history.[2] Not unlike Grau and Jordan's imagery of the sea offering possibilities "for foreign cultures to find their way in"[3] to the Netherlands, a similar scenario played out at the Cape. As settlers arrived from Europe they brought with them across the sea the social dances of the time. Thus, social dancing gained prominence in Cape Town society in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries due to colonial

[1] Lancer, "In the dancing world: Official results of the examinations", *Rand Daily Mail*, 11 May 1935, p. 8.
[2] A. M. Green, "Dancing in borrowed shoes: a history of ballroom dancing in South Africa (1600s-1940s)" (University of Pretoria, Master's thesis, 2008).
[3] Grau and Jordan, *European dancing: perspectives on theatre dance and cultural identity*, p. 21; see Chapter 2.

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settlement and in particular the British occupation.[4] Balls and dance parties were regular events held in various locations, including the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC - Dutch East India Company) castle, Cape taverns, burgher's (citizens) houses, and slave quarters. Popular European dances such as the waltz, minuet, quadrille, and contre danse were danced in Cape Town during this time. Dances became popular for entertainment and as a neutral space for groups with different backgrounds to interact. Enslaved people in the Cape community played a crucial role in sustaining these ballroom dances, providing music such as the mazurka, polka, waltz, and the cotillion. However, these dances also formed part of their own "underclass subculture" [5] eventually transforming into what became known as “Rainbow balls”[6] due to the colourful nature of the events.[7] In essence, these fringe balls that W. Bird refers to as “high life below the stairs”[8] encapsulated the aspirations of the excluded populace who aspired to emulate the elitist world of their “masters” possibly as a form of escapism. This phenomenon would recur in later episodes of South African history as was evident in the segregated and socially divided Johannesburg region of the mid twentieth century – the focus of this study.

For the most part, however, couple dances were centralized within European and more privileged groups of people. While couple dancing was popular, it was not always regarded as acceptable, and the influence of dances on Cape Town society's morals was sometimes questioned by seventeenth, eighteenth, and twentieth-century authors. They claimed that it led to frivolous and even vulgar behaviour and could even be associated with prostitution.[9] Despite these reservations, it is clear that the dances played a significant role in Cape Town

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[4] Green, "Dancing in borrowed shoes”, 2008.
[5] V. Layne, “Square roots at the Cape”, *Rootz Africa*, 5(4), November 2003, p. 18; R. Semple, *Walks and sketches at the Cape of Good Hope; A journey from Cape Town to Blettenberg’s [sic.] Bay*,). p. 31; W. Bird, *State of the Cape of Good Hope in 1822*, pp. 165-166.
[6] Bird*, State of the Cape of Good Hope in 1822*, pp. 165-166.
[7] Green, "Dancing in borrowed shoes”, 2008, p. 62.
[8] W. Bird, *State of the Cape of Good Hope in 1822*, pp. 165-166.
[9] N. Worden, E. van Heyningen, V. Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town the making of a city: an illustrated social history* (Cape Town: David Philip publishers, 1998), p. 195; A.F Hattersley, *An illustrated social history of South Africa*, p. 155.

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society from the seventeenth century onwards, serving as a platform for social interaction and cultural exchange.

By the close of the nineteenth century, makeshift towns in the northern regions of South Africa were rapidly expanding. The mineral discoveries had brought people from all over the world to South Africa and as cities grew so did commercial entertainment, such as gambling, prostitution and drinking. As shown, social dancing was also accommodated in a number of hotels, clubs, and halls across the cultural and racial landscape and class boundaries seemed to disappear in this diverse dancing community.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century and more so in the first half of the twentieth century morally based censures became increasingly invasive as white conservative regimes intervened. Some South African authorities began to fear the effects of dancing and drinking on society and passed legislation to prevent, for example, people from dancing on Sundays instead of going to church. The ZAR promulgated a piece of legislation, Act number 28 of 1896, that made it illegal for managers, leasers, or owners of public places to allow public dances on a Sunday. This was punishable with one month in jail or a fifty-pound fine.[10] It also needed dancing schools or owners of public places to obtain prior approval about operating times and selling liquor before opening their doors to the public.[11] This reverberated with other parts of the continent such as the earlier mentioned comment by Callaci regarding Tanganyika and the concern about the "demoralising effect [dance] had on the youth" and the "loss of … societal control".[12]

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[10] J.A. Schagen van Leeuwen, "Act No. 28 of 1896 part 7", *De locale wetten en volksraadsbesluiten der Zuid-Afr. Republiek, benevens de proclamaties van ZHEd. Den Staatspresident en de belangrijke Gouvernements-Kennisgevingen gedurende het jaar 1896*, (Pretoria, Staatsdrukkerij van de Z.A. Republiek, 1807), p. 274; Alfred Harris-Sir Maxwell Major General Military, TAB, Pretoria: MGP 10251, A/01, pp. 104-105; Lieut. Sec. To the Mil.Gov.-Alfred Harris, 24 September 1901, Governor Pretoria, 11 August 1901, TAB, Pretoria: MGP 10251, A/01, p. 108.

