Substantive Belonging in a Post-Apartheid City: Examining the Intersection of Race, Class, Space, and Colonial Legacies in Cape Town

By

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the complexities of belonging, displacement, and restitution in post-apartheid Cape Town. The study focuses on the intersections of race, class, space, and the legacies of colonialism. It employs the concept of substantive belonging to analyze how affective and structural modes of belonging shape individuals' positioning within the city. Furthermore, by examining the gaps in belonging, the research illuminates the discrepancies between the idealized condition of substantive belonging and the realities experienced by residents of Cape Town. Through ethnographic exploration in various locations, including Woodstock, District Six, and Protea Village, the dissertation presents a nuanced understanding of how belonging is constructed and challenged. The research uncovers how race and class influence perceptions of inclusion and exclusion by analyzing events and narratives in public spaces. It investigates the connection between forced removals during apartheid and contemporary gentrification-led displacement, shedding light on the ongoing struggles for affordable housing and the right to belong in the city. The dissertation also examines the experiences of returning communities in Protea Village and District Six, illustrating the intricate social practices and norms that shape localized notions of belonging. An investigation of the regulations of space, the comparison between gentrification-led displacement and forced removals during apartheid, and the adequacy of post-apartheid restitution measures uncovers the challenges in creating a truly post-apartheid city. It underscores the importance of addressing historical injustices and reconciling with the colonial past to foster substantive belonging for all residents. Ultimately, the research calls attention to the intricate processes of transformation, restitution, and reconciliation in Cape Town, emphasizing the need to consider more than legal rights and economic factors when aiming for meaningful change.
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Chapter One: Introduction

Introduction

In 2015 a real estate developer’s advertisement in Cape Town, South Africa, made headlines in the media because the wording of their ad was offensive to some local residents. The advertisement said, “Join the global trend of gentrification in lower Woodstock and become part of the designer society! […] Heritage listed Victorian home graciously upgraded and waiting...” The advertisement emphasized how gentrification would transform Woodstock, a working-class suburb of Cape Town, into a desirable designer neighbourhood with beautiful, historic homes seemingly empty and waiting for new occupants. The ad presented Woodstock as an almost blank slate available for a wealthy clientele and elided the low-income families that used to live in these homes and those that still lived in the area. Local residents asserted that the advertisement disregarded gentrification's harmful effects on low-income residents (Geach, 2016). They felt this was particularly damaging given that development projects like the one in question exacerbate the problem of gentrification-led displacement of low-income residents in Woodstock while also contributing to the continued removal of African, Coloured, and Asian residents from desirable areas in the city.

In 2016, a different promotional brochure was released (see Appendix 1) for a development called WEX Living, which also upset local residents and activists. Especially vocal were those associated with a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) called Ndifuna Ukwazi (isi-Xhosa: “Dare to know”) that offers legal assistance and pro bono representation to low-income residents. The organization's activist branch works with citizens to fight for urban land justice and housing through a social media and activism campaign called “Reclaim the City.” The advertisement read: “Right from the beginning, when Khoisan villagers and Dutch sailors
met on a beach, Woodstock in its various iterations has been the frontier where different cultures have come together, creating a mixed community where humans of the hood live side-by-side.”

The advertisement continued to say that WEX Living represents the “New Woodstock,” which is more than just a place; it is an attitude and a lifestyle. In this ad, the extremely long and violent colonial history of South Africa is reimagined as a friendly meeting of two peoples who fostered a multicultural neighbourhood. The “new” Woodstock the developers promised in their promotional material capitalized on the mixes of cultures and lifestyles that have been a part of Woodstock for decades while ignoring the racism, exploitation, and dispossession of these first colonial contacts and the later colonial and apartheid experiences.

Members of Ndifuna Ukwazi later critiqued another promotional brochure from WEX Living. They were upset about the effects the project would have on the neighbourhood, but also took issue with the wording in the brochure, which read:

WEX is not a building, it's a lifestyle. An attitude […] WEX is about embracing the crazy old funkiness of Woodstock with a huge warm hug […] WEX is about transforming dysfunctional dilapidation into bright, beautiful, purposeful new spaces [see Appendix 2].

In a WhatsApp group1 dedicated to coordinating and planning protests, an activist wrote his version of the promotional brochure, criticizing the language of the pamphlet and the development by highlighting the negatives aspects the project would bring from the perspective of the activists:

Wex is about pretending you didn't skop [kick] the poor. Wex is about looking over the heads of the homeless. Wex is about reading South African History as if it was designed to be your very own backstory. Wex is about taking an existing vibrant bustling multifaceted area and transforming it into a monocultural vortex devoid of any of the people you claimed to love in the first place. Wex is about bleaching. Wex is about privilege pretending. Wex is about destroying the innate

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1 WhatsApp is an application available on cellphones that allows people to send text, photo, video, and audio messages to individuals and groups using the phone’s data or an internet connection rather than a traditional phone line or SMS messaging.
characteristics of an area by trying to reproduce and imitate instead of simply honouring and recognizing. Wex will tell you they just LOVE you, but Wex doesn't. Wex is about privileged pretension. It is.

The activists were upset because the vision in the original brochure endorses the removal of the supposedly unsavoury parts of the neighbourhood deemed by some to be superfluous, whether people, buildings, or businesses. The new version of Woodstock would be a safe, middle-class space. Conversely, the activists' reimagined text highlights how gentrification in Cape Town is embroiled in larger discussions about race, class, and belonging. The WEX development was seen by the activists and those being forced out of the neighbourhood as a vehicle for removing Black residents and replacing them with White people while erasing the cultural significance of the multicultural neighbourhood.

With their promotional material, projects like WEX Living contribute to this (re)imagined neighbourhood that excludes references to the lived experience of its current residents and the reasons why there might be crime or things in a state of disrepair. It glosses over racial and class tensions that have been a part of this neighbourhood (and beyond) for centuries. At the same time, it also sets out the conditions that govern belonging in this newly reimagined space, including norms of behaviour, socioeconomic status, and social practices.

This narrative of Woodstock as a transformed, newly safe, and trendy place has become increasingly popular in Cape Town and abroad. A 2015 article published by a popular travel magazine, Condé Nast Traveler, advertises the transformation of Woodstock from being an unsafe neighbourhood to a cool shopping destination (Holland, 2015). Another article by Air France in 2019 states: “Once a place of ill repute, the district has been reinventing itself in recent years, investing in and renovating old industrial buildings, in a way reminiscent of Brooklyn. So much so that the neighbourhood has become the favourite place to be for Cape Town's youth” (Air France, 2019). Woodstock has become a destination for wealthy, mainly White, visitors
from Cape Town and abroad. New businesses and residential developments have sprung up to cater to this new clientele. In this process, low-income and working-class residents feel excluded by the changing neighbourhood.

Gentrification is one of many factors reshaping and transforming the city of Cape Town. However, it also contributes to the way belonging is being (re)defined, reinforced, or in some cases, contested. While gentrification can bring many positives to the city and individuals, such as improved infrastructure and lower crime rates, not everyone experiences these improvements equally. In fact, in Cape Town, the downsides of urban renewal disproportionately affect residents who already have less access to economic resources and social capital. In South Africa, these are mainly people categorized as African, Coloured, and Asian. The downsides can range from eviction, severed social and kin networks, job loss or increased commutes, the rising cost of food and property, business closures, and income loss. These effects are part of a much longer historical process rooted in colonialism and apartheid, which sought to exclude “non-Whites” and sanitize urban space so Whites could exclusively enjoy it (Cousins, 2016; Layne, 2008; Maylam, 1995).

These tensions and anger around the positive narratives about gentrification in Woodstock indicate more extensive questions and conflicts about what it means to belong to a changing city that is still highly steeped in the social, economic, and racial history of its colonial past. Belonging to a place is full of complexities, contradictions, and competing claims conditioned by historical context. I argue that, at its core, belonging is a feeling of being

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2 The term “non-White” was used under apartheid to refer to any groups that were not White; this includes those who were identified as African, Asian, and Coloured peoples. I choose not to use this term whenever possible as it describes people by what they are not. When I do use it in this dissertation, I do so in reference to the meaning under apartheid.
recognized, included, and valued within laws, customs, and social discourse and practices. South Africa’s transition to democracy in 1994 brought legal equality to every citizen in the country, and although much has changed, inequality persists in many areas of life. Using the theoretical concept I call “substantive belonging,” I examine how affective and structural modes of belonging shape how people are kept in racially and classed political-economic positions in Cape Town, and how some resist these forces. In doing so, I shed light on the gaps in belonging that perdure for many, as well as the constellation of forces and processes that make transforming Cape Town into a truly post-apartheid city challenging—particularly in the context of redress, restitution (which is defined as the return of rights in land to people or communities who were dispossessed) and reconciliation.

To define substantive belonging, I draw a parallel with Holston’s (2008) distinction of formal versus substantive citizenship. Holston (2008) defines substantive citizenship as the ability to exercise the rights and access the resources granted under formal citizenship, which he defines as the rights and responsibilities between a nation-state and an individual. He is concerned with “the substantive distribution of the rights, meanings, institutions, and practices that membership entails to those deemed citizens” (Holston, 2008, p. 7)—in other words, the enjoyment of rights and resources that are promised on paper.

I also adapt the concept of “modes of belonging,” which Rutherford (2008) defines as “the routinized discourses, social practices, and institutional arrangements through which people make claims for resources and rights, the ways through which they become ‘incorporated’ in particular places” (p. 74). I examine structural and affective modes of belonging to distinguish further the conditions that govern a particular kind of belonging in a place and the accompanying resources and rights that come with that belonging. Rutherford uses modes of belonging to
examine inequality and farm workers’ claims of belonging shaped by the unequal, racialized, and
gendered power dynamics on White-owned commercial farms in Zimbabwe. In contrast, I am
using modes of belonging to examine the connections and gaps between legal rights and
affective claims to belong.

Therefore, I define substantive belonging as the ability to belong to a place both
structurally (such as with citizenship) and affectively (feeling a sense of belonging). Together
this means that one has the right to belong to a place and the means to exercise those rights,
while also feeling a deep attachment to that place and feeling at home and welcome. Although
my research expands on Holston’s concept of citizenship, which he examines using formal and
substantive aspects, I diverge from his theoretical framing in one crucial way. Whereas Holston
looks at how substantive citizenship puts into action the rights given by formal citizenship and is
conceptually dependent on those rights. I focus on a subset of the larger concept of belonging—
substantive belonging — where structural and affective modes of belonging each compose
substantive belonging.

Structural modes of belonging are similar to formal citizenship and refer to laws, rights,
policies, and other formal forms of control within a particular territory. On the other hand,
affective modes of belonging refer to an individual or group’s sense of belonging, familiarity,
affiliation to a group, place, or practice, and factors that fuel or deny a sense of belonging.
Examining these two parts makes it possible to understand how people can (or cannot) translate
their rights and feelings into substantively belonging. I use the term “gaps in belonging” to refer
to the missing factors that do not allow for substantive belonging such as having the right to live
in a place of one’s choosing while also having the means to do so. In other words, for Holston,
substantive citizenship occurs when one *exercises* the rights of formal citizenship, whereas
substantive belonging exists when one is able to navigate both structural modes of belonging and affective modes of belonging (see Figure 1 below).

**FIGURE 1 DIAGRAM OF SUBSTANTIVE BELONGING AND CITIZENSHIP**

**BELONGING**
A feeling of being recognized, included, and valued within laws, customs, and social discourse and practices.

**SUBSTANTIVE BELONGING**
The ability to belong to a place both structurally (such as with citizenship) and affectively (feeling a sense of belonging).

**Structural Modes of Belonging**
The legal forms of control (rights), that inform belonging while also having the ability to exercise those rights.

**Affective Modes of Belonging**
The various ways that people feel a sense of belonging or affiliation to a group, place, or practice while also feeling welcome or at home.

Substantive belonging as a lens of analysis clarifies the competing narratives and conflicts in and around Cape Town involving urbanization, displacement, and the regulation of space. The socioeconomic inequalities and the racialized power differences whose roots largely
lie in apartheid and colonialism fuel conflicts surrounding who has the right to space in the city and the state’s role in managing land, housing, and restitution. Looking at these competing claims through the lens of belonging sheds light on the complexities of transformation and redress and why it is necessary to consider more than just legal rights or economic factors when discussing meaningful restitution and transformation. This lens of analysis also exposes the gaps between the idealized condition of belonging that I call substantive belonging and the reality of belonging in post-apartheid Cape Town. In particular, examining belonging and the gaps of belonging in connection with restitution and transformation exposes the messiness and seemingly impossible task of reconciling with the colonial past, dealing with present-day challenges while trying to continue moving forward to create a restituted and transformed city, and why for some restitution will never be enough.

Furthermore, I have chosen to write about belonging rather than focusing solely on exclusion. Much of South Africa’s history is defined by the exclusion of Black people, which is to say, the denial of access and opportunities and resources. I have tried to write in opposition to exclusion, rather than talking about the way exclusion continues. Similar to eschewing the term “non-White,” which defines people by what they are not, I examine the way belonging is constructed and the processes where people are pushed to the margins of society through these modes of belonging rather than focusing on exclusion.

To understand how race, class, space, and legacies of colonialism intersect, constrain, and construct belonging in Cape Town, my dissertation explores the following questions: 1) How does the regulation of space through gating, policing, and internalized cultural and social norms shape residents’ modes of belonging in post-apartheid Cape Town? 2) What can the similarities between gentrification-led displacement and the forced removals of the apartheid era help us to
understand more about everyday forms of belonging in Cape Town? 3) Is the post-apartheid legal/economic structure of restitution adequate for achieving substantive belonging?

**Colonial History and Racial Categorization**

To better situate the field sites described below, I first present a brief overview of the colonial and apartheid history of South Africa (additional relevant history and context are presented in Chapter 2). I then discuss the racial categorization used in present-day South Africa, which stems from a socially constructed classification system that reinforced racist and segregationist apartheid ideologies. The area now known as South Africa was colonized first by the Dutch and later by the British. In 1910, the colonial powers founded the Union of South Africa. The government began instituting several laws restricting the rights of the African and Asian populations. In 1948, with the election of the National Party—in defiance of growing decolonization efforts and moves to break up the European empires elsewhere in Africa and Asia—the government developed what it called “apartheid,” Afrikaans for “separateness” (Worden, 2007). Apartheid was a system of racial segregation and oppression based on a racialized hierarchy that became the foundation of virtually all of the country’s legislation. It restricted access to jobs, pay, social services, education, public spaces, and property ownership by all people who were not White—Africans, Coloureds, and Asians (Worden 2012). The restrictive policies had wide-reaching consequences for how “non-Whites” were permitted to live and work. The end of apartheid in 1994 ushered in many legal and social changes that brought legal equality to all citizens and efforts to correct prior oppression and inequalities. Land reform, including redistribution, restitution, and tenure reform, has been a significant focus of the post-apartheid government’s efforts to address inequality (Akinola, 2017, p. 2). One important piece of land reform has been the land claims process that allows those who were dispossessed
Race as a socially constructed concept has roots in colonialism, nationalism, and ethnocentrism. When Europeans encountered difference, particularly during colonialism, race was used to classify and categorize groups of people on a putative biological level based on phenotypical differences. In the context of colonial expansion, racial classification based on these “biological” differences was used to justify racial inequality when White Europeans encountered others while colonizing Africa, Asia, and the Americas (Bernasconi, 2009, p. 92). European colonizers located themselves at the top of the racial hierarchy. They felt it was their right and duty to “civilize” the people they encountered through colonial expansion (Boisen, 2017). The biological “fact” of racial difference fueled the colonial expansion of Europeans across many parts of the world, generated a sense that they were racialized as “White,” and justified systems and everyday practices of inequality.

In present-day South Africa, there are generally considered to be four main racial groupings that stem from the apartheid-era classification system: African, Coloured, White, and Asian. According to Bornman (2014), “the South African state enforced and reified subgroup identities, racial identities in particular, through rigid processes of spatial, political, social, and cultural engineering” (p. 181). However, these categories also incorporate a messy constellation of factors. In many ways, they are related to phenotype: what someone looks like. Now, all of these terms are used by people daily as racial categories, and the characteristics that are believed to accompany each one are an essential part of how people describe and talk about other people.

It became clear to me during my fieldwork that when most South Africans meet new people, they try to categorize them. For example, after I came home from an interview with a participant,
my roommate asked me, “What was she?” referring to the person’s race. The specific racial
categories are still relevant today because they are believed to map onto other characteristics,
such as where someone grew up, what language(s) they speak, what kind of music they listen to,
and even what alcohol, if any, they drink. Moreover, they shape people’s perceptions of others
and influence their lives, such as class, job opportunities, and belonging in a given place. This
type of categorization was so commonplace that I began unconsciously reproducing these
orientations and tried to organize in my mind the people and interactions I had every day.
However, these different categorizations are not neat and tidy; they are socially constructed and
often ambiguous. Furthermore, the attributes associated with racial identification also vary
significantly both within and between racial groups.

For example, Asian South Africans are generally understood to be of Indian descent, but
they do not represent a homogeneous group as they also come from different ethnic groups.
Indian South Africans are primarily descended from those brought over by the British in the 19th
century as indentured labourers or enslaved people to work on sugar plantations in the Natal
Colony (Harris, 2010). Once the practice of indentured labourers ended in 1911, traders began
immigrating to South Africa from India; there are still immigrants coming from South Asia
(including Bangladesh and Pakistan). Cape Town also has Cape Malay, who fall under the Asian
categorization. They are descendants of Malay people who were brought to the Western Cape
beginning in the mid-17th century to work on plantations and ports (Baderoorn, 2006). Many of
these people were from Indonesia (the Dutch East Indies at the time), while others originated
from East Africa and Madagascar. They were brought as indentured servants and were primarily
Muslim. They became known as Cape Malay, with most living in the Western Cape near Cape
Town (Milner, 2009).
Generally, the term “African” describes individuals of African descent, many of whom still speak their African language and have distinct cultural practices (Seekings, 2008, p. 9). However, the categorization of “African” is complex because there are many ethnicities and “ethnic subgroups” within this category. Many Africans identify themselves in ethnic terms or according to what has been referred to as “tribe.” Nevertheless, smaller subgroups constituted by different totems, religions, and geographic locations are also powerful forms of identification and community (Seekings, 2018, p. 6). In addition, African South Africans have religious affiliations historically rooted in colonial missionizing projects, which often included dispossessing African inhabitants of their land and rights as a result of colonial administrative policies that distributed territory among different churches (Chipkin & Leatt, 2011).

The term “Coloured” is highly contested by some and accepted by others. Many have embraced the term as a marker of their identity and shared history, (Adhikari, 2008; Petrus & Isaacs-Martin, 2012). Often placed within the umbrella term “Coloured” is a group called Cape Malay, who are generally of Indonesian descent and practise Islam. Some Indian South Africans and Africans are also Muslim. While “South African Muslim” refers to Indians, Coloureds, and Black Africans, most South African Muslims are Malay under the census (and during apartheid). However, they are categorized as “Coloured” (Vahed, 2021, 46). In Cape Town, Coloured people are the majority group at 42% of the population (Statistics South Africa, 2011). Beginning in the 1970s, following the growing Black Consciousness Movement, many people who had previously identified as Coloured and as separate from both Africans and Indians began to question the term because it created divisions between the marginalized “non-Whites” being oppressed to various degrees by apartheid policies and practices (Adkikari, 2008). A few individuals I spoke with eschew this term because they feel it was imposed upon them.
became apparent when a filmmaker showed me apartheid-era archival footage of a woman discussing her relocation by the state. Based on my previous interactions with other informants that identified as Coloured, I assumed her accent indicated she would likely be categorized as Coloured, and I asked him whether that was correct. He responded that he did not like that term: “It was created by the apartheid regime. Why would we use it?” He favoured the term “Black.” He was one of the few people in my year of fieldwork who pointed out the problematic nature of the term.

Other people discussed their Coloured identity with me quite openly and positively. One friend even commented that she had a “Coloured accent,” but her brother did not since he was younger and went to a racially mixed private school. In contrast, she went to a school with primarily other Coloured children before and after the end of apartheid. The Camissa Museum is an emerging museum in Cape Town that “uncovers a hidden ancestral and cultural past challenging the Colonial and apartheid narratives of those classified as ‘Coloured’…” (Camissa, 2022). The museum’s website shares information about the history of racial classification and states:

For those who were labelled ‘Coloured’, our ancestral roots and cultural heritage is most defined by having faced and risen above specific adversities or crimes against humanity - colonialism, slavery, ethnocide and genocide, forced removals, de-Africanisation and Apartheid. It is also defined by having multiple roots which represents a coming together of African (68%) and Asian (32%) ancestors with some non-conformist European roots. This definition is much more reflective of the racial category's socially constructed and deeply historical nature.

Although a White South African is typically of British or Dutch descent, other European immigrants came to South Africa, such as the French Huguenots and Germans (Keegan, 1996). The Dutch settlers later became known as Afrikaners. In settler colonial states such as South
Africa, whiteness was associated with positive characteristics. White Europeans justified their oppression of the Indigenous inhabitants as a civilizing mission of rationality, order, and progress (Green, Sonn & Matsebula, 2007, p. 397). Several generations of White people were socialized to believe not only in their superiority but also in the “logic of racialization,” as well as which spaces, practices, and material resources should be devoted to each group (Steyn, 2001, p. 88). The hierarchical categorizations of apartheid were not only limited to “non-Whites.” Although colour was a key differentiator between putative races during apartheid, among White people, other markers set Afrikaners apart from the British, even though both were racialized as White. Being White was not a uniform category. For Afrikaners, their language, food, and shared history all served as elements of their identity (Verwey & Quayle, 2012, p. 568).

In a North American context, whiteness is often discussed as unmarked and normalized (Dyer, 1997; Frankenberg, 2009). Hartigan (1997) advocates for making whiteness theoretically and conceptually visible in the same way racial categories like Black or non-White are marked and known. Nevertheless, the context of whiteness in South Africa is unlike that in the West, where those raced as White are in the majority. In South Africa, being White is not only marked and visible but also something that permeated White people’s interactions with “the Other” before and during apartheid (Steyn, 2005, p. 122). The benefits afforded to White people under apartheid were also clearly marked and made visible by the state and “almost impossible to refuse by those who might have wanted to refuse its benefits” (Ratele, 2009, p.161; see also McKnight, 2003). The apartheid system was set up to give White people an advantage in all sectors, making it a category marked and delimited as privileged by the state. In offering privilege in the form of access to the best land, houses, education, services, and jobs, as well as the right to dominate other racial categories, this system reinforced the idea that White people
were superior and every advantage afforded them was natural (Steyn, 2001, p. 87). Coupled with this notion of privilege was its opposite: that underprivileged, “non-White” groups were, under the law and in the eyes of many White people, inferior in terms of intelligence, ability, and morals.

There are other ways of classifying race in the country beyond these four terms. For instance, inverting the way “non-White” was used by apartheid officials and White people to describe all groups not classified as “White”, “Black” was a unifying term used by those struggling against the apartheid system; it included African, Coloured, and Asian people. “Black” consolidated and united a multi-racial majority and offset the power of the minority (White) rule. The African National Congress (ANC), a leading political organization fighting against apartheid, dubbed it “non-racialism policy” and saw it as a way of uniting all Black South Africans. This form of non-racialism focused on a common South African identity rather than racial or ethnic identities (Ramsamy, 2007), highlighting the difference between Black as a racial category and Black as a category of political organization. Such political identification and organization around the category of Black created solidarity for many of those “non-Whites” forced to adopt apartheid-era racial categories. The categorization of Black in post-apartheid South Africa is rooted in the historical political organization across racial boundaries. It legally refers to all “people of colour” or “non-Whites.” It is very different from the use of “Black” in North America or elsewhere, where it refers primarily to the descendants of African slaves brought to the Americas as well as those born in Africa who more recently migrated. When I employ the term “Black,” I use it in the way that most of my informants used it, in reference to all African, Coloured, and Asian people from South Africa.
Finally, I would like to discuss my decision to capitalize all racial terms, which some scholars can see as controversial. Recently, the Associated Press, which sets the example for many publications, explained they would be capitalizing “Black” because “people who are Black have strong historical and cultural commonalities, even if they are from different parts of the world and even if they now live in different parts of the world” (Daniszewski, 2020). They also stated they would not be capitalizing White because there is not a similar shared history, and capitalizing the term would risk “subtly conveying legitimacy” of White supremacists that do capitalize the term. Other scholars have stated that not capitalizing “White” is “anti-Black.” For example, Ewing says, “Whiteness remains invisible, and as is the case with all power structures, its invisibility does crucial work to maintain its power” (Ewing, 2020). Kwame Anthony Appiah also advocated for capitalizing “White”: “Black and White are both historically created racial identities—and whatever rule applies to one should apply to the other” (Appiah, 2020). He explains that removing the difference between the two terms will take power away from racists. These discussions reflect primarily the North American context and indicate the need to push back against the harm that misusing capitalization can cause.

In the South African context, there does not exist a similar debate. After carefully researching the way that South Africa capitalizes racial terms, I have found there is not one standard approach. Overall, most news sources do not capitalize racial terms. The South African government released a style guide that recommends capitalizing African, Coloured, Indian but not Black or White or Indigenous (Editorial Style Guide, 2013). Many academic sources written by South African scholars capitalize African and Indian, but not Coloured, White, or Black (Muyeba & Seekings 2011; Beyers 2008). I recognize that words and grammar have power, and the choices writers make about capitalizing racial terms impact the evolution of how these terms
are received and used. Therefore, after considering the broader debate and the specific South African context, I have decided to capitalize all racial terms, including Indigenous. I do this explicitly because I want to challenge the power and normalization of Whiteness in South Africa. Unlike most South African scholars, I will capitalize Black and Coloured to recognize their importance as racial categories in the past and present.

**Research Sites**

I have always been interested in the tensions between what seems to be an increasingly marked need in the contemporary world to preserve and remember the past in its many forms and the continuous changes taking place, especially in cities (Freund 2007, p. 142). I focused on the geographical area of the city of Cape Town and its suburbs for my doctoral research. The ethnographic findings are dispersed across the city but primarily center around three places: Woodstock, District Six, and Protea Village. I chose to focus on these three places over others in the city because, separately and together, they offer a way to understand the different facets of belonging. During the year I lived in Cape Town, these three places also shared an important temporal element. From the perspective of my participants, each place was concretely connected to its past, and many participants framed their understanding of the present in reference to the events of the past, which anchored different claims in a politics of belonging. At the same time, participants at all three sites were concerned with the future.

As I became familiar with the city and was starting to understand better the complexities of race, space, and belonging in Cape Town in 2016, Reclaim the City campaign, run by Ndifuna Ukwazi, caught my attention. At the same time, I was meeting and talking with people from Protea Village and District Six, two sites from which “non-White” residents had been removed in the 1960s. I was also trying to learn more about the neighbourhood I was living in,
Woodstock. Slowly over a few months, my focus narrowed to how belonging was being contested across the city and how these contestations make a larger statement about the structures of belonging, inclusion, and exclusion regarding space, resources, and rights in Cape Town and South Africa more broadly.

**Cape Town**

Setting the scene first with the greater context of the city, located in the Western Cape province, Cape Town is one of the biggest cities in South Africa, with a population of over 3 million in the metropolitan municipality (Statistics South Africa, 2011). The city has a population of 5.8 million (see Figure 2). The city surrounds Table Mountain and is divided into seven suburbs: the City Bowl, Atlantic Seaboard, Southern Suburbs, Southern Peninsula, Cape Flats, Blouberg, and the Northern Suburbs. The City Bowl is a natural depression at the foot of the mountain that hosts the Central Business District (CBD) and several neighbourhoods, including District Six, Bo-Kaap, and Woodstock. The Atlantic Seaboard is home to many well-known beaches, including Clifton beach, while the Southern Suburbs feature many of the city’s wealthy neighbourhoods. The Southern Peninsula extends to the tip of the cape peninsula, the Cape of Good Hope. The Cape Flats is a large, flat, and sandy area southeast of the CBD. During apartheid, the government created residential areas in the Cape Flats on the city’s outskirts, often referred to as “the townships,” for “non-Whites” to live in. Many people were relocated from the city to these outer townships from the 1960s to the 1980s. Blouberg and the Northern Suburbs are mainly residential neighbourhoods (Figure 3).

A significant portion of the city’s population identifies as Coloured, accounting for 42.4%, followed by 38.6% identifying as Black African, 15.7% as White, 1.4% as Indian or...
Asian, and 1.9% identifying as Other (Statistics South Africa, 2011). Cape Town has the highest proportion of Coloured South Africans in the country; by comparison, Johannesburg has 5.9% Coloured residents. This concentration is a result of apartheid policies that sought to exclude Africans from the Western Cape and to make the region a Coloured labour preference area (Adhikari, 1991, p. 108). The unemployment rate was 26.7% in the Republic of South Africa and 19.5% in the Western Cape at the end of 2017 (Statistics South Africa, 2017). In Cape Town, the Gini coefficient, a measure of inequality, was 0.57 in 2010 but increased to 0.62 in 2018 (Western Cape Government, 2020). In contrast, the measurement for South Africa in 2010 was 0.63 (Western Cape Government, 2017) and remained unchanged in 2014, the last date it was measured (The national census planned for 2020 was delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Statistics South Africa carried out the most recent census in 2022 but has not published the results as of February 2023. As a result, some statistics are outdated, where possible municipal and provincial statistics have been used to updated national statistics (Statistics South Africa, 2023).

The Gini coefficient measures income inequality. For comparison purposes Canada’s rate is .33 in 2017 (World Bank, 2023).
World Bank, 2023). In 2016, Cape Town’s economy accounted for 71.8% of the Western Cape’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Western Cape Government, 2017). The tertiary sector accounts for 74.9% of the GDP, which includes retail, transport and communication, finance, insurance, and social and personal services (Western Cape Government, 2017).

FIGURE 3 SUBURBS OF CAPE TOWN

Source: Map drawn by Aya Turchio
In Cape Town, the quality and density of housing vary significantly from neighbourhood to neighbourhood, and White people generally live in nicer, larger accommodations. Some wealthier residents live in large houses or apartments, while the less wealthy live in small apartments with several people in a room. Living in the city centre, as opposed to the outskirts of the city, often comes with additional benefits. For example, a simple sidewalk makes walking from one place to another easier and safer. Other amenities often present in the city include better air quality as opposed to that found in townships where people mainly cook using wood fires or with charcoal; the presence of trees; proximity to grocery stores, schools, public transport, and places of employment; access to piped water in their dwellings; and lower crime rates.

Housing differs dramatically between the townships and the city. The townships comprise a mix of houses and apartments, along with informal forms of housing that are typically small shacks or tents. Informal housing settlements are often erected on empty or abandoned land by people with low incomes as a last resort. Such settlements are frequently the target of theft and criminal activity, and since they are illegal, they are at risk of being dismantled by police. Typically, the township areas do not have the same access to city services and amenities. For example, if there are sidewalks, they are not very well-maintained. In addition, environmental factors such as flash floods, wind, and fires heavily affect those residents without proper shelter or transportation in and outside Cape Town. Without question, the Black underclass living outside the city experience these difficulties the most (Worden, 2012, p. 162-165).

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5 There are also informal settlements in the city, but most are found on the outskirts.
The Cape Flats townships were built during apartheid. They were designed to have only one main road for access so they could be sealed off during times of “unrest,” but the single access road now acts as a bottleneck if there is a crisis or problem, such as when a fire or flood rages through the area, making it difficult for the residents of the Cape Flats to evacuate or receive help if they need it. In addition, the Cape Flats ground is composed of unstable sand, which, with the density and unplanned nature of many of these settlements, compound safety issues such as flash flooding, limited access and water supply for firefighters, and sanitation issues due to lack of sewage treatment (Drivdal, 2016). The Cape Flats have higher levels of unemployment and lower levels of education than other areas. Fewer people live in formal housing and have access to services, such as water piped into their dwellings, than in areas closer to the CBD where White people mainly live (See Figure 3). Table 1 shows the difference between Gugulethu (a township in the Cape Flats), the CBD, Woodstock, the Southern Suburbs (Bishopscourt, a wealthy area), and Cape Town as a whole. The neighbourhoods provide a glimpse into the socioeconomic differences among these areas. Substantially more residents of Bishopscourt completed grade 12 and are employed than the average in Cape Town. When Gugulethu is added to that comparison, the differences are much starker. These statistics highlight not only the inequality that still exists in Cape Town, but also how geographically based and racialized the inequality is.

TABLE 1 SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS OF THREE NEIGHBOURHOODS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighbourhood</th>
<th>% Completed Grade 12</th>
<th>% Labour Force Employed</th>
<th>% Living in formal dwellings</th>
<th>% Households with water piped into dwelling or yard</th>
<th>% Households with access to flush toilets</th>
<th>Majority % population by race</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gugulethu (Cape Flats)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>99% African</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodstock (City Bowl)</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>50% Coloured;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Woodstock

As I first walked through the neighbourhood that would become my home for the year I lived in South Africa, I noticed the century-old homes in Upper Woodstock had been renovated and painted in what seemed to be a common aesthetic. Upper Woodstock homes often had wooden gates, and muted blue and grey painted cement walls. Most of the homes had electrified wire or razor wire above perimeter fences along their property lines and multiple additional gates on porches and doors for added security. Cars were often parked within the perimeter gates, forming small compounds. The residential streets of Upper Woodstock felt deserted due to most of the homes being walled off. Nevertheless, there were several nice, relatively pricey restaurants and bars that people from the neighbourhood and surrounding areas flocked to in the evenings. There was a café that doubled as a convenience store and patisserie. A French restaurant, pizza place, and burger bar were within a 5-minute walk for those living in Upper Woodstock. A spa, an antique furniture store, and a real estate firm could also be found in the area. During the day, the streets were mostly calm and empty.

Victoria Road, commonly referred to as Upper Main Road, marked Upper Woodstock’s end and Lower Woodstock’s beginning. At Upper Main Road, the calm, relatively quiet streets were replaced by a vibrant, chaotic, people-filled road lined with stores and restaurants. Visitors to this street could shop for pizza, falafels, groceries, and furniture, as well as get a haircut, have

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bishopscourt (Southern Suburbs)</th>
<th>Cape Town</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>85</td>
<td>46</td>
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<td></td>
<td>96</td>
<td>76</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>99</td>
<td>87</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>99.5</td>
<td>88</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>74% White</td>
<td>42% Coloured; 39% African</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics South Africa, 2011
electronics fixed, and go to the bank. The frenetic energy of Upper Main/Victoria Road felt at
odds with the calm and wealthy feel of Upper Woodstock. The transition from one part of the
neighbourhood to another happens instantly. Lower Woodstock is a mixed community in terms
of race and class. This part of Woodstock had several empty lots lined with fences and often had
garbage and old furniture leaning against the fences.

I walked up and down the peaks and valleys of jagged, sometimes eroding sidewalks. The
streets were lined with cars of varying degrees of new and old, dented or pristine. One of my
neighbours had two very well-maintained and brightly painted cars parked on the street. He
washed them nearly every day and frequently sat outside monitoring them. Many of the houses
in Lower Woodstock (see Figure 4) looked a little more run down and were not as well-
maintained compared to Upper Woodstock. They tended to be painted much more vibrant
colours, although the paint was sometimes peeling or faded. The street I lived on in Lower
Woodstock had a lime green house that had been transformed into a bar on the corner. Next to it
was a bright orange house, and the house I lived in was electric blue. Many houses had metal
bars on the windows and doors rather than high concrete gates or wooden fences. Several homes
had armed response signs indicating that if there were a break-in or any kind of incident at that
house, a team of armed security guards would respond to the alarm. A few homes had electrified
wires above their fences to ensure that people could not climb them and enter their homes. The
home I lived in had all three security measures, which made me feel all at once safe, trapped, and
scared of the potential incidents the measures were meant to prevent.
Woodstock, which has two electoral wards, is located between the north side of Table Mountain and the Cape Town docks. It is a relatively central location and one of the closest neighbourhoods to the CBD. Albert Road, colloquially referred to as Main Road, divides Lower Woodstock lengthwise (see Figure 5). It has a population of 9,345 in an area of 3.1 km². It is a racially mixed neighbourhood with 29.1% Black Africans, 50.9% Coloureds, 11.6% Whites, and 2.8% Indians/Asians (Statistics South Africa, 2011). It has been a neighbourhood of Cape Town since the late 19th century (Garside, 1993). Woodstock housed both White and Coloured residents (Booyens, 2012). After the Group Areas Act of 1950 was implemented, some “non-White” communities were permitted to remain in the city. For example, Bo-Kaap and Walmer Estate were both allowed to remain as “non-White” areas; Malay and Coloured communities historically settled them. Others, like Woodstock, remained as “controlled areas” while a decision on their racial composition was pending (Garside, 1993).

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6 The Group Areas Act enabled the government to designate and reserved specific areas for specified racial groups. To accomplish this, the government forcibly removed racialized communities that were no longer allowed to live in those areas (See Chapter 2 for further discussion).
During apartheid, Woodstock was a working-class neighbourhood and home to light industry—mainly textile factories and others such as the Pyotts Biscuit Factory (Carls, 2016, p. 30). However, manufacturing began to decline in the mid-1980s (Lemanski, 2007). Over the last 20 years, most manufacturing jobs disappeared, mainly in the textile industry. As a result, many businesses have moved out of Woodstock, and the neighbourhood has transformed. The old manufacturing buildings are being converted into condominiums, office spaces, and commercial spaces.

FIGURE 5 KEY RESEARCH SITES IN THE WOODSTOCK AREA

Source: Map drawn by Aya Turchio

Although Woodstock has remained a racially diverse neighbourhood, there are more Coloured residents in Lower Woodstock and more White people in Upper Woodstock. This trend developed throughout the 1980s because, at that time, the local government permitted Coloured
families to move into Lower Woodstock. In 1986, the state declared that Lower Woodstock should be a Coloured neighbourhood because there were mainly Coloured people living there. A campaign called “Open Woodstock” fought to keep Woodstock open to all “races,” and residents circulated petitions that they presented to the state. Eventually, the state halted plans to turn Lower Woodstock into a Coloured-only area (Garside, 1993). As a result, Woodstock along with a few other South African neighbourhoods like Warwick Avenue Triangle in Durban successfully resisted late apartheid racial classifications and became known as a “grey area” (Maharaj, 1999).

Woodstock was home to successive waves of immigrants coming to the Cape from the 1920s to the 1970s, including “post-Boer war British settlers, rural Afrikaners in the 1920s, Eastern European Jews in the 1930s, Southern Europeans in the late 1930s and early 1940s, and most recently, in the 1960s and 1970s, Portuguese immigrants from Angola and Mozambique” (Garside, 1993, p. 31). In addition to these immigrants, White and Coloured working-class Capetonians were also making Woodstock their home. Recently, foreigners from other African countries and beyond have moved into Lower Woodstock as it is considered safer for migrants (Carls, 2016) compared to the townships where deadly xenophobic attacks have occurred (Charman & Piper, 2012). Today, Woodstock is at the center of a discussion about how to create an inclusive city and what it means to belong when racialized class politics continue to shape how people are included and excluded.

**District Six**

The District Six Museum was one of the first sites I visited when I arrived in Cape Town at the beginning of my fieldwork. As I sat on a wooden bench waiting for my tour guide, I looked around at the museum I had read so much about before arriving in the city. Ruth, my
Coloured tour guide, like most other guides and employees, was a former resident of the neighbourhood. The tour began in the museum’s main hall, where Ruth pointed to the floor, which was covered in a large, hand-drawn map. The map was created with the help of many artists and former residents to commemorate and document what their community looked like prior to the forced removals that began in 1966. Ruth showed us at the beginning of the tour where we were on the map (in the Methodist church), and she explained that the building was at the border of what used to be District Six. Then she pointed towards the street that delimits the edge of the district. She stepped over the red line on the map, and before she continued, she had us all do the same so that we were “in” District Six, inviting us into the original District Six, the way it was before the community was forced to leave. This symbolic step into the geography of District Six underscored how deeply connected the claimants’ community experience and sense of belonging are tied to the land itself. To understand what happened at this site and to the people who were forced to leave, one has to literally step into the place where it happened.

District Six is one of the best-known sites of forced removal in South Africa. In 1966, it was declared a White area, and following this, some 60,000 (mainly Coloured) people were forced to move out of their homes and relocate to an outlying area known as the Cape Flats. Although the government expected the relocation to take two years, it took twelve years to complete (Layne, 2008). Once the apartheid government cleared District Six under the Group Areas Act, it built the Cape Technikon. Although it was initially meant for White people, it is now called Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) and has a majority of Coloured and African students attending. However, it takes up a sizeable portion of the District Six area, and therefore that land cannot be used as part of the resettlement of land claimants, nor can it be used for other housing schemes.
Residents of District Six actively resisted their forced removal and successfully impeded new development on the land. Almost immediately after the forced removals, the bulldozed site became an important focal point for anti-apartheid resistance and eventually—under the democratically elected government—for land claims and official memorialization in the form of a museum and community centre. Memorials ensure the victims of past injustice are not forgotten, while a monument “marks a decisive moment as a new beginning and embodies the historical self-perception of the founders of the monument” (Douglas 2011, p.176). The District Six Museum acts as both memorial and a monument to the past and as a community centre that fortifies former residents’ connections with one another. District Six became much more than a site of displacement; it became a symbol of oppression and struggle on a national and international level. It also became “a rallying point for anti-government forces with otherwise widely differing political agendas” (Dewar, 2001, p. 51). In 1987, the “Hands Off District Six” group was founded under the premise that if the original inhabitants could not live on the land, then no one else should. Out of this grassroots movement, the District Six Museum Foundation was founded in 1989 (Cassidy, 2012). In 1993, the District Six Museum officially opened in the former Methodist Church, one of the few remaining buildings after the removals. Apartheid laws prevented the demolition of churches and mosques, and the government left those buildings intact. The museum also served as a base of operations for the former residents’ land claim. The District Six Museum’s goals were to reclaim the memory of the place, reconstitute the dispersed community, and help facilitate the land claim process for former residents. The mission was fueled by former residents’ deeply rooted sense of belonging. In conjunction with the changes made by the post-apartheid government to structural modes of belonging for those citizens that fall under their Black category, former residents drew on affective modes of
belonging supported by their accounts of the past and the material culture in their exhibits. The large canvas map on the floor of the museum is one of the earliest and most famous exhibits of the District Six Museum. As the exhibit opened, former residents began signing their names and adding information about their lives to the large map. These collaborative efforts challenged the distorted history of apartheid South Africa that privileged and valorized the contributions of White South Africans while mainly ignoring or vilifying the role of “non-Whites” (Layne, 2008).

Functioning as both a museum that documented the history of the neighbourhood and a community centre that served to reunite former residents, the District Six Museum, suggests Rassool and Slad (2012), “has become one of the most prominent examples of new museums whose methods of work are based on participation, annunciation and inscription, and a model of memory work based upon the idea of knowledge ‘transaction’” (p. 188). Their museological approach was developed in a grassroots way and has solidified over time; the model has subsequently been adopted at other museums in South Africa and abroad (Rassool & Slade, 2012). The District Six Museum has also helped others win land claims by offering space for meetings, creating a political action group that worked with lawyers and organizing protests and awareness campaigns. As residents resettle in the area, the Museum now serves as a central meeting place and a site of organization for new and old residents engaged in reimagining and creating the “new” District Six. In the post-apartheid version of District Six, former residents theoretically are able to navigate both structural and affective modes of belonging. However, in examining the ways these modes of belonging are translated through the realities of restitution and transformation, the gaps in belonging become evident. Despite having rights and a deep sense of community and attachment to their land claim’s site, returning remains unfulfilled for many former residents.
Protea Village

I met Cedrik van Dieman, the head of the residential committee that launched the land claim for Protea Village, and his wife at the Woodstock Lounge in Upper Woodstock in March 2016. Mr. van Dieman, a 66-year-old retired evangelical minister, lived in Langa, one of the townships outside of Cape Town. He spoke to his wife in Afrikaans and would be identified as Coloured by most South Africans. Mr. van Dieman shared that he was 16 when he had to move from Protea Village with his parents. When I mentioned that I had not yet seen the land claims site, he offered to show me the area. We chatted as we drove past the panoramic views of the city on one side and Table Mountain on the other. After a 15-minute drive, we turned left onto the road that bisects the former Protea Village, with Bishopscourt on the right and Fernwood on the left. The neighbourhoods surrounding Protea Village have large homes with courtyards and fences around each property. The site is five minutes away from the Kirstenbosch botanical gardens that sit at the foothills of Table Mountain. I commented that it was a beautiful space and that it must be great to live there. Mr. van Dieman responded, “Yes, and I hope to be living here soon.”