[11] Alfred Harris-Sir Maxwell Major General Military, TAB, Pretoria: MGP 10251, A/01, pp. 104-105. Lieut. Sec. To the Mil.Gov.-Alfred Harris, 24 September 1901, Governor Pretoria, 11 August 1901, TAB, Pretoria: MGP 10251, A/01, p. 108

[12] E. Callaci, "Dancehall Politics: Mobility, Sexuality and Spectacles of Racial Respectability in Late Colonial Tanganyika, 1930-1961", *Journal of African History,* 52, 2011, p. 366.

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As the century progressed, however, the nature of the mining camps and the informal dances associated with them changed. Cities such as Johannesburg developed better infrastructure and a growing middle-class that had more disposable income and leisure time emerged. These transformations were reflected in the dance functions of the time when high- and middle-class society could enjoy formal dance events at private clubs and halls, mirroring what was danced a century before in the colonial Cape. Socialites planned ballroom dances at hotels and private clubs to enable members of high society to meet and mingle. Until the mid-1920s, these balls, commemorative festivities, and charity events were relatively extravagant affairs.

Again, social dancing was practised not only by the South African upper classes but also by the subaltern, the white and black middle-classes who were part of the city economy, but on its periphery. The white middle-classes, particularly the English-speaking community, would embrace commercial couple dancing in the city, while black South Africans living in the townships danced at clubs, public halls and at commercial venues. For the black elite, similar to their white middle-class counterparts, social dancing symbolized a new advantage of urban culture where the old familial rural ties were slowly disappearing.

The assimilation and adoption of social couple dancing in South African communities also signifies a break in traditional African gender roles. The one-on-one, male female partnership in the couple dances was a radical departure from African traditional or vernacular dance which were usually, as mentioned, single-sex group dances. While traditional African dances were reflective of polygamous communities, social couples' dances on the other hand were more symbolic of the monogamous relationships present in European society. Perhaps because of this central change in the social dynamic, South African sources reporting on dance tend to place more emphasis on the partnership than European and American sources do.

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When considering social dance in a global context with differing cultures, a similar phenomenon is apparent in an Asian or Eastern setting. As Zhang observed, social dance was totally at variance with traditional Chinese cultures for men and women to embrace. It therefore introduced a new urban middle-class culture and mindset. He also explains that these commercial dancing spaces were the "…keystones of modernity...leisure, consumption…the spectacle and money".[13] The introduction and foreign nature of social dance and ballroom venues, as well as the commercialization thereof as portrayed in Zhang's study, resonates with how dancing was introduced to Johannesburg and perceived as a colonial pastime and grew as a commercial activity and as such forms an interesting comparison between the two cities.

Thus, from the early colonial encounters in the colonial Cape to the developments in the interior after the mineral revolution, European "foreign cultures"[14] found their way in. Social dancing reflected on this spirit of the times as individuals aspired to this leisure time activity transcending class, culture and race.

7.3 Dancing in Unison

In the first decades of the twentieth century, as South Africa's political dispensation merged into a white-dominated Union, at another level social dance was merging into more formal organisations. This was happening as dance became more professionalised with more highly rated competitions occurring in both the increasingly separated black and white social dance circles. These developments in social dance again mirrored the changing political dispensation. The dancing scene was reshaped in the 1920s with the establishment of SADTA and the ADA for whites and in the following decades with the Bantu Ballroom Dancing Association for black and coloured members. These bodies ran various local and regional competitions for smaller clubs. Moreover, like their white counterparts, the black organisations also later held regular provincial and national social competitions that were often adjudicated by British dance professionals. The white

[13] Zhang, "The Paramount ballroom in the 1930s", 2012, p. 32.
[14] Grau & Jordan, *Europe dancing: perspectives on the theatre dance and cultural identity*, p. 21.

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formal dancing bodies also focused on standardizing the style and tempos of conventional ballroom dances. However, it is interesting to note that neither the white or black organisations initially had an appetite to incorporate international ragtime and swing dances into their competitions.

Over time, this reticence to include new dancing trends would eventually change as Johannesburg became more industrialised and thus more cosmopolitan. This led to the acceptance of new dances, such as the jitterbug, as well as new services. The new jive dances were infectious, fun, and easy to learn and appealed to young urban workers. In the late 1930s and 1940s, dance commentators highlighted the Johannesburg dancers' adaptation of the jive, allowing for more individualistic interpretation during jam sessions. The influence of jive dances was even visible in the fashion of the day with the local colourful adaptation of the zoot suit. In order to accommodate the increasing number of people, dance proprietors offered a range of additional in-house services along with in-house dance bands, dance hostesses and often sold alcohol and food.