Located in the southern suburbs, Protea Village is another site of apartheid-era forced removal: it is much smaller and less is known about its history than that of District Six. Like District Six, it was a multiracial community. It was designated a White area in 1968, and approximately 600-800 residents were separated and relocated based on their designated racial group to townships like Langa and Manenberg. As with District Six, after most of the neighbourhood was destroyed, it was not redeveloped except for an area that was turned into an arboretum (Bohlin, 2011). The surrounding areas became wealthy, White neighbourhoods that enjoyed the greenery planted after the removal of the original residents. Bohlin (2011) argues
that since its destruction, Protea Village has become “a source and container of heritage and identity…. [N]o longer part of the fabric of everyday life, memories of life in Protea Village were relegated to the realm of ‘heritage’” (p. 290). In the absence of a real community, the memory of the space for those who had been displaced became part of what constituted an essential part of their identities, dictated by where they came from and what makes them who they are (Bohlin 2011). Like District Six, while waiting for the legal recognition of their belonging, Protea Village claimants continued to draw on their sense of belonging and connection to the past to help temporarily bridge the gaps of substantive belonging.

In 1994, former residents organized a reunion, and several former residents became active in reviving the memory of Protea Village so it could be reintegrated into the urban landscape. In 1995, they launched a claim “modelled after the District Six land claim” (Cassidy, 2012, p. 190). With the help of the District Six Museum, former residents created an exhibit at the District Six Museum about Protea Village titled *A History of Paradise 1829-2002*, which opened to the public in 2002 (Bohlin, 2011, p. 289). The community won their land claim in 2002, and in 2006, the government returned part of the land that was once Protea Village to its former residents for resettlement. Shortly after this, the claimants were taken to court by the residents of the neighbouring area, who opposed the resettlement of the land, and halted plans for the redevelopment of the land claims site. A prominent, wealthy lawyer from a neighbouring area of Protea Village challenged the former residents’ claims to certain areas of land. The plaintiff argued that certain areas should be left as green spaces as it was unclear whether former residents who won the land claim had inhabited those areas. The legal battle, which the claimants ultimately won, lasted four years (News 24, 2015). The new development of Protea Village is still in the planning stages.
Road Map

My dissertation ethnographically examines these different urban spaces to illustrate how belonging is constructed and challenged in post-apartheid Cape Town. I detail different episodes in these spaces using both a traditional ethnographic methods, as well as a digital ethnography from February 2016 to April 2023. Using these different means of data collection, I demonstrate the layered and contradictory nature of belonging and the way space, race, and class shape substantive belonging. I examine how affective and structural modes of belonging expose gaps in belonging when they do not align.

In Chapter 2, I provide the historical context necessary to understand the nuances of the ethnographic material presented. I also present a discussion of my methodological approach as including data collection and analysis. Finally, I discuss my positionality and the ways that it impacted my interactions with people and place.

In Chapter Three, I expand on my conceptual framing and elaborate on several concepts centering on belonging to demonstrate their suitability for analyzing my research material. In Chapter Four, I examine several events in public spaces around the city, including an incident at a park involving a goat, a protest at a Saturday market, and an animal sacrifice at a beach. I used these events to expose different narratives around public spaces and how race and class shape perceptions of belonging that have implications for residents’ sense of inclusion and exclusion in the city.

In Chapter 5, I examine the forced removals of District Six and draw connections with present-day gentrification-led displacement. I also detail the movements of the Reclaim the City activist group as they fight for the right to affordable housing in the city amidst gentrification in Woodstock and, in doing so, make claims to belong to the city. Through this analysis, I examine
belonging and the intersection with well-being and dignity. Next, in Chapter Six, I examine Protea Village, an urban land claims site in one of the wealthiest neighbourhoods in the city, to understand how returning exposes some of the less explicit social practices and norms that govern belonging localized in space. Chapter Six also analyses District Six, a second land claims site that, despite fostering a successful reconstitution of their forcibly dispersed community, has faced ongoing challenges relating to returning and reinhabiting the site from which they were removed. The differences and similarities between the two cases illustrate the difficulties with achieving restitution and substantive belonging. Finally, in Chapter 7, I present my conclusion, including a summary of my main arguments, and potential future research opportunities.
Chapter Two: Research Context and Methodology

Historical Overview

South Africa is the oldest-known site of proto-human and, later, human habitation (Dirks & Berger, 2013). Khoisan hunters and gatherers were the original inhabitants of southern Africa. They lived in the region for thousands of years and were slowly displaced by Bantu-speaking agriculturalists beginning in the 4th or 5th century (Barnard, 1992). According to the Camissa Museum, “The peopling of South Africa has taken over 3000 years of ancestral and cultural development to get to where we are today, and all of South Africa’s African peoples are inter-related from San, Khoe and Kalanga peoples to Venda, Xhosa, Tswana, Sotho, Ndebele, Swati, Tsonga, Pedi and Zulu” (Camissa, 2022).

The colonization of South Africa began in the Cape region with the arrival of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in the 17th century. Slowly, the Dutch colonists—who became commonly known as the Boers or Trekkers, and then as Afrikaners—extended their farmlands and their wine cultivation, and as they did so, they increasingly encroached on the lands of the Khoekhoe herders who were living in the area before the arrival of the colonists (Worden, 2012, p. 12). By the early 18th century, the colony had become a complex settler society with the expansion of pastoralism, grain and wine production, and imported slave labour (Worden, 2012, p. 13). As European settlers moved farther inland, they engaged in many armed conflicts with different African groups. As they went farther north, Europeans took over more and more land by force. In 1795, the British took over the Cape region, and by 1806, the initial Cape settlement began expanding and encroaching on San and Khoekhoe land (Boisen, 2017, p. 327). Wars broke out between the colonizers and Indigenous populations for control of the land. In addition to these conflicts, relations between British and Dutch colonial administrations and settlers became
strained. This tension led to armed conflict, culminating in the Boer War from 1899 to 1902, with the British winning against the Afrikaner armies and civilians (Worden, 2012, p. 13).

In 1910, with the South Africa Act, the British government granted the South African colony the right to be a self-governing dominion called the Union of South Africa. The Act also gave control over “Native,” “Asiatic,” “Coloured and other mixed races” to the White minority population (Devenish, 2011, p. 12). At this time, the White-led state began instituting several laws restricting the rights of the African, Coloured, and Asian populations including suffrage. One of the most impactful acts passed was the Natives Land Act of 1913, which prohibited the purchase or lease of land to African groups except in designated areas called “reserves.” The reserves were far from White-owned farms and commercial regions (Worden, 2012, p. 55). The Act continued prior efforts by colonizing Europeans to displace “non-Whites” from their land and is viewed by many scholars as the first “apartheid-like” legislation (Hall, 2014; Walker, 2014).

The Act also allowed the South African government to remove people from certain areas reserved for Whites. It is an example of how the regime of the time distinguished legislation and policy based on racial categories; Coloured and Asian people were still permitted to purchase land under this law. The Native Administration Act of 1927 compounded the physical separation of African people by instituting administrative segregation under the stated idea that African people should be “retribalized under a distinct system of law and government” (Worden, 2007, p. 82). This Act was another way to separate racial groups from one another while ensuring that the White minority government retained ultimate control and advantage. Segregation was part of a broader, state-sanctioned system to control those classified as African, Coloured, and Asian peoples (Maylam, 1995). The 1923 Natives (Urban Areas) Act allowed municipalities across the
country to control who, based on race, was legally allowed to stay in a city and purchase property. In many cities, this removed the right of African people to live in the city and their rights to secure tenure (Worden, 2012, p. 49; Seekings & Nattrass, 2005, p. 139). The 1934 Slums Act allowed the government to remove African, Coloured, and Indian people from multi-racial inner-city areas deemed to be “slums” (Greyling, 2013, p. 40).

The repressive policies continued for three decades while the National Party, an Afrikaner ethnic nationalist party, gained increasing support. In 1948 the National Party was elected, and the new government developed what it called “apartheid,” Afrikaans for separateness. Apartheid was a system of racial segregation and oppression based on a racialized hierarchy that became the foundation of virtually all of the country’s legislation. It kept many oppressive laws enacted by the Union government but went a step further and made segregation of racial groups a law. Apartheid legislation restricted the movement of all people who were “non-White”: African, Coloured, and Asian people.

Through legislative, administrative, and judicial means, the apartheid state erected boundaries around what constituted the particular qualities of each race, including White people (Ratele, 2009, p. 168), basing categorization on such criteria as appearance, norms, or behaviour, among others. Sometimes members of the same family were categorized differently. Many people were left unsure of their official status as either White or Coloured, and they could apply for reclassification if they did not agree with their classification (Ratele, 2009, p. 159). This kind of classification could have life-altering consequences for people, especially those classified differently from their loved ones. There were jobs reserved for White people, marriage to someone from another racial category was forbidden, and even sexual relationships across
“races” were monitored and made illegal with the Immorality Act of 1927, a policy which carried forward with formal apartheid (Ratele, 2009, p.160).

The apartheid government instituted the Pass Laws Act (1952), intending to control access to White areas and also force “non-Whites” to remain within the areas where they were assigned to live. The pass was used to control travel within the country and record requests for travel and any granted permissions. Racial segregation also meant certain spaces were designated for “White use only,” such as beaches and parks. At other venues, people designated as “Whites” and “non-Whites” had separate access, with each group having different entrances, bathrooms, water fountains, and benches. Police frequently stopped “non-White” people to examine their pass books and would arrest and prosecute them for defying segregation laws (Savage, 1986).

The Group Areas Act of 1950 empowered the government to designate areas for specific racial groups and to forcibly remove and relocate communities to poorly serviced and far-off settlements on the outskirts of the cities, placing “non-White” people well away from places that were desirable to White people. The Group Areas Act of 1950 is often discussed as the primary law that led to urban segregation, but earlier measures mentioned above put in place beginning in 1910 had already laid the groundwork for increased segregation in direct and indirect ways and saw the removal of most African people from the cities. The new law, primarily targeting Coloured and Asian people living in cities, also “restricted the location of African and Asian businesses and their access to white consumers” (Seekings & Nattrass, 2005, p. 142).

Another significant law was the Population Registration Act of 1950, which required people to register their racial group with the government, and based on one’s racial classification, people were treated differently and granted different rights (Greyling 2013, p. 46). In the Western Cape province, labour policies that were preferential for Coloured people promoted “a
stronger sense of colouredness by privileging coloureds economically, relative to Africans”; the policy served to remove Africans from the region further (Trotter, 2009, p. 50-51; p. 83).

Apartheid rule lasted over four decades. In 1989, after increasing international pressure, internal protest, and resistance, and with the election of Prime Minister F.W. De Klerk, the National Party quickly began scaling down the oppressive controls of apartheid. The apartheid government lifted the ban on the African National Congress (ANC), a political party that originated in 1912 and that fought against apartheid, and released political prisoners like Nelson Mandela. In 1991, the National Party held talks with other parties, such as the ANC, and committed to a democratically run and unitary state (Worden, 2007). In 1994, Mandela and the ANC won South Africa’s first democratic elections under universal suffrage, including the African majority. Nelson Mandela became the country’s first African president. The election formally ended apartheid in South Africa, and the country was officially considered to be decolonized and democratic (Worden, 2007).

With the transition to democratic freedom after the election being largely peaceful, South Africa was often portrayed as a shining example of peace and democracy in Africa (Worden, 2012, p. 1). Nelson Mandela is credited with playing a significant role in securing a non-violent transition. He focused on healing and equality rather than retribution or reprisals. One of the ways he promoted this view of the newly democratic South Africa was through a policy of multiculturalism. Myambo (2010) suggests multiculturalism, which generally involves the tolerance and acceptance of other cultures within one state, “[was] literally a matter of life and death. It allowed for a reconciliation of opposed forces that were tearing the nation apart” (p. 95). The “new” South Africa manifested its new multiculturalism through its progressive constitution where tolerance and rights for everyone are enshrined. Rather than erasing difference,
multiculturalism allowed for every group to celebrate their uniqueness while, in theory, being united. This focus on celebrated difference did not do enough to disrupt the inequality inherent in these racial categories. Some feel that “rainbow nationalism,” a metaphor for South African multicultural unity introduced by anti-apartheid activist Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1994), disguises the continuation of apartheid-era separations and cultural identities (Marschall, 2010). The “rainbow nation” was internationally popular and signaled a successful non-violent transition to democracy (Marschall, 2010). However, addressing the structural, spatial, and economic consequences of decades of racial oppression has proved challenging. Some South Africans and scholars argue that the focus on peace limited the new government’s ability to quickly make meaningful, concrete changes (Marschall, 2010, p. 89). As will become apparent below, although legislative changes were enacted, structural and affective modes of belonging have maintained inequalities and exclusions drawn primarily along racial lines.

**Land, Dispossession, and Being in Place**

The long history of land expropriation in what would become South Africa exceeded 350 years, beginning with colonization and continuing during apartheid, with waves of colonizing parties taking land and natural resources from the Indigenous peoples (Cousins, 2016, p.1). The dynamics of current property and land ownership are heavily linked to the successive actions taken by European colonists to wrest control of land from southern Africa’s Indigenous inhabitants. First, in 1657 the Dutch East India Company began acquiring land with a series of dishonest “land deals” that misrepresented the terms of the sale to Indigenous inhabitants. The Company then started granting land to Dutch settlers, effectively establishing a feudal land-holding system (Yanou, 2009, p. 11). Second, some settlers opted not to purchase the granted land and instead squatted on unoccupied land (land whose Indigenous owners they ignored),
effectively claiming ownership by occupation. Third, the Dutch claimed that there were no inhabitants upon arrival in South Africa, which would have meant their claim to southern Africa was unopposed. Later, they falsely asserted that the Bantu farmers migrated south towards southern Africa at the same time as the Dutch Trekkers arrived to further their right to claim the land over the Africans already living in the region (Worden, 2012, p. 10-11). Both groups of European colonizers also denied that Africans had complex societies before European arrival in an attempt to justify their domination of African populations. For example, British administrators ideologically positioned their control of land as being uncontested as “the native, because he was uncivilized, could not be dealt with as a negotiating partner” (Yanou, 2009, p. 12).

According to Boisen (2017), this dispossession of land was justified by two main ideas: *terra nullius* (nobody’s land) and trusteeship. *Terra nullius* contends that the settler colonial authorities found empty, uninhabited land and, therefore, had a legitimate claim to it. *Trusteeship* centers on the notion that White Europeans had a God-given duty to make the earth productive and bountiful. Africans were not using the land in ways Europeans thought appropriate; therefore, Europeans felt it was their duty to take it over. As Boisen (2017) puts it, “Europeans argued that the Indigenous populace had not exercised their natural rights to property, or, as these principles of colonization became more refined, were incapable of exercising such rights” (p. 323). Furthermore, ownership of land was linked to the cultivation of land. Therefore, if land was not being used in what the settlers deemed productive, it was considered “empty,” which meant it was available for settlers to appropriate and use in the way they believed God intended (Boisen, 2017, p. 325).

From the 20th century onward, European colonial administrators took legal measures to further transfer ownership of land and property into White settlers' hands (Yanou 2009, p. 14).
Collectively these policies are referred to by many now as “spatial apartheid” (Cogin, 2016; Urson et. al., 2022; Cloete & Yusuf, 2018; Sefala, 2020). As a result, colonial governments took over the majority of land through the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century. The assumption that Africans had no real, recognizable titles to the land was further entrenched in colonial discourse and imperial jurisprudence (Boisen, 2017, p. 334). In 1905, the Lord Milner Commission’s report recognized that Indigenous people had access to land but recommended that land be under European control and that portions of land would be carved out for reserves where Africans could live (Yanou, 2009, p. 14). Then, in 1913, the Natives Land Act designated 55,913 kilometres or only 7% of total land for “non-Whites.” (Yanou, 2009, p. 14). Later, in 1936, the Native Trust and Land Act (subsequently renamed the Bantu Trust and Land Act and the Development Trust and Land Act) released more land for Africans, but the targets were never met and merely consolidated the existing land allocation in place and did not introduce any new land allocation system (Yanou, 2009, p. 16).

Where cities are concerned, the apartheid government’s control over land took the shape of regulating urban populations. These laws enacted new modes of belonging, including rigid forms of governance that informed inclusion in areas for some and exclusion for others. The Group Areas Act of 1950 “was aimed at the political control, the ownership of immovable property and the occupation and use of land and premises on the basis of race” (Yanou, 2009, p. 16-17). The Act imposed control “upon all interracial sales of property and interracial changes in the occupation of properties ... [the aim of which was] to achieve total racial homogeneity in each residential zone” (Western, 1981 quoted in Robolin, 2011, p. 361). Furthermore, the Act overrode existing property and renting rights for “non-Whites” (Robolin, 2011, p. 361). Through the Group Areas Act, the apartheid government designated desirable areas for “Whites only” and
forcibly relocated “non-White” residents of these areas to townships (Layne, 2008). Prior to this, Africans had already been restricted from these urban areas as a result of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act; however, for most Coloured and Asian residents it was the “first legal restraint placed upon their property rights, their first experience of de jure disqualification” (Robolin, 2011, p. 361). In urban areas across the country, relocated non-White property owners were granted minimal compensation while none was allotted to tenants. Renters in arrears were evicted without resettling (Dewar, 2001). According to Robolin (2011), the Act “legally established equation between White racial classification and privileged property rights” (p. 362).

The forced removals left many without guaranteed housing, while others lost their livelihoods. The apartheid government assigned housing under a relocation scheme, leaving most communities spread out over different areas. Many residents were moved to “newly built sub-economic or rental council estates” (Dewar, 2001, p. 50) in an area far from most available work.

In the Western Cape province, where Cape Town is located, the forced removals primarily affected Coloured people because they were the majority “non-White” group in that region. In other areas with different populations, forced removals affected racialized groups differently. For example, in Durban, Indians and Africans were the majority “non-White” groups, so they were proportionally more affected by the forced removal actions taken by the government at sites like Cato Manor (Mottiar & Bond, 2012). In the Johannesburg suburb of Sophiatown, on the other hand, African people were the majority group displaced however, Coloured and Asian people were relocated to separate areas once the suburb was declared “White only” (Maharaj, 1999). In Cape Town, Coloured people were removed from different areas across the city to townships in an area known as the Cape Flats (Ryland Estate, Belhar, Hanover Park, and Manenberg). As mentioned earlier, most Africans in Cape Town were
forcibly removed in 1900-1902, and many were relocated to Uitvlugt, later renamed Ndabeni (Bickford-Smith, 1995, p. 75).

In addition to the material losses, those forced to relocate suffered social and psychological consequences of the removals as their communities were fractured, and friends and families were separated. Entire neighbourhoods were broken up and relocated. Many “removees” lamented the loss of the social ties and support networks neighbours once provided (Trotter, 2009). The new neighbourhoods were often unwelcoming and comprised other victims of removal, including Africans who had been part of a much earlier expulsion from the city, as well as some individuals who had moved from other areas with the hopes of finding housing (Trotter, 2009).

Apartheid spatial planners created buffer zones between racial areas. They used natural and humanmade elements such as railroads, rivers, and large areas of brush to physically separate these areas to keep “non-Whites” far away from wealthy White residents and reinforce segregation (Greyling, 2013). The barriers acted as reminders of the structural modes of belonging that limited “non-White” people’s rights and ability to belong to certain places, regardless of their affective connection to a place.

Under apartheid, the mass removal of people from different areas of Cape Town was done under the guise of urban redevelopment.7 Officials in charge of planning the new apartheid-era Cape Town believed Coloured people lived in cramped, unhygienic, and crime-ridden neighbourhoods (Trotter, 2009). The Department of Community Development in charge of the removals claimed segregating Coloureds in the Cape Flats would be a means of “social upliftment” for them (Beyers, 2008, p. 360). By removing them from what they deemed

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7 This justification has been used in many parts of the world (Duplessis, 2005) – such as Paris in the 19th century (Brahinsky, 2011) and Africville in Halifax in the 1950s (Rutland, 2018).
unsanitary conditions and placing them in a better area (different townships in the Cape Flats),
the government purported it was “helping” Coloured people. This move also enabled the
government to avoid addressing criminal activity in the city by shipping some of it out to the
periphery (Trotter, 2009). Although one of the factors leading to urban segregation was the moral
panic that associated “non-White” people with disease and crime, Maylam (1995) names other
factors that contributed to these actions. For example, there is evidence that White ratepayers
were pressuring the government for segregation, which would serve multiple material interests.
Removing “non-Whites” from urban centers left land open for White people (Maylam, 1995).

The transition to democracy in 1994 brought about significant changes to socioeconomic
policies. Land and housing are essential issues in post-apartheid South Africa. The new
democratically elected government implemented legislative and policy changes to address
unequal land access and the accompanying socioeconomic inequalities stemming from colonial
government and apartheid policies and which primarily negatively affected African, Coloured,
and Asian people. Land policies in post-apartheid South Africa “must provide redress for
historical injustice at the same time as creating sustainable livelihoods through production,
employment creation, and equitable forms of growth” (Cousins, 2016, p. 2). The land reform
process has become complex, with many interwoven objectives and visions. Land policy in
South Africa has comprised mainly three strategies: 1) redistribution of land to move toward an
equitable division of land; 2) restitution in the form of compensation or return of land; and 3)
tenure reform to ensure land rights are legally recognized under the “different modes of locally
appropriate occupancy” (Akinola, 2017, p. 2). The first two represents the underlying conditions
that situate the ethnographic data presented in this dissertation.
The first strategy, redistribution, seeks to provide land to those who were previously
denied the right to own land. The 1994 Restitution of Land Rights Act “provides for equitable
redress for South Africans evicted from land as a result of racially motivated discriminatory laws
or practices which officially commenced in 1913” (Akinola, 2017, p.4). The government
employed a market-based approach to land redistribution, which relied on a “willing-buyer,
willing-seller” model (Hall, 2004, p. 214), meaning that only the land people were willing to sell
would be offered as part of this program. Although the post-apartheid government has made
significant efforts to address land distribution, critics have decried the slow pace of land reform
and land redistribution (Akinola 2017; Khan 2015). Cousins argues several factors have led to
the failure of land reform, including a lack of specific objectives and intended benefits. He states,
“land reform has been captured by elites. The most powerful voices are those of ‘emerging’
Black capitalist farmers (often with non-farm incomes), traditional leaders, large-scale White
commercial farmers, and agribusiness corporates, who are all benefitting more than the poor”
(2016, p. 11). In addition, the unequal distribution of land is correlated with poverty in South

Much of the land across the country remains in the hands of White people or the state. As
of 2012, White farmers owned 67% of land, Black communal areas (the former Bantustans)
accounted for 15%, the state-owned 10%, and a final 8% was used for other purposes, including
urban areas (Walker & Dubb, 2013). However, the racial distribution of income is near the
reverse of land ownership. For example, 4.15% of White people are categorized among the low-
income households in comparison to 52.6% of Black South Africans (Statistics South Africa,
2013, 71; cited in Akinola 2017, p.5). Rather than improving, the gap between the rich and poor
has grown since 1994 (Akinola, 2017, p. 1). By comparison, White people make up 8.8% of the

population while Africans make up 79.2%, Coloureds make up 8.9%, and Indians make up 2.5% (Statistics South Africa, 2011). Therefore, the majority of land is not owned by the major racial group whereas they are over-represented in low-income statistics. Clarno (2013) argues the fixed nature of the built environment in combination with apartheid urban planning and investment “have left behind an entrenched geography that was produced to facilitate white supremacy, racial segregation, and racial capitalism” (p. 1194).

The second strategy, land restitution, is part of “nation-building and reconciliation” (Commission on Restitution of Land Rights, 2019). Starting in 1995, people who were part of the forced removals after 1913 could lodge a land claim against the state. In 1996, the Land Claims Court was established as a High Court specializing in legal proceedings related to land reform in South Africa, which included the Restitution of Land Rights Act of 1994, the Land Reform (Labour Tenants) Act of 1996, and the Extension of Security of Tenure Act of 1997 (The Land Claims Court of South Africa, 2019). This strategy has undoubtedly made it progress in redressing land inequality however, the land claims process has not been able to offer restitution with respect to substantive belonging. In Chapter 6, I present a more in-depth overview of the history of land claims and delve into the issues related to belonging.

This dissertation will primarily discuss forced removals from the 1960s onward. Although, as I have previously explained, there is a much longer history of displacement and exclusion not covered under the term “forced removal,” the legal process for land claims since 1995 excludes many who fall under these earlier waves of exclusion and eviction. The post-apartheid land claims process aims to return land to people forcibly removed as of 1913, the year the Natives Land Act began restricting land ownership by “non-Whites” (see Chapter 6). The land claims process does not cover the people who were removed or prevented from buying
Many of the claimants are Coloured or Indian people, reflecting African people's limited ability to purchase land under apartheid and earlier periods in the first place (Walker, 2006).

Land is important but represents only one piece of the unequal distribution of wealth and opportunity in post-apartheid South Africa. In 2001, Thabo Mbeki, then President of South Africa, stated that “the problem in South Africa is homelessness, not land” (quoted in Alexander, 2016, p. 8). Housing was enshrined as a basic need in the 1996 Bill of Rights. In fact, the 1997 Housing Act states that all “have access to adequate housing” (Republic of South Africa, quoted in Huchzermeyer, 2001, p. 305). The new government focused on quickly delivering housing to poor and homeless people through the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). However, the slow pace of construction and high demand for housing has forced many who are waiting for government housing to find alternative means of shelter that are often inadequate (Oldfield & Greyling, 2015, p. 1100). At the same time, government housing remains the most viable means of accessing housing for many low-income South Africans.

Housing and land are a hallmark of citizenship (Miraftab, 2006). More than two decades after Mbeki’s statement, South Africa’s housing problems remain prevalent. Housing provides not only a residence but a sense of place and belonging. In failing to address the housing problems, the post-apartheid government has failed to extend the full benefits of citizenship promised as the new government took power (Becker, 2020, p.233). The need for land reform and housing is further exacerbated by the fact that post-apartheid South Africa is urbanizing very quickly. Two-thirds of the country’s population already live in urban areas (Mpofu, 2017) compared to 58% in 2005 (Walker, 2005). This puts pressure on local authorities to also build
appropriate transportation, water, electric, and other forms of urban infrastructure, including providing housing.

The question of who has access to urban land for urban development and restitution projects, such as land claims and affordable housing, has been increasingly in the spotlight. In Cape Town, there is a conflict over how best to address spatial apartheid and who is responsible for building affordable housing to foster the integration of historically displaced and excluded people. Rapid urbanization and the lack of available, affordable land in the city have led to a lack of housing, which in turn has led to an increase in homelessness and a growing number of informal settlements popping up in urban and peri-urban areas, especially for African and Coloured populations (Lahiff & Rugege, 2002; Parnell & Pieterse, 2010). This situation has spurred activism by citizens who feel the government at all levels is not doing enough to create a city for all. Mpofu (2017) contends the failure of the ANC government to address the urban land issue has influenced the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), a national political party, to encourage its supporters to illegally occupy “vacant” land in urban areas (p. 99). Since 2014, Julius Malema—as the leader of the EFF—has encouraged his supporters to occupy land because he and his group believe land should be handed over to African people (Mpofu, 2017). Yanou (2009) points out that “Modern-day squatting and invasions of private property by dispossessed poor Black Africans, which has received exaggerated publicity in Zimbabwe and South Africa by the western media and human rights campaigners, [always has] to be interpreted in the context of the first invasions by people of European extraction” (p. 11).

Since 2017, members of Reclaim the City began occupying buildings in Cape Town slated for sale and redevelopment. The NGO offers legal assistance and pro bono representation to people at risk of eviction. Its activist component works with citizens to fight for urban land
justice and challenges the reproduction of spatial apartheid. Members occupied the Ahmed Kathrada House in Green Point, the Old Woodstock Hospital (which they renamed Cissie Gool House) in Woodstock, and the Irene Grootboom House in the city centre. On their website, Reclaim the City stated:

We occupied public buildings because our members are desperate for housing. Because we cannot afford to pay our rents anymore. Because we don’t want to live on the street when we are evicted. Because we don’t want to be sent to relocation camps by the government to be forgotten. Because we are tired of living in distant informal settlements and townships. Because we have little land and no security. (Reclaim the City, 2019; see also Murray, 2020, for more on the fight for housing and services in Cape Town).

My fieldwork in Cape Town predates these occupations, but the protests and meetings I attended were the beginning of this social movement, which has gained much more traction since it began in 2016 (see Eidelmann, 2021, for more on Reclaim the City’s occupations). Land is not only a physical place where one lives or works, but is also a requirement for reconciliation, citizenship, and, ultimately, a sense of belonging for its inhabitants. The activism and accompanying occupations by Reclaim the City members challenge the current modes of belonging in Cape Town, such as housing policies, land development, procurement of land contracts, and public consultations.

Neoliberalism in the "New South Africa"

Neoliberalism is a contemporary form of governance that spread worldwide from the 1970s onward. Conservative governments in the United States and the UK in the 1980s pursued economic development strategies based on the free market and cheap labour and production costs. Through independent adoption or structural adjustment programs imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, neoliberalism became dominant across the world by the 21st century (Dilraj, 2021, p.3). Neoliberal policies focus on “privatization,
deregulation, corporate tax breaks, and cuts in social spending; attacks on unions, welfare, and affirmative action; and the promotion of individualism, self-responsibility, and entrepreneurialism” (Clarno, 2017, p. 11).

During the fight against apartheid, the ANC was a nationalist party closely allied with unions and the South African Communist Party (Becker, 2020, p. 6). Shortly after the new South African government took power in 1994, it published the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and the RDP White Paper, which outlined policies, programs, and financial structures that would fund the planned changes to address the inequality left by apartheid rule. In particular, the RDP focused on “meeting basic needs, developing human resources, building the economy, and democratizing the state and society” (Becker, 2020, p. 203). The intent was to fund most programs by cutting spending on parts of the budget that would no longer be needed, such as the military. However, the planned cuts in spending were not enough in practice to cover the planned expenditures (Becker, 2020, p. 171). The government also stated that it would become “more business friendly, rein in government expenses, gradually open itself up to freer trade, and lessen intervention in the economy” (Becker, 2020, p. 178).

Two years later, the government soon began implementing neoliberal policies and transitioned from “a popular-nationalist anti-apartheid project to official neoliberalism” (Bond, 2014, p. 1). The ANC promoted a different set of policies that were explicitly neoliberal called Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR), which further cemented the nation’s transition to a neoliberal state that promoted free trade, the privatization of state-owned services and businesses, and a focus on exports (Clarno, 2017 p. 32). The transition in policy is sometimes referred to as a neoliberal shift, a change surprising to many observers, that according to Becker (2020), is the product of internal and external pressures on the new government. In the
lead-up to the transfer of power from the National Party, the ANC “made major concessions to win the support of white South Africans, international financial institutions, and the global capitalist elite” (Clarno, 2017, p.32). In contrast to their early ideas and plans, they did not nationalize land, banks, and mines “and instead agreed to constitutional protections for the existing distribution of private property— despite the history of accumulation through dispossession” (Clarno, 2017, p.32). Internal pressures dictated the adoption of neoliberalism rather than external forces such as structural adjustment programs (Khan et al., 2022, p.6). The ANC government focused on “free market, privatization, globalization, reduction of government spending, repayment of apartheid debt, cutting corporate taxes, and cutting social programs” (Kgatle, 2020, p. 3). However, many now argue that this shift in policy and prioritizing of economic value as determined by the market meant forgoing reforms needed to address racism, inequalities, and poverty (Khan et al., 2022; Clarno, 2017). The neoliberal shift means that residents often relate to the state and claim their rights through market mechanisms; in short, by being able to pay. Failure to pay could mean a lack of rights and inclusion. Moreover, there is a growing privatization of formerly public space creating quasi-public spaces, which has meant that people are not only surveilled in quasi-public areas but that, increasingly, these places are regulated and scrutinized based on political-economic forces.

Neoliberalism in an urban context has led to “the entrepreneurialization of local government, the privatization of public services, and the commodification of urban space” (Rossi & Vanolo, 2015). According to Fawaz (2012), urban neoliberalization also features “Urban regulations and taxations organized to facilitate foreign investments and high-end commercial and residential development and, conversely, dwindling tenure security for low-income dwellers whose presence in the city becomes even more superfluous as their once needed labor is replaced.
by cheaper goods and/or labor imported from nearby and faraway locations, and numerous population displacements caused by highway and other so-called development projects” (pp. 24-5).

Neoliberal policies and initiatives, including privatization of services by the post-apartheid government (nationally and locally), “suppress effective policy debate and meaningful public participation” (McDonald & Smith, 2004, p. 1480) as well as increasing “polarisation and the displacement of poor and lower-income residents” (Booyens, 2012, p. 51). Von Schnitzler argues the large-scale installation of prepaid water meters in South Africa is part of neoliberal reforms that force poor residents to continually measure their consumption: “Inclusion in and connection to the state here becomes contingent upon the successful performance of an ethic that fuses civic duty and entrepreneurial comportment” (Von Schnitzler, 2008, p. 899). Privatization of services means that to simply survive in a place, one must adhere to neoliberal modes of belonging by behaving in a way the private sector dictates. The racial lines drawn during apartheid have been replaced by the ideology of the market under neoliberal policies that promote free market economics and favour existing elites (Schneider, 2003, p. 32). It will take more than a market-driven approach to fix racial inequality, as “markets reward those with resources and connections, making neoliberal policies perfect for rewarding elites” (Schneider, 2018, p. 319).

In Cape Town, neoliberalism was adopted at the municipal level due to growing economic and social pressure to address the inner-city decline, failing infrastructure, increasing crime rates, and capital flight due to the transition to democracy (Khan et al., 2022, p. 8). The townships, representing a third of the municipal area, had not received any capital infrastructure expenditures for 50 years (Khan et al., 2022, p. 10). The already strained financial situation
meant that the government had to divert funds from the CBD (Central Business District) to inject much-needed spending in the historically underserved areas. Khan et al. (2022) explain that, on one side, local businesses faced an existential threat due to redirected funds and fiscal constraints, while community members in Cape Town responded by independently addressing the investment gap and deteriorating urban conditions through grassroots efforts and initiatives (p.10). Eventually, in the mid-1990s, the Cape Town Partnership, a public-private partnership, emerged. Formalized in 1999 (Khan et al. 2022, p. 9), which is considered a “watershed moment” in the urban development trajectory of the city during the transitional period (Khan et al., 2022 p.7), the partnership involved two parts. First, the strategic partnership between businesses and the government focused on the long-term development of the central city. Second, the Central City Improvement District (CCID), a public-private partnership made up of the city of Cape Town, the South Africa Police Services, and property owners, provided services that the city was not providing (CCID, 2018). They aim, their proponents argue, to make the city safer, cleaner, and more caring.

Initiatives like the CCIDs have had positive impacts in the CBD in Cape Town and Johannesburg, for example, by employing refuse collectors and street sweepers, as well as reducing crime by employing security personnel, thus making the districts more attractive (Lemanski, 2007; Miraftab, 2007). Critics argue that CCIDs favour marketization and contribute to gentrifying forces in the city, plans that focus on “street-level spectacles, trendy bars and cafés, social diversity, and funky clothing outlets” rather than addressing “unemployment, lack of opportunity, or social exclusion” (Winkler, 2009, p. 364). In line with Wacquant’s (2008) argument, the CCIDs created in Cape Town are a product of the shifting role of the state in providing fewer services to low-income populations. Moreover, the need for an improvement
program supplemented by local businesses to increase the cleanliness and security of the neighbourhood indicates that state support alone is no longer enough, even for the richer minority.

Additionally, CCIDs have been criticized for pushing social problems in the inner city—such as poverty, housing, and crime—to the outskirts of the city, which tend to be poorer areas (Lemanski, 2007). Developing and addressing problems in the inner city has created renewed interest for businesses and middle- and upper-class residents to move back into the city, which was the municipal government’s goal. As a result, policies and programs have focused more on combating inner-city decline than on gentrification-led displacement issues (Visser & Kotze, 2008, p. 2569). The goal of the CCIDS is to foster further economic growth, transforming the CBD into “a site for bourgeois consumption” (Wacquant, 2008, 199). In other words, the policies aim to make the inner-city more desirable for investment, thus enabling gentrification without consideration for the displacement of lower-income residents.

Several of my participants expressed concern and anger about the policy decisions the City of Cape Town was making. One activist explained the municipal government’s focus on economic growth and investment made it more difficult to remain in a gentrifying area and he would like to see the city finally consider the people who live in the city currently rather than only considering economic growth. His comments reflected the precarious situation in which many low-income residents found themselves and the consequences of falling out of (neoliberal) belonging (Probyn, 1996) in this case lead to exclusion in the form of displacement.

The neoliberal shift made by the new South African government has not had the intended effects on inequality and redress of apartheid-era policies Instead, inequality has increased since the end of apartheid and race remains a defining characteristic of socioeconomic status (Clarno
2017, p. 33). Furthermore, the ANC has continued for over 25 years to enact macroeconomic policies that have failed to address outlined social and economic targets (Ansari, 2021, p. 4). Although there has been notable growth in the Black middle class, the balance of economic power remains largely in the hands of White South Africans (Becker, 2020, p. 232). Rather than race being the primary factor determining access to property and space, class and the market economy dictate access (Becker, 2020, p. 234). In practice, this still means that property and space are still less available to African, Coloured, and Asian South Africans compared to White South Africans.

Taken together, these facts are particularly significant given the new government's strong optimism and promises of change in 1994. Unfortunately, the intervening years have not seen those hopes and promises met, which begs the question of how a government that, by almost any marker, is entirely different from its predecessor has failed to significantly transform the socioeconomic situation and quality of life for the majority of the country. This state of affairs has led to several protests across the country; of particular interest are those related to housing and land. During apartheid, protest was used as a means of resistance, a demand for equal citizenship as well as impeding governance by the apartheid regime; in the post-apartheid period, protest continues to be used to demand equality and citizenship, although the reasons behind the protests have significantly changed (Becker 2020 p. 234). The following section traces the history of protest in South Africa as an important part of political participation, discourse, and citizenship.

Protest

Protest by mainly African, Coloured, and Asian people (with some Whites) against the oppressive laws and policies was ongoing during apartheid, and heavily suppressed by the
apartheid government. For example, the Riotous Assemblies Act of 1956 limited public assembly (Duncan 2016, p. 47). The government also passed laws to permit the arrest of protesters. For example, the General Law Amendment Act 37 (1963) and the Criminal Procedure Amendment Act 96 (1965) allowed the police to detain anyone “suspected of acting against the state and hold them without charge for 90 days” (Roberts et al., 2017, p. 7). In the 1970s, the state continued to use strict legislative measures to restrict any resistance severely (Du Pisani et al., 1990, p. 582). Despite these restrictions, protests continued across the country. For example, in 1979, 3.8 million protest events were documented by the Global Database of Events, Language and Tone. (Bohler-Muller et al., 2017, p. 82). Throughout the apartheid regime, the government suppressed political action using several different methods. They enacted laws and issued proclamations and notices to limit the ability of people to gather and protest (Du Pisani et al., 1990). There was also a heavy and violent police response to suppress protests against the status quo (Du Pisani et al., 1990, p. 582). Throughout the apartheid era, the government continued to enact more policies to limit protest while protestors adjusted their protest methods to resist each new policy change. For example, amid rising protests, the government declared a state of emergency on 12 June 1986 that lasted until June 1990 that banned gatherings in public spaces, effectively impeding all ability to protest without facing harsh police response (Du Pisani et al., 1990, p. 586). In response, funerals of killed protestors or activists became venues for protest. The government then enacted more laws to limit the number of people permitted to attend funeral ceremonies, processions, burials, and memorials (Du Pisani et al., 1990, p. 586).

Anti-apartheid protests followed a particular pattern; mass rallies typically followed a church service and ended at a police station or municipal office “where petitions containing demands on national, regional, or local issues were presented for onward transmission to the
relevant authorities” (Du Pisani et al., 1990, p. 590). In addition, different kinds of grievances prompted protests, including deficient housing, lack of services (e.g., sanitation, electricity), detention of activists, and forced removals, among many others (Du Pisani et al., 1990, p. 591-2). “Undoubtedly the protest marches demonstrated the dynamic of mass collective action, and the potential strength of organised, non-violent pressure” (Du Pisani et al., 1990, p. 600-1).

Protestors often used freedom songs during protests as a collective means of expression. These songs became so connected to struggles for an emerging nation that the late acclaimed trumpeter Hugh Masekela once theorized that the loss of the decisive Anglo-Zulu war in 1879 was due to Zulu warriors singing on the battlefield (Jolaosho, 2019, p. 11).

Towards the end of the 1980s, the apartheid government began to allow peaceful protest, legitimizing the long-standing protest movement against the status quo. “For those communities that have been excluded from the mainstream of parliamentary politics for so long, the legitimation of protest marches represented the first step towards the gradual restoration of their political rights.” (Du Pisani, et al., 1990, p. 602). The apartheid government launched a commission of inquiry into political violence and drafted a new Regulation of Gatherings Act (1993). This Act recognized protest as essential to democratic expression (Duncan 2016, p. 47); this was a marked shift from the previous way protest was regulated under the apartheid regime. Furthermore, the new government entrenched this right in the constitution, which protects the right to protest as part of the freedom of assembly and expression (Duncan 2016, p. 3).

Protests declined in the 1990s with the transition to democracy. Still, the mid-2000s saw a dramatic increase in protests that are “economic in character, with protesters tending to cite the poor state of wages, labour market opportunities, municipal services and other material issues as predominant factors” (Bohler-Muller et al., 2017, p. 81). Duncan (2016) asserts that South Africa
is a protest nation, where protests of different kinds occur nearly daily across the country. He defines protest as “expressive acts that communicate grievances through disruption of existing societal arrangements, bring problems in society to public attention in direct, at times dramatic, ways” (p. 1). These protests include occupations, marches, and disrupting meetings. They are rooted in the protest culture that played an essential role in the anti-apartheid struggle (Duncan, 2016, p. 1). Another essential feature of these protests is the incorporation of anti-apartheid freedom songs, which “offer important resources for activists making claims on the state through multiple strategies including public demonstrations, litigation, and infrastructural opposition” (Jolaosho, 2019, p. 8). The songs have changed over time and are adapted to confront present-day issues. For example, one of Jolaosho’s informants explained that anti-apartheid songs often referred to White opponents as “dogs” in the post-apartheid era. To adapt the song to address current problems, he changed the word “dog” to “capitalism.” Jolaosho explains, “in the repeating refrain, he exchanged “inja” [the designation of dog in isiZulu] with “icapitalism” within the same melodic frame (p. 18).

Protest plays a vital role in South African society as a way of holding the government accountable, politicizing the masses, and galvanizing political change. The disruptive nature of protest serves as an alerting mechanism to the ongoing problems protesters face. It can also contest existing power structures and, in some cases, can upset the social order in favour of change (Duncan 2016, p. 5). In the past two decades, a variety of groups have been protesting different issues across the country. First, there are what some refer to as protests by the poor (Chance, 2018). For example, several protests across the country have been about service delivery to townships (Bond & Mottiari, 2013). Basic services, such as garbage collection, sanitation, storm drainage, and roads provided adequately to other areas of the country, have
been notably deficient in historically poor Black communities (Bond & Mottiar 2013, p. 285). There are also worker strikes by labourers, including mine workers and public sector workers. In what has become known as the Marikana massacre, 34 miners were killed by the police while protesting in 2012 (Brown, 2022; Roberts et al., 2017, p. 5). Students make up a third group of protesters. From 2015 to 2017, ongoing protests at university campuses demanded free education and the decolonization of higher education (Paret, 2018. p. 472; Mafofo & Makoni, 2020).