During this early twentieth century period, technological developments also played a key role in determining changes on both the white and black dance floors. Even from the previous century, it was technology that distributed both the British and American dance trends, fashions and music via film, gramophone records and radio. The latter was a key determinant in taking dance music beyond the formal dance halls to the smaller clubs and other make-shift dance spaces, as well as both black and white residences. Moreover, these technologies also enhanced the dissemination and popularization of social dance across the social spectrum by introducing dance patrons to new dancing styles, popularizing both internal and local swing bands and international dancing icons. Other technological developments which further enhanced the social dance scene was the investment in better and specialised high-quality sprung flooring, as well as ventilation systems to accommodate the growing number of social dancers.

While dancing pivoted across the social spectrum, there was as before, an element of moral panic and disdain emanating from government authorities, religious

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leaders, and community groups. Reaction culminated in restrictions at various levels with the government implementing curfew regulations, pass laws, Sunday observance and censorship statutes. These legislative measures imposed limitations and exerted control over the movement and interracial interactions of individuals and hence also the social dance fraternity. But beyond that, social dancing was tainted as immoral and promiscuous. Even the popular zoot suit did not escape this disdain as it became synonymous with the jive dances and was identified with the gangster groups of the township areas. These restrictions influenced all logistical aspects of dancing and forced dancers to find creative solutions, such as all-night dance affairs, to be able to dance.

The early twentieth century decades saw an increase of social dance's popularity but at the same time an increase in authoritarian scrutiny – a situation that would perpetuate into the mid-twentieth century.

7.4 Appealing Apartheid

In 1948 the Nationalist Party government won the elections and ushered in the legal entrenchment of evolving segregatory and discriminatory regulations. This increasingly racialised political climate, impacted on developments on the dance floor as it became equally more divided and restrained.

Yet, despite these challenges dancing still experienced a period of relative growth in the late 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s. During this time, there was a significant movement towards repurposing venues such as hotels, theatres, nightclubs, public halls, beer halls, and even outside venues for social dancing. Many large commercial dance halls were replaced, but the new smaller halls allowed for more dance events and increased the longevity of venues. The media also reflected on this popularity with advertisements depicting social dancers as the "promoters" of a range of products – both dance and non-dance related – but in distinctly racially separated formats.

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Intraregional exchanges between dancers and dance bands saw the introduction of South African dance bands to countries in Africa. Formal dancing bodies such as the SADTA increased their number of regional and national competitions also including participants of neighbouring countries. In the early 1950s, the black ballroom competition scene also experienced immense growth, with the appearance of small clubs, dance teachers, and dancing schools. In 1955 another black social dance organisation emerged, but tellingly it was called the Transvaal *Non-European* (author's emphasis) Ballroom Dancing Association reflecting the jargon of the apartheid regime.

Moreover, in appealing the negative attitude to social dancing, patrons increasingly moved away from strict religious rules imposed by the church, as some dance halls, concert halls, and cinemas had larger audiences than any church. The connection with the USA dance culture was also embraced as a form of resistance through the adoption of dance styles such as the bebop and rock 'n' roll which became popular features on radio broadcasts and in make-shift dance halls. Johannesburg was in fact likened to Harlem[15] which can also be seen as a move to distantiate the local dancing society from the incumbent suppression of the apartheid government.

Despite this growth, social dances also experienced various other social challenges during this decade. Popular music in Johannesburg was subjected to gender stereotyping, with women's names gradually disappearing from competition listings in the local press and in advertisements, often negating them as nameless partners in the dance. Additionally, the association with the American underworld led to the prohibition of jive dancing at venues like the BMSC, one of social dancing's early supporters. The church also became less tolerant towards social dancing and condemned any form of modern dancing.

Political challenges and restrictions on dancing in Johannesburg also increased. After 1948, police blockades and interrogations intensified, impacting travelling

[15] See Chapter 4.

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dancers, dance bands, and social dancing events. Arrests were commonplace, and the functioning of public halls was also affected. The forced removals of people impacted social dancing in the city as it not only destroyed the existing physical infrastructures, but also scattered social dancing communities to the outskirts of the city. In particular, the Group Areas Act destroyed social cohesion, as well as the artistic support that the local social dancing community had in these areas. Its effects were felt across the city, in both the white and black social dance spaces.

7.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, social dancing played a significant role in South African society and particularly in urban centres such as Johannesburg. It served as a platform for social interaction, cultural exchange, and entertainment. While initially centralized within European and privileged groups, it eventually became popular among the broader white and black middle-classes. Johannesburg society across the racial spectrum literally danced the night away – but by the mid twentieth century politics with its social engineering did away with social dancing.

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