These protests engage the government at different levels. The first group generally targets local governments, whereas the second and third groups engage the national government (Paret, 2018, p. 478). Lodge and Mottiar (2016) studied two protests movements in South Africa to determine if the increasingly violent protests “threaten or complement democratic procedure” (p. 819). They found “a protest was deemed successful if it opened opportunities for discursive exchanges with officials. Protest enabled people ‘to act like citizens’ and was itself a ‘democratic expression,’ it was intended to realize already conceded ‘rights’” (Lodge & Mottiar, 2016, p. 834). Many view protest as a means of asserting rights collectively, engaging different levels of government in dialogue, and exposing the expectations and needs of protestors. In doing so, protest can also signal gaps in substantive belonging when structural and affective modes of belonging do not align. Protest highlights the unequal distribution of rights and resources or the affective attachment to a place. It is also a means of communicating how individuals or groups feel excluded or claim inclusion.

The protest culture of South Africa is an important context for the ethnographic data presented in this dissertation. Several participants I interviewed identified as activists and felt it was their duty to protest to force the government to make meaningful and needed changes to policy and laws relating to land and housing distribution. In particular, I argue that activists’
protests about housing and land are connected to broader demands for equal and inclusive
citizenship and belonging.

Methodology

My methodology draws from the field of “engaged anthropology.” The anthropology
doctoral program at Carleton University is centred around engaged anthropology. It emphasizes
practical involvement with the social world through ethnographic and theoretical analyses of
cultural frameworks and social fields that shape interactions among humans and between humans
and the environment (Carleton, 2023). Engaged anthropology offers “a valuable supplement to
more conventional forms of ethnographic research, as they introduce anthropologists to
unfamiliar research sites and interlocutors, suggest alternative topics for inquiry, and yield novel
insights” (Kirsch, 2018, p. 2). Susser argues that engagement, and in particular the pursuit of
social justice, has been “a strong force in anthropology, if not a central tenet.” (Susser, 2010, p.
229). Setha Low considers engaged anthropology as originating from a commitment to the
communities with whom anthropologists work so that research will “respect the dignity and
rights of all people and have a beneficent effect on the promotion of social justice” (Low 2011,
p. 391). In practice, engaged anthropology can include collaboration with activists, participating
in social movements, advocating for informants and communities, and working with NGOs or
lawyers (Kirsch, 2018, p. 3).

Research for this dissertation includes traditional fieldwork, digital ethnography, and
archival research from January 2016 to December 2019. I carried out 11 months of fieldwork in
Cape Town, South Africa, from January to December 2016. I originally intended to explore how
people remember and commemorate the past while moving forward in post-apartheid South
Africa. However, slowly over a few months, my focus narrowed to how belonging was being
contested across the city and how these contestations make a more significant statement about the structures of belonging, inclusion, and exclusion regarding space, resources, and rights.

Grounded in engaged anthropological approaches, my fieldwork was based on participant observation, ethnographic open-ended interviews, site visits to commemorative, museological, and historic sites, and analysis of popular discourses through social media, news reporting, and protests. By living in the burgeoning neighbourhood of Woodstock, one of my field sites, my daily routines and interactions centered on the people and places that became the focus of my research. I was able to attend community meetings and events, including market days, social gatherings, protests, and community-organized meetings. I also frequented many local businesses and restaurants and spent time in public spaces and on public transport. The types of activities and events I was able to gain access to and my interactions with my participants confirmed that class and race heavily influence where and how people live and move around in the city.

I conducted 21 semi-structured interviews, lasting 1-3 hours each, with key informants to deepen my understanding of their lived experiences. I interviewed three participant groups: 1) residents of my three primary field sites: Woodstock, District Six, and Protea Village; 2) activists and governmental and NGO workers; and 3) business owners and developers. For the structured interviews, I asked pre-determined questions (see Appendix 3), and either audio-recorded the answers or handwrote them.

Semi-structured interviews allowed me to ensure I was able to consistently inquire about key issues while also enabling me to shift my focus to other topics the participants felt were more important. For example, I used a set of interview questions at first relating to heritage and the memorialization of forced removals. As my topic became more focused, I wrote a new set of
20 interview questions about Woodstock and gentrification. I asked each participant about the changes in the city from the time of the forced removals to “now” and what it meant to them to no longer live where they grew up. I also created individualized interview questions for a few key participants. Several of my interviews began as structured interviews but became more open-ended and exploratory as I pursued relevant related topics presented by my participants. I also engaged in several unstructured and unscheduled interviews with residents, activists, and community leaders throughout my year of fieldwork. During the unstructured interviews, I recorded important notes by hand, which I later typed up. Additionally, as part of my participant observation, I held informal conversations with many participants at events, on tours, in meetings, and at coffee shops. Again, I recorded these conversations by hand.

Digital ethnography has become increasingly popular because it allows for the study of virtual interactions and communications and offers a different perspective from traditional participant observation. Pink et al. (2016) explained “digital ethnography practice […] takes as its starting point the idea that digital media and technologies are part of the everyday and more spectacular worlds that people inhabit” (p.7). They continue to say that we need to focus on how “digital has become part of the material, sensory and social worlds we inhabit, and what the implications are for ethnographic research practice” (Pink et al. 2016, p. 7). In the last 20 years, our lives have become much more entwined with the digital world. I am particularly interested in how digital spaces expose underlying assumptions and ways of thinking that are typically more hidden in everyday interactions. As a separate space apart from the physical world, people often share opinions and thoughts they might not feel comfortable sharing in “real” life. I was also interested in understanding how activism is translated into digital spaces. I primarily collected data from online forums and groups I had joined during the year I lived in Cape Town.
Therefore, I could extend my fieldwork past the time I left South Africa and gain a different perspective on how people talk about issues like race, space, crime, and reconciliation when they are relatively shielded in the digital world. Throughout this period, I also regularly read local news, blogs, and white papers relating to my research topics to ensure that I was able to continue pursuing my research questions.

**Positionality**

As a discipline, anthropology acknowledges that objectivity is not possible when conducting research. The so-called “crisis of representation” in the 1980s pushed researchers to examine their role in their research settings (Okely, 2020, p. 15). Maintaining objectivity was to avoid the “observer effect,” which could bias data. However, Okely (2020) suggests, “it is not about the observer; it is about the interaction between the anthropologist and others. From that continuous encounter, ethnographies emerge. The specificity, positionality and personal history of the anthropologist are resources to be explored, not repressed” (p.125). She goes on to explain that “the gender, nationality, ethnicity, age and personality will affect both initial and long-term inter-relations” (Okely, 2020, p.126).

Outwardly, I look like a White female. In reality, my identity is more complex than my appearance. Like many Canadians, I have a mixed heritage. I am a second-generation Mexican-Canadian and also a French Canadian. However, I am White-passing, and my social and cultural upbringing in Canada as the daughter of a person of colour influences how I see racial dynamics in Canada and abroad. During my fieldwork, I was married, but my partner did not come with me. Although it is undeniable that my gender affected my positionality, I did not feel the effects except in situations where I felt insecure or worried about my safety, as South Africa is notorious for its gendered violence (Andrew et al., 2021; Pumla, 2007). In most of my interactions with
people, I felt that my racialized positioning and classed foreignness affected how people perceived and responded to me more than my gender. I lived off of a modest stipend my university provided me; therefore, I was considered low-income in a Canadian context. Once I arrived in South Africa, my financial position improved, and I could live relatively comfortably with 1600 CAD a month because of the exchange rate and cost of living. This meant I was able to frequent middle-class venues and restaurants. I frequently used ride-share services such as Uber rather than the local bus system to get around. The combination of these factors shaped my experiences during my fieldwork. As a result, I found it was easy to meet and interact with other middle-class Capetonians, regardless of their “race.” I found it harder to make connections with low-income or wealthy residents.

As will become apparent in subsequent chapters, my whiteness affected how I interacted with participants and how they perceived me. I was easily welcomed into middle-class places that mainly White people typically frequent. It was often only my accent that would mark me as an outsider in these contexts, as my skin colour and financial means allowed me to appear as though I belonged. In other places, such as at meetings in the townships, my whiteness was conspicuous and marked me as an outsider right away, while my accent sometimes seemed to mark me as a different kind of outsider. I was aware that racism is part of South Africa, as it is part of Canadian society; however, both countries have a complex and long colonial history that similarly oppresses Indigenous people. However, I was surprised to learn how racism differs in each place. For example, I was surprised by how openly a person’s race is talked about in South Africa, whereas in Canada, such discussions of race, in my experience, have been much more veiled.
Nevertheless, the power dynamics and socioeconomic effects of racism have striking similarities in terms of discrimination, policing, and quality of educational and employment opportunities. At different points in my fieldwork, I was confronted with the history of power differences between White and Black people in South Africa. An encounter I had during my fieldwork will better situate my understanding of racialized power dynamics in Cape Town. A few months after my arrival in the city, as I watched a movie with my roommate, a South African of Indian descent, our neighbour, shouted from the window that someone had hit her car. My roommate ran out to see the damage, and after scrambling to find my shoes, I joined her. Immediately, I could see the damage was not that severe, yet the young Black man who had hit her car was very nervous that the police would be called. I crossed the street and joined the two of them to offer support to my roommate, and immediately, the scene changed. The man turned to me, exclaimed it had been an accident, and asked me not to call the police. Initially, I was confused about why he was talking to me; it wasn’t my car, after all. I told him I would not call the police and that he should be speaking to my roommate. I stepped behind her to allow her to continue talking to the man, and as I did this, he shifted his feet, following me, and continued addressing me as though I was the one who needed to be convinced the police should not be called. We continued this dance of me moving away and him following me for a few minutes until my roommate seemed annoyed and said, “it’s only a scratch,” before walking back inside. I followed her, leaving the man looking relieved. I was perplexed for a few days about what happened in that interaction and why it had unsettled me. Then it dawned on me that upon seeing a White woman, the young man must have assumed I had a position of power that I did not feel I held. He looked to me as the authority figure in the situation.
This power dynamic played out in other social situations throughout my fieldwork. For example, on several occasions when I visited a restaurant with Black people, the servers, who were often Black themselves, would look to me to choose the wine or take the check at the end of the meal. In each of these occurrences, I was reminded that the colour of my skin influenced how I was perceived and dictated how others treated me. Although my reactions were not defensive, I was surprised by the first interaction around my roommate’s car. I had not been prepared or used to the colour of my skin overtly affording me a perceived sense of authority, although I now recognize that it does every day. The structural racism embedded in the apartheid system manifests itself in moments like this countless times a day in South Africa. It plays a role in maintaining the political and economic position of people. This dynamic also speaks to the conditions under which different people belong or are excluded. As will become clear in the next chapter, belonging is a broad concept and by focusing on substantive belonging it is possible to examine how race, class, and historically rooted political-economic dynamics endure and are resisted.
Chapter Three: Substantive Belonging—Theoretical Foundations

Introduction

In 2015, the Rhodes Must Fall movement in Cape Town (Chadhurri, 2016) challenged the continued place that White historical figures from the colonial and apartheid era held in public spaces and in the commemoration landscape of the city. Cecil J. Rhodes was a British businessman and politician who was instrumental to the colonization of southern Africa. Through his company, he founded the territory of Rhodesia (modern-day Zimbabwe and Zambia) and was the Prime Minister of the Cape Colony (a colony located in present-day South Africa). The Rhodes Must Fall movement questioned the continued impact of harmful legacies and links to colonization in South Africa and demanded the removal of the Rhodes statue at the University of Cape Town campus. The protest movement was a way for protestors to signal a failure of belonging beyond just one statue or colonial figure, and as a result it expanded to target other symbols of colonialism within the University of Cape Town and then spread across the country to other universities. It eventually reached Oxford university, the site of the renowned Rhodes Scholarship, where Ntokozo Qwabe, a South African Rhodes Scholar, openly questioned the legacies of Cecil Rhodes and the deep roots the institution has to colonialism (Ali, 2015).

Located in one of the most prominent and central spots on campus, the statue of a seated Rhodes looking down over the impoverished informal settlements of the Cape Flats below was a physical reminder of the domination Black people experienced as a result of colonization. It also became emblematic of the deeply colonial nature of many institutions and the under-representation of, and continuing discrimination against, these students (Bosch, 2017; Chadhurri, 2016; Nyamnjoh, 2017). One of the protesters, Chumani Maxwele, travelled from the township of Khayelitsha carrying a bucket of feces from one of the township toilets and once in front of
the statue shouted, “Where are our heroes and ancestors?” Maxwele then threw the feces at the statue (Fairbanks, 2015). This protest and others on campuses across South Africa highlighted how alienated and excluded the presence of such statues and monuments can make Black South Africans feel because of what they symbolize and represent. Maxwele and other protesters emphasized there was a lack of representation of Black students on several fronts. The protests encompassed more than representation in South Africa’s memorial landscape; they also included a demand for more financial aid and student housing, and they called attention to the lack of Black faculty and administration. The central and prominent statue of Rhodes became a physical and symbolic reminder of these issues and acted to many Black students as an indicator that not only was the university not originally meant for them, but it also actively excluded Black students in the past as well as the present. This set of circumstances left many Black students stating that not only did the visual and institutional markers of belonging preclude them, but the internal structures of the institution also still excluded them and as a result, many of them did not have an affective connection or a sense of belonging to the university.

The concept of belonging denotes a sense of place or a feeling of attachment for a physical space, feeling, or memory. There is much more nuance to the concept of belonging beyond this, but feeling and attachment are key parts of what constitutes belonging. Yuval-Davis et al. (2006, p. 2) explain that belonging is feeling “at home” and feeling safe; it is about emotional attachment. For May (2011), belonging involves “creating a sense of identification with one’s social, relational, and material surroundings” (p. 368). Mee & Wright (2009) assert that belonging is an inherently geographical concept because it “connects matter to place through various practices of boundary making and inhabitation which signal that a particular collection of objects, animals, plants, germs, people, practices, performances, or ideas is meant ‘to be’ in a

Chapter Three: Substantive Belonging—Theoretical Foundations 69
place” (p. 772). To be “in a place” as a person or group in this way means geographical space is a comfortable and natural setting in which to “hold” belonging. A more robust definition, which the above works partially allude to, is that belonging is both a state of being and a positive feeling of attachment or affiliation. Belonging can be linked to a physical space, but is also multifaceted and linked to people, things, and experiences.

The laws and social relations that govern who and what belong where and under what conditions are an important part of understanding how belonging is constructed both individually and among groups. There are official and legal structures that grant belonging in the form of citizenship, membership, and access to resources and spaces, but there are also other informal ways belonging can be conferred to people and groups. In this way, belonging can be marked and communicated through official means such as the issuing of a passport while unofficially one’s race, religion, or ethnicity may mark some as belonging and others as outsiders. Belonging in these ways is mapped onto the material world. The materiality of belonging is most often linked to geography, land, and space. Material markers of ownership such as boundaries, fences, and other types of physical barriers designed to keep people, goods, and resources either in or out also serve as a way of demarcating belonging and who can determine it. They are part of the many ways people materially represent the limits of belonging and exclusion (Muller et al., 2009; Instone, 2009). In addition, space as territory is subject to ownership, whether legally or informally (de jure or de facto), and based on this, people can be excluded physically from a particular space by others.

There are multiple ways to examine belonging, however, as previously explained, I am using the concept I call substantive belonging to examine how racialized and classed political-economic dynamics are maintained and resisted. To do so, I draw on Holston’s (2008) work on
substantive citizenship, which he defines as the ability to exercise the rights and access the resources granted under formal citizenship, or the rights and responsibilities between a nation-state and an individual.

I also employ the concept of modes of belonging (Rutherford, 2008) to understand the conditions that govern a particular kind of belonging in and to a place and the accompanying resources and rights that come with that belonging. I define substantive belonging as the ability to belong to a place both formally and affectively. Together this means that one not only has the right and ability to belong to a place but also feels a deep attachment to that place while also feeling at home and welcome. Substantive belonging can fuel claims and counter-claims to a place or other resources. Crucially, gaps in belonging when some of the elements of substantive belonging are lacking can also fuel activism and protest. By using this lens of analysis, we can better understand some of the reasons behind the persistence of racial inequality in Cape Town, inequality that exists despite legal, governmental, and economic changes since the transition to democracy in 1994.

The City and Citizenship

My analysis of belonging includes an examination of both citizenship and exercising rights in the city. Belonging is frequently associated with citizenship and identity (Akinwumi, 2006; Alexander, 2008), and particularly with exclusion and processes of exclusion (Diener, 2007; Ervine, 2008). Citizenship has often been a mark of belonging; it also signifies a commitment to a particular space and comes with the rights and responsibilities (Desforges et al; 2005, p. 440). Geographers have examined citizenship and belonging of marginalised social groups (Alexander, 2008; Dunn et al, 2007; Hopkins, 2007; Nagel and Staeheli, 2005; Nordberg, 2006; Valentine and Skelton, 2007). According to Staeheli (2003), “the struggles and practices of
citizenship are powerfully shaped and conditioned by spatial relationships and the geography of the city” (p. 99). Holston (2011) and others (Holston & Appudurai, 2003; Purcell, 2003; Brenner et al., 2012; Rossi & Vanolo, 2012) have challenged the definition of citizenship as primarily one of legal membership to a nation-state; instead, they focus on practices of “urban citizenship,” which Holston (2011, p. 336) defines as:

a citizenship that refers to the city as its primary political community and concerns an agenda of rights-claims that address city living at its substance—issues of housing, property, tenure, transportation, daycare, plumbing, and so forth, largely understood to constitute a residential domain of social life.

This focus on daily social life and life in the city as the way to lay claim to political participation and citizenship is similar to Lefebvre’s (1996) notion of the right to the city. Lefebvre’s idea includes not only a right to space but also to life in the city, including political space. For Lefebvre, the “ideal city” is an ephemeral one where its inhabitants are constantly working from within to enact both social and political change (1996, pp. 172–3). Rights are not given automatically to citizens; they have to be created. Lefebvre (1996) argues “the right to the city manifests itself as a superior form of rights: right to freedom, to individualization and socialization, to habitat and to inhabit. The right to oeuvre, to participation and appropriation (clearly distinct from the right to property) are implied in the right to the city” (p. 173-4). For Lefebvre (1974), space is full of political potential in one regard as a repository of previous struggles, and in another as an enabler of future possible collective and individual social action. This means that while the city may be ever-changing, the spatial nature of the city provides a platform for action. Importantly, this understanding of rights differentiates between claiming a right and having rights conferred (or not) by an authority such as the state. The right to the city will never be conferred by the state; instead it needs to be claimed by inhabitants of the city.
Like Lefebvre and Holston, Secor (2004) is interested in how citizenship is shaped from the bottom up through the practices that reproduce and contest hegemonic citizenship (p. 353). Secor (2004) views citizenship as a practice and discourse that is constantly renegotiated. She believes citizenship is “a hegemonic process that assembles identities, fixes power relations, and disciplines space” (p. 352). These processes are never fully successful, and there is room for people to contest the pull of hegemonic citizenship. Contesting the hegemony of citizenship is accomplished through practices of everyday urban life and through claiming a right to the city (Secor, 2004, p. 353). Secor (2004) argues, “a critical element of urban citizenship struggles—that is, contests over identity, belonging, and rights to the city—is the assertion of the right to become a producer of the city, of urban space, and of citizenship itself” (p. 365). This is to say, the right to participate in the transformation of the city—and in so doing, shape citizenship—is a significant component in achieving urban citizenship. Therefore, the city is the scale at which urban citizenship is articulated both through everyday interactions, as Lefebvre and others argue, while also being the territory where formal citizenship is articulated most concretely in the form of laws, rights, benefits, and participation. Having the ability to participate fully in the production and transformation of the city is part of substantive citizenship because it implies not only exercising the rights laid out by formal citizenship but also having the ability to continuously renegotiate and shape them as the primary political community. The city offers a stage for the interactions of social relations and feelings of belonging that extend beyond sites of government to neighbourhoods, parks, and workplaces.

Just as citizenship can be constituted from the ground up, belonging can be fostered through the act of living and being in a place, participating, and interacting with the human and material world that surrounds us. By contrast, exclusion could also be created in a similar fashion.
through daily acts that remove or marginalize some from belonging to the city or specific parts
of it through an assumed right to act as an authority over a space. Although my primary frame of
analysis is the city, it is important to note that just like citizenship is experienced at different
scales, belonging is experienced at different scales. Belonging can be experienced
simultaneously across different scales with one scale flowing into the next, such as belonging to
a particular neighbourhood or cultural association at the local level, belonging as a citizen of a
nation at the national level, and belonging to a faith-based group at the international level. The
simultaneous nature of the scales of belonging can also be contradictory and in direct opposition
to another scale as can the forms of controls, practices, and discourses. For instance, in South
Africa, the notion of belonging to the “Rainbow Nation” after independence encouraged South
Africans, at the national level, to see each other as belonging to one nation while maintaining
separate cultural, ethnic, and racial identities. However, the national sentiment of belonging
being advertised did not translate to changes at the local level where racial inequality and racism
persisted. Belonging to a city or local area was very different from the nationalist message of
belonging, equality, and racial acceptance.

Additionally, the right to the city does not mean simply accepting the resources of an
existing city; it also means having the right to “radically transform the material processes
shaping it” (Kuymulu, 2013, p. 926). The work of transforming a city is a collective project.
Harvey (2008) and Marcuse (2009) see the right to the city as a common right rather than an
individual right. In this way, one person alone cannot claim the right to the city, it must be done
communally. In the context of South Africa, activists as well as radical theorists of urban justice
have taken up the concept of the right to the city as a way to address neoliberal urbanism agendas
that promote austerity programs and decrease the capacity of state supports (Kuymulu, 2013, p.
A communal right to the city contrasts with the highly individualist rights enshrined in and promoted by modern neoliberal states and therefore aligns with many activist movements across the globe, including those in South Africa. Fighting for the right to the city, much like urban citizenship in Holston’s sense, means that living, working, and participating in life in the city should be considered a right for all, just like other rights granted to citizens.

Having a right, and being able to exercise that right, are significantly different. For instance, a person has a right on paper to purchase property anywhere in the city, but they may only be able to afford to do so or may not be able to secure an appointment to visit property in the city, because of prejudice. For example, Figure 6 shows the “social tapestry” of Cape Town, where each coloured dot represents a person and their racial identifier in the 2011 census. The Central Business District (CBD) of Cape Town is located on the top left side of the map near the white section that represents Table Mountain. At first glance, it is easy to see that Cape Town remains a highly segregated city as it is possible to see the concentration of pink, yellow, and blue in different areas with little overlap. Visually, Woodstock looks much more mixed but has a predominance of yellow dots which represents Coloured residents. Using the concept of substantive citizenship to analyse this map, objectively it seems that although every citizen is now legally allowed to live wherever they choose, other factors contribute to continued segregation between White and African, Asian, and Coloured people (who overwhelmingly live outside of the city center). Some of that could be personal preference that could be reflective of an attachment to those places, but as was made clear in Chapter 2, much of the way space is organized, regulated, and experienced still reflects racialized socioeconomic inequality stemming from the apartheid era and beyond. In this case, the substantive way some are able to exercise their right to property means they cannot live in the city but instead must live on the outskirts.
The difference between formal and substantive citizenship can be quite extreme depending on many factors, such as class, racialized social norms, and social capital. Of particular importance here is the way certain axes of difference shape a person’s ability to claim substantive citizenship and the way this translates to meaningful belonging on the part of residents of Cape Town. In particular, what are the structural and affective forms of control, social practices, and norms that shape how people understand belonging in Cape Town? Additionally, how are these forms of control being used by some as a way of gatekeeping belonging through assumed authority relations whether de jure or de facto?

FIGURE 6 SOCIAL TAPESTRY OF CAPE TOWN 2011

Source: Statistics South Africa (2016).
Modes of Belonging

Structural Modes of Belonging

A structural mode of belonging refers to the legal forms of control that shape and constrain inclusion and exclusion for different residents (citizens and non-citizens) within a particular territory, in this case the city. I use the term “structure” to refer to the Durkheimian understanding of social structures, which are the patterned arrangements of social institutions that influence and undergird macro level social systems such as economic, legal, political, and cultural systems (Emirbayer, 1996). Crucially, the examination of structural modes of belonging includes not only having the right to belong but also the ability to exercise those rights.

Historically, the apartheid government legally and systematically tightly controlled the structural modes of belonging for “non-Whites” by legislating property, voting rights, and land ownership, as well as freedom of movement, employment, education, and marriage, to name a few. McEachern (1998) examined the sentiments of belonging and loss of identity for people who were forcibly removed from their neighbourhood of District Six in the 1960s. He states:

These people were [...] forced into a racialized kind of suburbia, a mode of living and an identity which was not of their own choosing. And in doing so, they lost a significant element of their identity as South Africans. They lost their right to determine their own identities. (1998, p. 514)

In post-apartheid South Africa, there have been many efforts to redress past exclusionary measures and their resulting structural inequalities. Under the new constitution, all citizens have a right to civic participation, voting, employment, housing, and other legal structures that delineate modes of belonging in South Africa. There are also legal processes in place to restore historically denied structural modes of belonging like the land claims process. Extensive scholarly work has examined government initiatives at the federal, state, and municipal levels focused on restitution, land claims, and housing (James, 2000; Spiegel, 2004; Carruthers, 2000;
Beyers, 2007, 2008, Kepe; 2012; Beyers & Fey; 2015). These legal processes are just an example of similarly implemented processes that shape various modes of belonging across the Cape Town region. These processes nominally assert that many who were forcibly removed from their homes and communities between 1913 and the 1980s have a right to compensation and/or a return of the land that was taken. This effectively alters the modes of belonging by changing the legal definition of who is allowed to belong to these places. They have a legal claim that aligns with the modes of belonging in post-apartheid South Africa, but as will be made clear, many still do not have the means to exercise that right. Furthermore, the work of substantively belonging is a complex process that is also shaped by affective modes of belonging. Gaps in substantive belonging, for example in circumstances where the promises and aspirations of the “new” South Africa have not been fully realized, fuel activism and protest.

To return to the example above of the social tapestry of Cape Town, the ability of people to exercise their rights has an impact on how much or how little they belong to a city. In other words, citizenship as a structural mode of belonging can create exclusionary conditions for some while being inclusive to others depending on how they are able to exercise their rights in a substantive way. This is to say having the rights alone is one of two parts of structural modes of belonging, exercising these rights is the other part. In spite of major political economic changes since the end of apartheid, Cape Town remains a city segregated by race and class, with many more White people living nearest to the city center in desirable and wealthy areas and African, Coloured, and Asian people living in less desirable areas, sometimes on the city outskirts in areas that often lack proper services like sanitation, transportation, and water. This remains the case in spite of radical changes to the government and to structural modes of belonging, such as laws.
As a result, many of the country’s historically excluded are still fighting for recognition of their claims of belonging in place and the ability to exercise their rights to belonging.

The tension surrounding the exclusionary conditions of current structural modes of belonging is evidenced by the ongoing protests about spatial apartheid, housing, and access to land. In central Cape Town, public land remains inaccessible to many historically disenfranchised and displaced people, and, according to Reclaim the City, there have been no affordable homes built there on public land since 1994 (Reclaim the City, 2019). The right to housing is an important part of many people’s efforts to exercise their rights as citizens as well as to belong structurally. Many in Cape Town are fighting for affordable housing in the city and service delivery to the townships as part of their right to belong in the city. In addition to the lack of housing and services is the ability (or lack thereof) to fit within the forms of control that accompany securing housing, which include the range of institutions and individuals who reinforce social norms and assert authority to exclude certain groups from occupying certain places. For example, a potential renter must appear trustworthy and financially solvent, and must know how to navigate the procedures and systems required to be deemed eligible. Where citizenship is concerned, there is a need for more tangible changes to the way land and space are regulated and allocated in Cape Town (Akinola, 2017; Beyers, 2017). Having the right to belong in a city does not mean everyone can navigate the forms of control and also afford land or housing to live in the city. It also does not guarantee one feels comfortable and welcome in doing so. Therefore, parts of substantive belonging can be elusive for many who, historically, were negatively affected by apartheid’s policies. This elusiveness explains why marginalized people are kept in their racially defined political and economic positions and why there are widespread protests for more inclusive belonging to the city.
Affective Modes of Belonging

In contrast to structural modes of belonging, which are concerned with the external, objective, and concrete structures that shape how an individual or a group negotiates belonging, affective modes of belonging denote, on one hand, an affective connection to, and feelings of, belonging and, on the other, the ability to feel welcome and at home. A sense of belonging is an inward-facing feeling that is mediated through the social world. As a feeling, it encompasses the ways people and groups find meaning in being a part of something, as well as how they maintain or search for affiliation and comfort in being associated with a place, feeling, or group. Affective modes of belonging are also tied to geography and space with the feeling of being in one’s proper place or being at ease (or not) in a particular place. Being welcome and comfortable is contingent upon fitting in. Cresswell (1996) sees people’s actions as being judged on the basis of the types of activities believed to belong in a place (Cresswell, 1996 in Mee, 2009).

Some scholars have explored “longing” as being part of belonging and linked it to memory and commemoration. Longing in this way has a temporal element to it; usually it is focused on the past but it can also be a way to look to an aspirational future. Along with this, the concept of a “sense of belonging” links affect theory with theories of belonging to understand feeling in place (Fenster, 2005; Mills, 2006; Walsh, 2006). Individuals and groups yearn for a feeling of connection to others and the world around them because this connection, while possible, is not always a given. In her influential writing on belonging, Elspeth Probyn (1996) argues that people yearn for belonging and work to achieve it. She connects affect to belonging through the notion of yearning and longing. To belong is to constantly long for a place or feeling that exists now or in the past or that people wish they could recreate.
A sense of belonging is also relational and rooted in sociality. The way one behaves and the activities one engages in constantly send messages to others to tell them whether they belong or not. For example, when attending a sporting event, fans of a particular team will often wear clothing that features their team logo as a way of not only indicating their support for the team, but also as a way of letting others know to which group they belong. Others who share that loyalty will feel a sense of kinship and camaraderie to the members of their group while those wearing the opposing team’s logos are considered outside of that first group’s membership. These types of outward markers are a way for people to project their internal sense of belonging for others to see. However, accompanying this projection is the reception and perception of the markers by others who will return a message of acceptance (or not). These two pieces, a sense of belonging and acceptance, make up the core of affective modes of belonging.

In addition to a sense of belonging, intangible norms that are socially constructed and often imposed by others govern whether one feels like they fit in and are welcome. A sense of belonging can be achieved in part by knowing and conforming to the unwritten rules (Fortier, 2000). People also make claims of belonging based on a shared understanding of the collectively constructed norms that govern group identity (e.g., who “we” are) (Fortier, 2000). Therefore, the second part of affective modes of belonging includes the ability to “fit in” and conform to social norms. Participation in society with the ability not only to understand and live within the norms, but also to influence them, is a key component for developing a sense of belonging (May, 2011). Having the ability to shape norms of belonging denotes a Lefebvrean right to belong. However, I argue just as having the ability to influence norms and rules is important, so is the ability to simply feel one belongs.
A feeling of attachment to physical spaces is a common theme in affective modes of belonging, such as feeling a sense of belonging to a place, where the physical space holds meaning for the individual or group beyond the materiality of the space. McCreanor et al. (2006) discuss belonging in connection to a sense of place in a community in New Zealand. They argue that places such as homes are more than just the physical spaces they occupy. Places “are constructed of sets of social relations that give rise to variable degrees of belonging. Places have unique and fluid identities that can only be understood through a consideration of the wider social relations from which they are constructed” (p. 197). A sense of belonging is fluid and constructed out of social relations that are often rooted in a place. A sense of belonging can also be constructed in the abstract, unconnected to the physical spaces. For instance, the children of first-generation immigrants may feel an attachment to their parents’ cultural practices but not to the physical land from which their parents originated. It is evident that affective modes of belonging are shaped by structural modes of belonging such as citizenship, law, race, and ethnicity as well as other factors such as forms of memorialization, aspirations for the future, and individual and collective struggle.

Feelings and acts of inclusion and exclusion are an integral part of what shapes a sense of belonging. There is perhaps no easier marker of belonging than to be included and welcomed into a particular space. Sara Ahmed’s (2007) work on institutional whiteness examines the ways institutional spaces in the UK make White bodies feel comfortable and like they belong. I draw on her work to illustrate the way race and racism shapes affective modes of belonging, in particular with respect to fitting in and feeling welcome, because I found similar racial dynamics relating to space play out in Cape Town. She argues whiteness is all around and “trails behind” (p. 156) bodies. Spaces are White by virtue of some bodies—and not others—passing through
them. Following Bourdieu’s work on habitus (1977), Ahmed (2007) argues that public spaces are shaped by the “habitual action of bodies” and bodies that already inhabit that space. Whiteness can be viewed as a habit that “bodies do” (p. 156). Ahmed talks of spaces expanding for the bodies that inhabit them; in this case, White bodies comfortably inhabit certain public spaces, and so the spaces expand for them. Whiteness becomes the hegemonic norm in such public spaces, as White bodies tend to go unnoticed and are made invisible. Those who do not fit the norm stand out and are made “hypervisible” (Ahmed, 2007, p. 159). Whiteness is only invisible for those who are racialized as White and inhabit whiteness. To be marked as different based on skin colour is uncomfortable; it also makes movement more difficult, as these bodies are often questioned about the legitimacy of their belonging, their purpose, and their motive for being in that space (p. 161). In other words, in such spaces, those racialized as White can substantively belong because the structural modes of belonging informed by a history of colonization placed White people as the center of power and moral rightness. On the other hand, they feel a sense of belonging to these spaces because their ability to belong has seldom been questioned in the way that “non-White” bodies are and as such align with affective modes of belonging. In the current South African context, whiteness paradoxically also enjoys a form of hypervisibility. In contrast to settler colonial states where White people are the majority, such as Canada and the United States, in South Africa White people are the minority. Nevertheless, the unequal distribution of power, wealth, resources, and land still offer White South Africans a position of privilege that translates to their ability to influence the racial dynamics of space and create conditions for inclusion and exclusion.
Substantive Belonging

Substantive belonging comprises two complex parts: structural and affective modes of belonging. Structural modes of belonging are not enough to ensure people feel attached to and welcomed within a place. In addition, merely feeling a sense of attachment and welcome in a place does not grant someone the legitimate right or means to live there or be affiliated to it. Schein (2009) identifies a tension between 1) a person’s ability to self-define their internal sense of belonging and 2) the externally imposed conditions that may already define their ability to conform to the facets of control that govern what I call structural modes of belonging to that place. I argue this interplay between structural modes of belonging and affective modes of belonging determines whether a person is able to substantively belong.

There is also tension between structural modes of belonging that shape one’s feeling of belonging; for example, people or institutions constrain choices or impose certain prerequisites for belonging that are mediated through power relations. Foucault (1979) states “power produces; it produces reality” (p. 194); with power comes the ability to be heard, to influence, and to assert criteria for inclusion or exclusion, which are basic components of how belonging is constructed at all scales and all forms of belonging. Therefore, power, the capacity to influence the action, feelings, and beliefs of others, plays a large role in one’s sense of belonging but is often dictated more by structural modes of belonging. I am interested in understanding how the privilege and power of whiteness as a broad racial category in South Africa is maintained in a context where Black people now have political power (Steyn & Foster, 2008, p. 26). The governmental power White people gained through apartheid and colonialism is gone, but their economic power remains. How does this power shape affective modes of belonging for African, Coloured, and Asian South Africans?
Probyn (1996) further explores what it means to be outside of belonging. She states, “if you have to think about belonging, perhaps you are already outside” (p.8). In reference to hyphenated identity categories such as “Mexican-Canadian,” Schein (2009) states, “at the very least, belonging implicates an inside and an outside, regardless of whether each side of the line or the slash is an individual, a category, or a group; and regardless of where the power to define lies” (p. 813). At the same time, there are individuals, groups, and institutions that define what it means to belong either structurally, as with ideals of citizenship, or legally in terms of claims to space, rights, or resources; in doing so, they also define what it means to not belong. Falling outside belonging implies exclusion, Otherness, and difference. Yet to be an outsider from belonging often means belonging to something else even if that other belonging is being “an outsider” explicitly created in opposition to exclusion. That is to say, most people will stake a claim for belonging to something, somewhere, or some group in spite of being excluded from structural modes of belonging. For example, Fenster (2004) examines how many Palestinians construct their own sense of belonging to their territory with their own symbols and memories as a result of being excluded from the sense of nationhood built by the Israeli state for its Jewish population. These Palestinians thus bypass the Israeli national notion of belonging and, in doing so, foster their own alternative national belonging and inclusion apart from, but underneath, the national notions of belonging. Healy’s (2020) work on not-belonging examines the failure to belong and the damages that can arise from this exclusion in schools. She draws on the foundational work of many scholars that have written about belonging such as Yuval-Davis (2006) and Fenster (2005) and concludes that “not-belonging” can place one as an outsider “not part of us” despite having formal membership and “thus someone who can be discounted” (p. 131).
The politics of belonging is a conceptual framework used by many scholars across disciplines (Mujere, 2011; Koot 2015, Marewo & Ncube, 2022; Nobis et al., 2022) to articulate how individuals and groups identify themselves and others as (not) belonging. In her seminal work, Yuval-Davis (2006) outlines an analytical framework for understanding the politics of belonging that can further contribute to an understanding of substantive belonging. She draws on Crowley’s (1999, pp. 15-41) definition of the politics of belonging as “the dirty work of boundary maintenance.” Yuval-Davis argues, “the boundaries that the politics of belonging is concerned with are the boundaries of the political community of belonging, the boundaries that separate the world population into ‘us’ and ‘them’” (2006, p. 204). Yet again, exclusion and inclusion are central to this concept with a particular focus on political communities and how they are delineated, upheld, and contested in space through social norms and interactions. Yuval-Davis (2006) argues these boundaries are maintained and reproduced by “hegemonic political powers” but are at the same time contested by other political actors (p. 205).

The boundary-making within different modes of belonging is achieved through the constant, often subconscious, determination of who does and does not belong, but also the minimum criteria required to signify belonging, whether that is “origin, culture, and normative behaviour” (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 207). That is to say, the construction of a politics of belonging in theory requires a minimum acceptable level of some predetermined criteria to determine whether or not someone belongs. Trudeau (2006) examines the way landscapes “become spatially bounded scenes that visually communicate what belongs and what does not” (p. 421). He conceptualizes the politics of belonging as a way to bound membership to “the imagined geographies of a polity and to the spaces that normatively embody the polity” (p. 422). These boundaries, which are both discursive and material, contribute to the “production of social
spaces like landscapes and place” (p. 423). Such boundaries can be based on a mix of criteria that are affective or structural, usually derived from one’s origin (e.g., place of birth or citizenship), culture, or behaviour, as well as 'how one is raced, gendered, and classed’. This sometimes means those criteria, which appear to be clear whether in fact or as perception—such as a person’s racial identification—get upheld more strongly and as a marker of the entire boundary of belonging. Therefore, much of the politics of belonging consists of continually assessing whether someone belongs to a group or a place and what the belonging criteria should be. Boundaries that delineate belonging are continually contested because they are not rigid categories and remain socially constructed and fluid, even as people try to see them as firm. As such, belonging is a continually negotiated process informed by affective and structural factors.

In this way, one’s claim to belong can encroach upon another’s and becomes political “since it is about collective identities that can be used to exclude others (Thakholi & Koot, 2023, p. 939). Landau (2006) argues that in Johannesburg, xenophobia towards migrants reinforces a sense of belonging amongst different South African urban dwellers by drawing a contrast with an outsider Other. The notion of being native to a place, in the case of South Africa, is complex given the history of forced population movement during apartheid; however, the Othering of migrant peoples in South Africa has been a way of shoring up a nationalistic sense of belonging where an ethnically-based, geographical sense of belonging is more difficult to navigate (Landau, 2006). In this case, the migrants are unintentionally encroaching on the “local” South African’s claim to belong to the city because of perceived competition for resources with South Africans. As a result, these South African residents of Johannesburg question the migrant’s claim to belong as a way of delegitimizing their claim to rights and resources.
Schein (2009) examines how land and landscape were used to deny belonging to African Americans in post-civil war Kentucky, US and the response from the community that felt outside of belonging. Although this article is in an entirely different geographic context than the cases examined here, Schein’s article reveals how, despite land and landscape being used to erase belonging, it can reclaim that belonging through an “oppositional politics of belonging.”

Historically, in the United States, land holdings were required to be able to vote. Although this is no longer the case, land and property remained central to the belonging in the United States (p. 815). There are still structural legacies remaining in the land distribution in Kentucky. Much of the concerns about land and property revolve around “equity in the urban landscape, and partly about who gets a voice and what voice in local politics” (p. 815). Thoroughbred Park in Kentucky, created in the 1990s, celebrates the horse racing that takes place in the city. It presents a particular narrative about the place, “which reverberates in ideas about belonging (who does; who does not); a story that ultimately writes out of the picture certain people and neighborhoods and their place” (p. 821). In response, community activists proposed the Isaac Murphy Memorial Art Garden. It took over the design of the memorial to make a political claim to decision-making processes and to ensure the content of the park will “valorize, through the tangible visible scene, the participation of local African Americans in the rich history of horse racing in central Kentucky and the United States” (p. 823). Schein’s work reveals that it is possible to use land to foster belonging counter to the dominant narrative and carve out alternative modes of belonging.

The role of space and place in shaping substantive belonging is important to the politics of belonging. Anthropological theory on space and place argues that the spaces people live in and interact with on a daily basis are characterized by social norms, behavioural expectations, and ideologies (Durington, 2006, p. 149); in other words, there are modes of belonging in
operation. Space can be understood as a physical geographical location while a place is socially constructed. “Place is used in the sense of a space that is inhabited and appropriated through the attribution of personal and group meanings, feelings, sensory perceptions, and understandings” (Low, 2016, p. 32). Space and place as tools of anthropological investigation allow anthropologists to acknowledge that where people live, where they work, where they socialize, and where they are welcomed or excluded are all a product of social, historical, and economic processes.

As discussed above, the daily actions and experiences of people within a city help shape the way they and others belong (or not). These interactions happen in particular places over time and as such these physical encounters mediate our affective connections to place and therefore our desire and ability to belong. Foucault explains that space and place are “an instrumental and fundamental means of transposing the logic of power into the forms of material practice” (as cited in Hook & Vrdoljak, 2002, p. 217). In addition, space and place can play a part in maintaining power structures in a location, despite other efforts to undo them. Cultural norms and values and the distribution of resources and opportunities based on existing power dynamics associated with a particular space can reinforce exclusion. However, spaces and the way they are used are sometimes contested. Low and Zuniga (2003) define “contested spaces” as “geographic locations where conflicts in the form of opposition, confrontation, subversion, and/or resistance engage actors whose social positions are defined by differential control of resources and access to power” (p. 18). Contested spaces are a way of challenging the structural modes of belonging and claiming rights and resources or the means to exercise those rights. Added to the dynamics of control and power is race. Ahmed’s (2007) work cited above illustrates the connection of race to space in how it shapes affective modes of belonging as well as structural modes of belonging.
Conclusion

This chapter presents the theoretical framework that will be employed, along with the historical and research context presented in Chapter Two, to analyse the data presented in the subsequent chapters. I argue that substantive belonging is the ability to fully belong enabled by both structural and affective criteria. In order to better understand the nuances of substantive belonging, I employ the concept of modes of belonging, which illustrates the ways belonging is negotiated and understood via power-laden social practices, discourse, and organizational structures. Within the theorized modes of belonging described above, I add nuance to the concept of belonging by examining race and whiteness, and how that translates to space. Taken together, I am able to better understand the ways that belonging is fostered and the way exclusion is created in the context of Cape Town.

The protests around the figure of Cecil Rhodes illustrate the intersections of the different modes of belonging and other theoretical lenses discussed above to reveal the ways race and space constrain and inform belonging in Cape Town. The months-long protests across the country in 2015 and 2016 reflect the clashes between different forms of belonging. In this case, the university administration, student groups, and established norms controlled the structural modes of belonging and therefore controlled the institutional arrangements, social practices, and discourses around inclusion and exclusion. Student protesters first used protest to signal the gaps in substantive belonging. They challenged the structural and normative modes of belonging based on their inability to exercise their rights and lack of sense of belonging stemming from the way the configuration of space and social norms historically welcomed—and to a certain extent favoured—White students (Cameron, 2016).
At the same time, the protesters were fighting against the exclusionary elements on campus while also asserting their yearning to belong in a way that felt comfortable to them rather than what was offered by the university. As Yuval-Davis (2006) would argue, the protesters were contesting the hegemonic power of the university to define who belongs and who does not, and in so doing, they were trying to promote their own position to build what would be an inclusive place for them. The Black students on campus have been able to secure attendance at the university, much like the transition to democracy granted citizenship rights to Black people in South Africa; the ability to attend the university is a way of realizing the rights of citizenship in a substantive way. At the same time, the changes made since the end of apartheid ensure that structurally, Black students are included in the university as an institution by virtue of their enrolment. However, on campus, Black students were confronted with the continued colonial nature of the university and asserted that the structural arrangements, discourses, and practices on campus did not support their ability to comfortably belong and therefore feel a sense of belonging. The protests exposed the gaps in belonging. It was a way for students to claim the right to substantively belong on campus by demanding structural changes that would improve their ability to affectively belong. In other words, they felt that merely attending the university does not grant them substantive belonging but decolonizing the curriculum with more Black faculty and the removal of colonial commemorative art and statues is a way to foster a sense of belonging and move toward substantive belonging.
Chapter Four: Space, Race, and Exclusion in Public and Private Spaces

Introduction

Some spaces are open to all, and others are more restricted. For example, public space is open to varying degrees, while private property is only open to a specific group of people as defined by the authorities over it (e.g., property owner, their security guards, managers of it, etc.). In a private mall, for instance, there may be common spaces that are theoretically open to anyone; however, mall spaces are also subject to regulation by management policies and by the authorities over it. Spaces are also subject to institutionalized understandings of race and class, and other identifying criteria that determine whether a particular group can occupy private property. The extent to which a particular person or group can occupy a space based on their ability to claim the rights of citizenship set out in post-apartheid South Africa is of interest.

“Enclosure” was first used in England to describe transforming common land often used by rural communities to private land. Following Marx (1906), Lee and Webster (2006) argue that this was a necessary step for the landlords to be able to extract more value from their land (p. 30). By controlling access and use of previously public land, landlords could generate more income, for example, by leasing land to others. “Enclosure” has been used in recent years to describe the neoliberal privatization of land and resources (Blomley 2007; Clarno 2017; Ferguson 2006; Harvey 2011). The enclosure of the commons, more specifically of public space, may have originated as a way to control resources and land to serve capitalist ends. However, its effects on the social side of space are equally important. Németh (2012) argues that although the publicness of space is ultimately subjective, “when a public space is privatized or securitized it ceases to exist as a truly public forum, characterized by (relatively) open access, unmediated deliberation, and shared participation” (p.812).
Where private property is concerned, such as with commercial centers, the owners of the property have certain rights to limit the flow of people from their quasi-public areas and do so based on a set of criteria rooted in the politics of belonging, defining who belongs to a particular space and who does not. From there, individuals with assumed or real authority can act as gatekeepers of the space. Public spaces owned by the government at different levels, such as parks and beaches, are controlled in different ways and sometimes in less overt ways, as I explain below. Nevertheless, the result of the privatization of space limits the free flow of people typically found in all types of spaces. In South Africa, control of a public space such as a park, commercial center, or residential neighbourhood is done in several ways. One way might be installing signs that say, “armed response” or “for customers only.” It can also be accomplished more directly by erecting walls with gates and booms or through the surveillance of space by security guards, business owners, or residents.

As people circulate in the world, others continuously assess them consciously and unconsciously. People are evaluated to determine whether they belong in that space based on a host of factors such as race, class, appearance, employment type, and status, all of which are being filtered through understandings of affective modes of belonging and the politics of belonging. They are then placed on the continuum of belonging, with fully belonging on one end and exclusion on the other, which in some cases leads to gatekeepers attempting to regulate their access to that space. From there, overt and veiled behaviours, comments, and actions can reinforce the idea that some belong and others do not. For instance, a smile or nod to another person shows recognition of belonging and acts as a friendly gesture. In contrast, tensing the body and moving farther away from someone could signal distrust and even fear of a person whose belonging is questioned. I argue that space’s racialized and classist nature means Black
people in Cape Town are sometimes characterized by those that act as gatekeepers of a space as outside of the normative affective mode of belonging in some parts of the city. This means how one is raced and classed strongly influence one’s ability to substantively belong, whether or not they experience acts of exclusion or enact exclusion on others.

This chapter examines the ways spatial relationships shape belonging and exclusion. Public and private spaces in post-apartheid Cape Town reproduce power dynamics introduced before and during apartheid that influence how people understand belonging. Space can create new forms of racial and class exclusion and make underlying tensions visible. In post-apartheid South Africa, although technically open to all, public space is subject to the power dynamics of race and class, which in many cases undergird how people delineate the politics of belonging within a particular space. This chapter examines how affective modes of belonging, such as feeling safe, connected, and welcome, shape people’s perceptions of space, including who belongs or not and who its gatekeepers are. First, I analyze an event at a public park in Woodstock fueled by a social media exchange that also received coverage in local media. Second, I discuss an incident at a beach that sparked a protest around access and rights to space in the city. Finally, an overview of the literature on the privatization of public space and gated communities further nuances our understanding of how the regulation of public space can create exclusion and shape belonging in Cape Town.

An Imagined Goat Sacrifice

In mid-October 2017, I logged into Facebook and came across a few posts by a Facebook group that caught my attention. The posts were from a Woodstock residents’ group I had joined during my year living in Woodstock that admits only people who live in the neighbourhood. The group acts as a local bulletin board and water cooler of sorts where people post things for sale
and talk about neighbourhood events. This particular event at a Woodstock park occurred on the afternoon of October 13th. The posts attracted a lot of attention and replies; within about three hours of the first post, there were over 50 replies. A second post the next day received over 200 replies within a few hours. The incident was so explosive on the social media page that it was also covered in the local news on October 16th. News reports mainly reported the conflict that arose on Facebook (February 2017; Pather, 2017a; Stone, 2017). Eventually, the moderators shut down comments on both posts, but it is unclear how quickly this happened.

Based on her Facebook profile, Megan Furniss, a Woodstock resident who presents as a middle- to upper-class White woman, posted on the group’s main page. She declared: “Help! There is a goat tied to a pole in the children’s park in Queens Park [which is in Woodstock]. Huge crowd of people. Goat is screaming. What to do? Help” (Woodstock Facebook group post, 2017 October 13th). Based on the comments she and others made on her post, as well as information revealed a few hours later, it is clear now that Ms. Furniss saw a group of Coloured residents gathered in the park with a goat. Ms. Furniss felt the animal appeared in distress and feared the animal was being mistreated. Below is a selection of the comments and replies made to the original post:

**Megan Furniss:** “Did call SPCA but scared. Drove away but I am hysterical,”[…]

**Mandy Soulsby-Bodart:** “What is status of goat now?”

**Megan Furniss:** “I don’t know. I ran away”

**Mandy Soulsby-Bodart** “Don’t blame you, just been there, the group is huge” [...]
Warren Shaw: “Call police. It’s a public space, they have jurisdiction” […]

Mandy Soulsby-Bodart: “just been up there, no sign of goat, but strong smell of braai, [a South African term to denote grilling or barbecue], I am actually so pissed off about this, was there when Muslim guy called People’s Post to complain about the dog park because nannies ‘had’ to walk children through the park to get to the kids’ playground (actually, they can walk around it), but it is okay to slaughter animals in a public space? WTF?”

Nadeem Essack: “Now what exactly does being Muslim have to do with it?”
Yumna Gamiet: “I don’t see the correlation here Mandy”
Mandy Soulsby-Bodart: “I went up to see what was going on and the group was definitely Muslim.” […]
Jill Lama: “You actually have offended many people, however unintentional and it may have been. You owe our Muslim neighbours, especially those who’ve commented here an apology.” […]

Jennifer Bradley: “NO IT IS NOT OK TO SLAUGHTER IN A PUBLIC SPACE” [emphasis in original] […]

Megan Furniss: “Look, I have to be a bit more rational, and it really doesn’t seem like it would be possible to slaughter, skin and prepare an animal in that space of time.”

Jennifer Bradley: “I am sure that goat was slaughtered. Anybody that can go with you to the park and check for blood and take some pics for the SPCA?” […]

Megan Furniss: “It has been 35 minutes, so let’s hold onto our hats here.”

Jennifer Bradley: “no man, really doesn’t sound right, goat is screaming, big crowd […] some ceremonious slaughtering I am absolutely sure. What would they want with a goat?? unless they were having sex with the goat?? […]

Mandy Soulsby-Bodart: “Did not see dead goat, but did not see or hear any signs of a live one either, and there was definitely a smell of braai.” […]
Carole Ann Sherratt: “UPDATE. CATHLEEN WENT TO SEE. KIDS PARTY WITH PETTING ZOO. ANIMALS IN GOOD CONDITION !!!!!” [emphasis in original]

Jennifer Bradley: “Are you SURE??”

Zakariyah Benjamin: “FFS10...really!?? Must be Braaiing, hey...just has to be them”

Jennifer Bradley: “Zakariyah Benjamin yes, I am really asking the question. there have been many animals slaughtered for cultural reasons recently ...” [...]

Zakariyah Benjamin: “Wow...!! There was suspicion [of] wrongdoing...fine!! Law enforcement call, no problem...then we take a turn, [it] turns out it was moslems who slaughtered, skinned, and chopped up a goat, in 35 min, [...] and of course it has to be that...because someone smelled braai somewhere. Talk about jumping to conclusions, [did] anyone actually [see anything] besides the screaming goat and a crowd of "Muslim" people? [...] As a Muslim, we don’t just go anywhere to slaughter animals, and we do also have certain protocols that we follow. Somebody saw something which obviously upset them...but then others are just jumping to conclusions and then a group of people are blamed and tarnished...” [...]

Ms. Furniss’s original post indicated she saw a large group of people with a goat that seemed to be in distress. Immediately, Ms. Furniss labelled the group in the park as an unknown, frightening Other. She was not only afraid for the goat but for herself since, in her own words, she fled the scene because she was frightened. This implies that by remaining in the park, her safety may have been threatened by the supposed “Coloured Muslims” if she had tried to intervene. Very quickly, many people responded with fear, anger, and concern for the goat, but things eventually devolved into racist and Islamophobic comments. As the exchange went on, Ms. Furniss appeared to become more and more agitated as her post filled up with comments, and she declared she was “hysterical.” The post continued to gain more attention and comments from people “confirming” what she saw by driving by or walking to the park. It was only when

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10 FFS is an abbreviation commonly used on the internet that stands for “for fuck's sake”
Ms. Soulsby-Bodart followed up with two posts—the first alluding to the goat being killed and being cooked for the group to eat, and the second stating she was “pissed” a Muslim guy had complained about dogs in the park but was allowed to slaughter an animal—that certain members of the group began talking about slaughter. Others called out the racism and assumptions made by these posters.

Half an hour later, amid mounting concern in the responses to her first post, Ms. Furniss suggests caution. However, with specific details confirmed by Ms. Furniss and a few other “witness” accounts, the goat’s fate as a victim of public slaughter was sealed and became truth for many of the posters. Jennifer Bradley responded: “no man, really doesn’t sound right, goat is screaming, big crowd ... some ceremonious slaughtering, I am absolutely sure. What would they want with a goat?? Unless they were having sex with the goat??” This comment is one of the most extreme and racist posts of the incident. This accusation of bestiality links the assembled crowd with immoral and taboo behaviour. No one directly responded to Ms. Bradley’s accusations, but once the situation was resolved, she was called out by many as being racist and Islamophobic and asked to apologize.

On Facebook in South Africa, there is a perception that you can identify someone’s race by checking their profile for their name, photos, and where they live, even if they do not identify themselves in racial terms. The association of the group in the park with ceremony, slaughter, and bestiality are all markers of particular racialized groups in South Africa. The interpretations made as a result of the facts—as they were constructed in the post—were based on particularly well-worn and historical frameworks that associate things such as sacrifice, sexual deviancy, and animal cruelty with Muslims. Edward Said (1979) argued that the West constructed the East—particularly Muslims and Arabs—as a primitive, exotic, mysterious, barbaric, and violent Other
(p. 24). Ms. Soulsby-Bodart doubly Othered the group, first by targeting their Muslim-ness which in this context is also tied to their Coloured-ness. In addition to the long-standing Othering South African Muslims face by western ideologies, they have also become associated with terrorism and experienced Islamophobia because of 9/11 and the media coverage that ensued (Hendricks, 2020).

In South Africa, animal slaughter is practiced by many groups who are not Muslim across different African ethnicities. Ballard examined people’s reactions to animal slaughter in Durban, South Africa, based on race, identity, space, and other factors. In discussing a cattle slaughter by new African residents to a wealthy, primarily White neighbourhood, he states, “Those who undertake such cultural practices are seen by opponents of the practice as being guilty not only of barbarism but of tainting civilized neighbourhoods with this out-of-character barbarism” (Ballard 2010, p.107). Thus, in South Africa, the custom is seen as tied to barbarism and a lack of morality for those who do not practise animal slaughter. Without a doubt, had the group in the park been perceived to be White, the situation would have been handled very differently; no one would assume a White person would sacrifice an animal in a park, and the smell of braai would have indicated a regular meal was being prepared. This is because White South Africans are socially marked as belonging in most gentrified public spaces and are not typically associated with animal sacrifice, barbarism, or uncivilized behaviour in public discourse (at least in spaces where White voices dominate).

Beyond the racism and hurtful assumptions conveyed in the comments on Facebook, this exchange reveals the politics of belonging at play in many areas of the city. The discussion in the post makes visible the type of boundary-making and reinforcement Yuval-Davis (2006) describes, which involves not only determining whether (or not) someone belongs, but also
continually reassessing the minimum criteria for belonging in a particular space. It also exposes the gatekeeping behaviours of certain White residents as a result of their assumed authority and ability to enforce the boundaries of belonging. Without even referring to the race or religion of the people assembled in the park, Ms. Furniss drew on the underlying, historically rooted assumptions about the criteria that determined who can comfortably belong in these places and whose presence is questioned. The commenters on the post instinctively understood what her coded language referred to, and many contributed to perpetuating the assumptions while some pushed them further regarding bestiality. For these early posters, the boundaries of belonging were clear by the racist and Islamophobic comments while eventually the larger group challenged their assumptions about belonging. The group gathered in the park was judged first not to belong, and then the accompanying generalized characteristics of this racialized group were thrust upon this specific group and used to assert many of the White commentators’ understanding of belonging to that space. In this case, the group was doubly Othered as their religion compounded their (assumed) racial identity, and the addition of a goat that seemed to be in distress pushed them outside the presumed boundary of belonging, according to the posters. Without seeing the group in the park, most of the respondents on Facebook echoed Ms. Furniss’s reading of the situation with their discussion of ritual slaughter and bestiality, as well as implied immorality and cruelty to an animal who appeared to be in distress.

Woodstock is a multicultural community with people from many backgrounds, but Queens Park—located at the top of Upper Woodstock—is an area that has already been gentrified and is home to mainly wealthy White people. The park is public and therefore more open to visitors of all racial groups from Upper and Lower Woodstock and other areas of Cape Town compared to during apartheid when many parks were segregated for “Whites” only.
Nevertheless, despite this significant change, for some the park remains a space primarily welcoming to White people, which is to say, a space where White visitors feel a sense of entitlement to the space and their particular understanding of safety and sociality, as well as an apparent inherent ability to police the space. When I visited Queens Park and other public spaces in Woodstock, people of different racial groups, including White, Coloured, Asian, and sometimes African people, were present, but in separate groups as most groups were not racially integrated. Even in spaces open to all and frequented by all, the social structures of society in Cape Town have maintained a level of racial power dynamics evident in casual settings, such as a park, and in more formal settings, such as concert venues where the staff are overwhelmingly Black and the patrons are generally White (Muyeba and Seekings, 2011).

Black people are not officially excluded from the park; under the new laws, they have the right to visit the park and “be” in the park in the same way White people do. The dynamic of race and space in the UK that Ahmed (2007) discusses are similar to the ones in Cape Town. For instance, as I walked along Albert Road one day, I stopped to go into a cheese shop. The door was covered with a locked, grated metal security door. As I approached, without saying anything, the store clerk stepped over and unlocked the door to let me in. Not long after I arrived, two Black men wearing worn clothing and shoes walked by the shop and looked in. The store clerk immediately went over to the door, and rather than opening it as she did for me—likely perceiving me as a middle-class White woman—she told them to move along. This is one example of how I was easily welcomed into spaces across Cape Town while others, such as Black and visibly poor people, were excluded and met with scrutiny and even hostility by a person authorized to enforce the boundaries of who can access the space. A similar understanding of race and the regulation of space is illustrated in the exchange on Facebook. Ms.
Furniss and fellow commenters behaved like the store clerk, as gatekeepers of the space based on their intuitive understandings of the racialized nature of space. They also drew on assumptions about an underlying relationship between race, civility, and moral rightness. Their actions had a specific audience in mind to elicit a particular response. Armed with their understanding of belonging and being far away from the park, the posters decided that the people assembled did not belong.

Several hours after Ms. Furniss’ original post and over 50 comments later, Siraj Waggie, who is likely a “Coloured” person—or is read as such online and in person—created a new post in the group to address the accusation of sacrifice and accompanying racism. In his post, he wrote:

_Assalamu alaikum waragmatullahi wa barakatoe, peace and blessings of God be upon you...It was my son’s 7th bday party, he loves animals and wants to be a vet when he grows up. We as parents always try and encourage our kids to reach for their dreams and aid however, we can with the objective for them to pursue it...I requested permission from the city to host my kid’s bday party with a petting zoo which had chickens, roosters, birds, rabbits, tortoise, and a dwarf goat. All the animals were well kept, clean and rather friendly to all...Megan Furniss it would’ve been prudent to approach us and enquire before ranting and posting hogwash, the option you chose to express your concern, seems purposeful to create chaos...To all the other keyboard commandos that accused us of ritual slaughtering and bestiality- may you find inner peace and focus your energy on creating a better South Africa for all...One of the neighbours may have been braaing and perhaps having a few drinks enjoying the [Manchester VS Liverpool] match, not sure if he was braaing goat... as we also caught the "braai

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11 Cape Town has the largest community of so-called Coloured people and as such, based on these demographics, the assumptions, and stereotypes at work in the Facebook exchange would lead people to race Mr. Waggie as Coloured and as Muslim. If the exchange had happened in Durban where there are more Asians, the assumptions and stereotypes might be different.
“smell”…There were a few suspicious looking Caucasians lurking through the park with their dogs, one women I noticed at the petting shelter but I didn’t pay too much attention to, Megan this was probably you…only to see this post when I got home 😂😂😂 yet not one approached us to ask or find out about the goat and other animals. Yet they all found it fair and their right as saviours to humanity to accuse us of many ills. This is what’s wrong with the previously (and currently) advantaged Cape Town Elitists...

Mr. Waggie’s response begins with an Islamic prayer in Arabic and then follows with the same words in English. He then succinctly addresses the overt racism and the failure of what he calls the “elitist” residents of Woodstock to foster direct and productive communication with their neighbours. He calls out the privileged position of White people in terms of power and a conflicting sense of belonging in the city; Mr. Waggie knew Ms. Furniss and the other “keyboard commandos” see the space of the park as theirs, as belonging to White people, and feel with that ownership comes the right to judge who belongs and who does not. When he states, “they all found it fair and their right as saviours to humanity to accuse us of many ills,” he is speaking to the judgments made by many of the posters, which were laden with racist assumptions about what is right, good, moral, and normative in that space and in the city, in general. It also places the comments within the history of colonialism, with White colonizers feeling they have a moral right to dominate and enlighten those who are deemed to be less civilized.

This incident is illustrative of two completely different conceptions of belonging. Ms. Furniss’ reaction can be explained using Ahmed’s (2007) work as a lens of analysis. In public space, inclusion is extended to those people who meet the criteria that govern historically rooted notions of belonging that mark them as safe and normatively the same as everyone else. Ms. Furniss’ reaction is indicative of how the colonial history of South Africa, which placed White settler-colonizers in the dominant position, continues to inform some White South Africans’
ordering and policing of space. “Public” space was raced and this mode of belonging has continued in varying ways since the end of apartheid. As a result, many White South Africans have a tendency to assume they are included and have the right to judge those who are not because space had been habitually and legally more open to White people prior to independence. Those who want to use the public space must adhere to the affective modes of belonging that dictate how to behave and fit into that space; in some cases, however, even relatively normal behaviour is not enough to meet the criteria for inclusion and belonging.

On the other side, Mr. Waggie and the rest of the assembled group happily occupied the park, undisturbed by the commotion that Ms. Furniss caused online. Mr. Waggie’s response was a clear refutation of her understanding of space and morality discussed above. He and the partygoers felt comfortable, a sense of belonging in their community park, and totally secure in their substantive right to belong. He questioned the appropriateness of Ms. Furniss’ behaviour, favouring dialogue rather than fear mongering. Mr. Waggie’s response pushed back against the politics of belonging and the understanding of space that was articulated in the Facebook post, but he only did so because he was confronted with a very public exclusionary act, even if in the virtual realm.

In the absence of legal measures to exclude unwanted bodies from a space, these “keyboard commandos” drew on other methods to attempt exclusion, in this case by drawing on racist ideologies about the protection of animals from the Coloured parkgoers. Included in this circumstance is the idea held by White people prior to and during apartheid that they are better able to protect and conserve nature. Musavengane and Leonard (2019) examined current conservation practices in South Africa and found they are still exclusionary toward Black people and continue to be dominated by White people both professionally and where activism is
concerned (p.140). This ideological domination over nature is not unique to South Africa. In examining the works of White Africans, David Hughes argues that across the continent, White Africans had a particular obsession with land and landscape, in part as an empty, unsullied place that can be enjoyed free of other humans, and also as part of their construction of belonging to place and indeed that they should own the land (Hughes, 2010, p. 4). In her discussion of White Zimbabwean farmers, Suzuki (2018) argues their rhetoric placed White farmers as “the moral subjects who care for the environment” (p.76). Ms. Furniss and her fellow commentors were not only defenders on behalf of the animal but also of the park – patrolling the boundaries of proper behaviour and users – because these racial ideologies continue to permeate South African social interactions in spite of the broader political and social changes since the end of apartheid.

In addition, the discourse used by Ms. Furniss and others on Facebook revealed what they felt was acceptable behaviour on their part when faced with something that threatened their sense of belonging, in this case manifested as a fear for “safety.” The underlying fear, assumptions, and racism that fueled the interpretation of events also affect real world responses to the events. For example, when reacting to a group of people in a park with a goat, their racialization, and potentially overt signs of their religion, influence whether someone will call the police or other authorities or whether they are able to continue celebrating freely in public. After their evaluation, the posters immediately voiced that some type of formal authority should be called into action, first the SPCA and then the police. With the police refusing to respond to the incident, several commenters suggested reporting the police officers to the Ombudsman, indicating that despite the police being the authority they called upon, they—the posters—questioned the judgment of those in authority. This reaffirms their position as the arbiters of what
is moral and right in contrast with those who were purportedly abusing an animal via (imagined) goat slaughter.

Megan Furniss’s fear of some of the other members of her neighbourhood was on full display in this Facebook post. Once it was revealed the goat in question was part of a petting zoo, the administrator of the group and several other group members of all racial backgrounds immediately requested that Megan and others apologize to Mr. Waggie and the other Muslims in the community. Many in the group, including Megan, did apologize. She wrote:

It is clear that an apology is warranted. I am deeply sorry. I really am. As an animal lover and someone who cannot manage cruelty I was deeply disturbed to see and hear the goat in distress. I arrived with my own dogs at the park and left as soon as I saw and heard the goat’s screams. I had no idea what colour or religion the group of people were, and never once brought that up. My concern for the animal was what prompted my post and the thing escalated and went out of control. I am beyond devastated that I have hurt people and caused pain and outrage. I have also learned a hideous lesson about social media, the escalation (without actual help) and the cruelty of name calling, calling out, and shaming. I am duly brought down, properly humiliated, and full of shame. Please accept my forgiveness[sic] . (Woodstock Facebook group post, 2017 October 15)

Once the truth came out, she felt ashamed and regretful for her post. She tried to distance herself from the racist nature of the responses to her post, yet she was the one who first assumed the animal was in serious danger because of the group of people with the animal. Although she did apologize, in narrating the chain of events that transpired from her perspective she recenters the fears she had for the animal and the way she jumped to conclusions for the animal’s sake and only very belatedly considering how those assumptions played out in a racist way in the rest of the comment thread. This focus further indicates the form of White racism discussed above that
casts White people as the rightful and proper caretakers of nature and animals, and often ignores the humanity, concerns, and experiences of people who are not White. She distanced herself from the actions of the event, writing, “the thing escalated and went out of control”; her statement removed any actors as the drivers of the increasing escalation and lack of control, including herself. She also cast herself as a victim of the exchange when she said she had “learned a hideous lesson” about cruelty, feeling “beyond devastated” and “humiliated.” In the final line of her apology Ms. Furnis writes, “Please accept my forgiveness,” which suggests that she does not feel that it should be up to Mr. Waggie for she should be asking for forgiveness rather than offering it if she saw him as the one who should decide. Perhaps unintentional, it nonetheless reproduces her entitlement and self-centring in a way that is perhaps telling.

The language Ms. Furniss used as well as her sense of alarm and moral outrage are the outward expressions of a broader understanding of who should belong, who should be excluded in a particular space, and who should be its gatekeepers. This type of discourse, reinforced by racialized surveillance and discipline, creates the conditions for the uneven distribution of inclusion and exclusion in public and private spaces.

The ways space is organized and accessed by people in South Africa further compounds these decisions. Under apartheid, public space in all its forms was not only mainly reserved for White people, but social roles in these spaces were exclusively related to one’s “race” (Houssay-Holzschuch, & Teppo, 2009, p. 353-4). Public spaces were racially defined, marked, and often policed and surveilled. Beaches, park benches, toilets, and other public facilities were segregated, and signs were erected to indicate who was allowed to circulate in a particular space (Savage, 1986). The transition to democracy changed this segregation along with many other oppressive and racist policies. However, in many public spaces in South Africa, unofficially
segregation remains and the privatization of space limits the free circulation of all people in these spaces. Communities, streets, and other formerly public spaces like markets and parks are increasingly “enclosed” from the public (Landman, 2020). Houssay-Holzschuch & Teppo (2009) divide public space into three levels that centre around the way space is used physically, but also the way a space is used socially. The first level is public space as a political space of debate; second, as a space legally owned by public authorities; and third, as a social space where all citizens can be and interact with others. These three levels can intermingle; a street, for example, can be legally public but socially private if it is in a gated community (p. 354) or surveilled by neighbours who are unwelcoming to unknown visitors. In many cases in South Africa, private or state police are hired to manage public safety (Houssay-Holzschuch, & Teppo, 2009, p. 358) and to police the marginalized in an effort to assuage the anxieties and fears of the powerful (Clarno, 2017, p. 18). While not always successful in keeping people in or out, the enclosure of public spaces in South Africa in the form of regulation, monitoring—or more materially walling or gating—signals an important way that belonging to place is determined—by one’s ability to fit in with neoliberal, racialized norms of behaviour.

The entire incident was a public attempted act of exclusion of Mr. Waggie and all others who were lumped in as Muslim and Coloured, as witnessed by an unknown number of visitors to the site. The public nature of this type of exclusion combined with the subsequent coverage in local news media extends the reach of these powerful messages, indicating the politics of belonging in public spaces, and most crucially, that habitual activities such as birthday parties can be met with suspicion, surveillance, disparagement, racism, and Islamophobia simply because of the race of the group that is gathered. These assumptions and preconceptions are
rooted in notions of belonging, as well as the types of behaviour that belong to a particular space pertaining to decorum, morals, and treatment of animals, to name only a few relevant examples.

With each interaction, people’s different understanding of belonging were asserted and challenged. Ms. Furniss, and all those who responded with alarm and racism, claimed the right to police the park and, if necessary, the duty to call on different authorities to regulate the activities in the park. The activities of the group in question did not appear to be conforming to the behaviour of what the “White elites”—as Mr. Waggie called them—might consider to be the “proper” mode of belonging, including the treatment of animals, but also generally proper, “respectable” conduct. Importantly, the attempt at exclusion was a failure. Those who posted were condemned and shamed by the larger community of Woodstock residents of all races. While the messages on Facebook speak to part of the racialized nature of belonging, it does not represent the kind of overt repression or real physical exclusion on the part of White Capetonians that happened during apartheid. Instead, part of what seems to bother some of the posters is that they cannot exclude those gathered in the park even though they want to. The incident highlights Mr. Waggie’s differing understanding of belonging and a rejection of the racialized modes of belonging that stem from historically rooted understandings of space, rights and belonging.

Gating, Security, and Exclusion

The park incident is not a unique occurrence; other forms of control and regulation of space in addition to everyday interactions similar to the one discussed above between people across the city can be an arena for reinforcing who belongs easily and comfortably and who is outside of belonging. At the same time, they can also provide a forum for challenging the nature of belonging in Cape Town, which continues to change since the end of apartheid. Much of my time in Cape Town was spent travelling from one securitized compound to another. I would
leave my securitized house to get into an Uber or a friend’s car and travel to a commercial or social space such as a restaurant, mall, or event space that was heavily regulated and securitized. I was told several times by locals that it was not safe to walk around the city and so based on these recommendations any time I moved around, I made sure to travel in ways that they had told me was safe. For example, if a friend drove me, they waited until I arrived inside my destination to drive away, and I began asking my Uber drivers to wait as well. When I arrived at either a shopping mall or a commercial space, usually at the entrance I found security guards surveilling those coming and going. I learned their role was primarily to deter homeless or urban poor people from these spaces but they also served as a visual marker of safety in these middle-class spaces. The security guards, who are often Coloured or African, were also present at the entrance of most grocery stores I frequented. They are one of the main regulators of inclusion and exclusion for these spaces and serve to reinforce the norms of behaviour and security in middle class spaces.

Landman (2000) predicted that by 2020, Johannesburg would be a city of “urban forts” where the wealthy are confined to securitized compounds and safety zones. She equates public space in this scenario to a war zone. It seems her prediction has partially come true in the case of Cape Town. Much of the commercial and social spaces are fortified and highly regulated by private guards. Most buildings have bars and security system stickers on the doors and windows; it is also common that homes and businesses are surrounded by a gate that sometimes has a security guard. People who can avoid walking outside at night instead drive or are driven from one secured compound to another. Within these fortified, largely middle-class spaces, there is a sense of safety, peace, and order contrasted with less-regulated public spaces that often feel less
safe, riskier, and dirtier. Within these gated or securitized spaces there are certain norms of
behaviour that denote belonging and, by extension, safety.

Houssay-Holzschuch & Teppo (2009) note that in public spaces such as the Waterfront in
Cape Town, a popular destination for Capetonians and tourists known by many as “safe” and
“open,” the proper behaviour is “White” behaviour. All visitors to the Waterfront are free to
roam around, shop, and eat, but while they are doing so, they are expected to behave according
to what many understand as “White standards”: aesthetics and norms of respectability developed
under apartheid such as “being clean and neat, wearing good clothes and speaking in a manner
considered ‘civilized’” (p. 366). For example, “loudness is frowned upon, and [W]hite aesthetic
ideals are presented in every shop window. Whatever ‘[B]lackness’ means in South Africa, it is
still the suppressed ‘other’ with all the negative consequences this has in respect of social
interaction and racial mixing” (p. 366). The definition of “Blackness” here is defined in
opposition to what is understood to be “proper,” “White” behaviour. At the same time, there are
inherent contradictions in public spaces that are also privately owned. Security guards at the
Waterfront, and presumably at other spaces like it, must negotiate the publicness of the space by
allowing the free flow of people while also trying to limit the presence of “street children and

Private security (which includes the car guards, hired commercial security guards as well
as armed response guards) is an important part of policing in South Africa. In addition to
securing private property, they intervene and help manage other incidents such as car accidents,

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12 Spaces like that are rare in Cape Town but they generally feature open spaces that are also monitored by
security guards, which reduces crime. They are also generally open to most who would want to frequent them
regardless of their desire to purchase something from the shops.
13 “Bergie” is a name for a homeless person in and around the city of Cape Town. It originates from the Afrikaans
word “berg” which means mountains (Collins, 2019). In my experience there, bergies are often talked about as
criminals, engaging in petty crime.
public events, and functions (Diphoorn, 2015, p. 201). This shift towards private security can be attributed at least partly to the perception among some White South Africans that given the government is Black, “it is either incapable of controlling crime or unwilling to protect white people” (Clarno 2013, p. 1205). The role of security guards is to surveil and secure space, but this surveillance and exclusion is disproportionally focused on Black people. It is ironic, given that these jobs are occupied mostly by Black people who then have to surveil other Black people. In addition, private security guards are often distrusted by police or their employers; they are often the first to be questioned or suspected in cases of theft or other crimes (Diphoorn, 2015, p. 223).

This type of control of space is also seen in residential spaces in the form of gated communities, which have become increasingly popular across the globe including South Africa. Berg (2010) argues that in South Africa, “the power of private security in public spaces is beginning to equal the power it holds in private spaces (albeit symbolic rather than legal power)” (p.288). Private security companies have also employed a proactive approach to crime. Private security companies actively use methods to deter crime and identify potential criminals in public spaces they protect. In contrast, traditional policing methods rely on police reactively responding to a crime or criminal activity (Clarno & Murray, 2013, p. 212). Clarno and Murray argue this constitutes a paradigm shift which is part of the larger shift “from government to governance” (Clarno & Murray, 2013, p. 212).

Middle-class and upper middle-class communities have increasingly sought out and created these regulated spaces. Blakely and Snyder (1999) define gated communities as:

residential areas with restricted access in which normally public spaces are privatized. [Gated communities] are security developments with designated parameters, usually walls or fences, and controlled entrances that are intended to prevent penetration by non-residents. (p. 2)
Gated communities allow residents to select whom they want to associate with; potential residents of a gated community select a community based on criteria that make them feel safe, welcome, and like they belong. This means that generally a gated community is composed of people who share similar characteristics in opposition to those outside their community. While imagining themselves to have shared qualities—such as being civilized, law-abiding, or wealthy—they are assuming those kept out of their communities do not possess these attributes (Massey, 1999, p. 90). Many scholars agree that gating promotes exclusion and creates further social division (Caldeira, 1996a, 1996b; Clarno; 2017; Hook & Vrdoljak, 2002; Marcuse, 1995; Watson & Gibson, 1995). Gated communities are a material realization of the desire to be separate and avoid interaction with people who are deemed undesirable, Other, or unsafe (Low, 2001, p. 56). Withdrawal into securitized communities creates barriers “to social interaction, building of social networks, as well as [to increasing] tolerance of diverse cultural/racial/social groups” (Low, 2001, p. 45).

Gated communities offer more in terms of security beyond an alarm system or camera system; it is a popular way to deter or catch a criminal, but it does not protect the house from being seen by all who may pass by outside its walls. By living in a gated community, residents live behind a gate or a wall with controlled entry and exit points, limiting who can enter and access a resident’s property. It is often viewed as much safer because there is an additional barrier to the outside world. Other residential communities that are not gated employ methods to securitize and limit access to their neighbourhoods. Some of these include installing a security checkpoint with a boom and security guard at the main road of an otherwise open residential development to control who can and cannot enter the neighbourhood (Hook & Vrdoljak, 2002, p. 56).
197). Others include an armed response subscription, alarm systems, multiple gates, forms of razor wire, and dogs.

In South Africa, home security usually consists of an assemblage of measures. Wealthy residential areas employ security methods to close off streets and formerly public areas to create private spaces that are supposed to be safer for the residents who are “protected” from criminals and other undesirable people, such as the urban poor. Industrial complexes have also walled off their property to ensure there are no unwanted visitors. The enclosure of public space in these ways means the “accessibility and freedom of movement in post-apartheid cities and towns in South Africa [has] been curtailed” (Spocter, 2007, p. 154). Private citizens are fortifying their properties rather than relying on the state to protect them and their property (Lemanski, 2004, p. 106). This has entrenched the notion of private spaces as “safe” and public spaces as “dangerous.” Restrictions of space based in notions of safety and security are also steeped in the politics of belonging, where to be included in a space often means being able to afford inclusion, or be marked as an outsider, or to the extreme, a threat.

The closure of public urban space predates the increase in gated communities and monitored public space in South Africa (Spocter, 2007, p. 153). In the apartheid era, nearly all spaces were segregated, including banks, post offices, beaches, and parks; conceptually the government constructed gated communities around the most desirable and basic necessities for Whites, leaving “non-Whites” with less desirable areas, services, and necessities. Gated communities were also a feature of this segregation during apartheid, primarily as a way of creating seemingly safe spaces for White South Africans by limiting the ability of “non-Whites” to circulate in the gated communities. The transition to democracy did not do away with this type of spatial exclusion, and they are increasingly popular in post-apartheid South Africa. In fact, as
new developments are being planned, developers and homeowners routinely consider whether
the planned homes should be within a gated community. Clarno (2013) argues the dismantling of
apartheid policies, which had historically designated White space in the city, White South
Africans have tried to shift the scale of authority around space from the city to the
neighbourhood. The creation of residents' associations and subsequent gating or regulation of
space by private security companies are one of the principal strategies employed by White South
Africans to defend what they perceive as 'their' space while at the same time continuing
segregation (Clarno 2013, p. 1195).

Protea Village: A Gated Community

At one of the land claims sites I examine, Protea Village—discussed briefly in Chapter 1
and further detailed in Chapter 6—the claimants, along with the hired development firm opted to
build the planned homes within a gated community, what they called a “security village.” The
planning phase of the development highlighted for the claimants the history of exclusion and
removal as well as the complicated relationship of security, wealth, and belonging. Originally,
the development plan called for building two separate but adjacent estates, one for the land
claimants who were awarded this land through the land claims process in 2006, and one for the
units sold on the market to finance the claimants’ own homes. The claimants came back and
expressed concerns with the division that was meant to have one estate with large houses to be
sold on the market and another separate estate with smaller homes. They did not want to be
viewed as “poor cousins.” One of the developers I interviewed explained:

They were originally going to separate the two security villages, and the community
said, “Hang on, this is apartheid again. You’re putting us poor people here in one
corner and then you’re putting the rich people there in one corner…” I said, “You
know what? You’re right.” We didn’t mean it like that; we just thought you would
all like to be together. And now we have redesigned it, and it’s all mixed. This is
part of assimilation on a micro scale. On a macro scale, if you do a proper development, the broader community will accept you.

As the residents continue to negotiate reclaiming and building on their land, they regularly face moments such as these that remind them of and/or reinforce the modes of belonging that are raced and classed. The developer notes that “proper development” will lead to acceptance from the broader community, by which he means building an estate that looks and feels like the other ones that surround the land claims site. The surrounding estates are made up of large homes with well-maintained properties owned generally by very wealthy and mostly White residents. He is very much aware that the long and hard road the claimants have faced up to that point could be made harder if they do not try to “fit in” with the neighbourhood – that is, comply with their criteria of belonging (see Chapter 6 for more on this).

The security of the gated community was a key part of its attraction for the residents while it would also add to the value of the homes overall. The conversation the developer and I had about security and gated communities was part of a much broader discussion about the redevelopment relating to the land claims process discussed in Chapter 6. The (White) developer explained to me that the gated community would provide additional security for the residents. Within the estate the residents were planning to build, there would be a school and a park, which he said would be safe for the residents presumably compared to schools and parks not within their built and secured estate. He added:

It’s nice; children can play in the park, and you don’t have to worry about it. In a normal suburb, you can’t just let your children play in the park, and I think worldwide, it’s a problem. I also live in a security village…I don’t even have an alarm in my house; it’s a nice environment. I travel for business. I know my wife is safe at night, or relatively safe, or way better than the other area next door where there is no security.
This brief detour our conversation took into the merits of a gated community points to the complexities of organizing space and belonging. The gating of a community represents the physical ways people are excluded from space and those that are able to afford the right to belong; in this case, it also signals the long history of exclusion and segregation that is part of South Africa’s past. Importantly, this example shows the ways explicitly racialized segregation put in place under apartheid, which was informed by assumptions about inferior cultural habits of the Other, are now translated into classed notions of security and value. In this way, cultural habits and norms that were previously deemed inferior in racist legislation are now seen as inferior because they represent a lower-class lifestyle. It also shows how people sometimes reproduce the harmful structures that have previously been imposed upon themselves. Although the community opted for a gated community, they did not seem to be concerned it would be exclusionary; rather, they were focused on appearing worthy of inclusion in the wealthy community. In other words, their gated community would conform to the established markers for the politics of belonging in this larger community.

The other important point that came out of this discussion is the idea that in one of Cape Town’s wealthiest neighbourhoods, a security village would still be safer than individual homes. The perceived “need” for gated communities is tied to the “assumption that unregulated and uncontrolled space is dangerous space” (Hook & Vrdoljak, 2002, p. 198). The reason for this according to Clarno (2013) is that the “racialized discourse of crime, the desegregation of public space has meant that formerly “white” space is now seen as “black” and therefore dangerous, disorderly, and criminal (p. 1194). Feelings of safety or danger are largely consistent across
major cities in South Africa, despite widely different crime rates\textsuperscript{14} (Rossouw, 2001 cited in Hook & Vrdoljak, 2002). Lemanski (2004) argues an increase in fear of crime has led to an increase in walled or gated buildings but also to a variety of mitigating behaviours, such as restricting spatial movement or interaction with others. The convention now is to build fortified homes, and, like the Cold War arms race, everyone wants to ensure they are protected from the potential of crime and the unknown Other. Gated communities are a small part of the broader securitization of space and control of people in the country. Blakely and Snyder (1999) have classified gated communities in the U.S. into three varieties: “lifestyle,” “prestige,” and “security-zone” communities\textsuperscript{15} (p. 55). Many gated communities built in South Africa fall into the “security-zone” category. As the name implies, security-zone communities are chosen because they mitigate fear of crime, whether exaggerated or realistic.

Lemanski (2004) argues that a consequence of privatizing space to increase the perception of safety leads to an increase in the actual danger and risk of public spaces. Public space is left to those who cannot afford to be within the privatized spaces (p. 107). Since the fall of apartheid, public spaces are also being accessed by a much larger percentage of the population compared to the small White minority that were granted access to these spaces during apartheid. Given that walling is an attempt to privatize public space, due to the deep correlation between race and class in contemporary South Africa, the effects of walling also “deepen segregation and reinforce fear by excluding difference and limiting social mixing, thus increasing paranoia and mistrust between groups” (Lemanski, 2004, p. 108). Thus, the decision of Protea Village

\textsuperscript{14} The percentage of household crime, such as robbery and assault, decreased from 9% in 2015-16 to 7% in 2016-17, while feeling safe when walking alone at night decreased from 31% to 29% (Statistics South Africa, 2018).

\textsuperscript{15} In a lifestyle community “public space is privatized and controlled more as a social statement than as a safety device” (Hook & Vrdoljak, 2002, p. 196). Examples of lifestyle communities are retirement communities or a golf course. A prestige community is not recreational in nature, rather it is made up of residential subdivisions and gating denotes prestige and monetary value (Hook & Vrdoljak, 2002, p. 196).
claimants to build a gated community is significant. In some ways they are perpetuating segregation in response to security and classed property values. In building a gated community, they are effectively able to enclose themselves within a community, cementing their rights to be in that space by using markers their neighbours will read as similar to their own. These markers, however, are rooted in a segregationist and racialized reading of space and belonging.

In South Africa, gated communities like Protea Village demonstrate a prioritization of security over the mission of integration and equality that the "new" South Africa seeks to uphold. Durington (2006) explores fortified suburban homes and questions why, in the context of a desegregating nation like South Africa, these types of developments are very popular. Existing class and racial divisions are being reinforced and reinscribed on the landscape by barriers, walls, electrified fences, and razor wire. The division of those living in better protected environments from those living in more exposed settings is now increasingly along economic rather than merely racial lines (Kruger et al., 1997 cited in Hook & Vrdoljak, 2002, p. 203), although race and class remain overwhelmingly aligned in South Africa today. Hook & Vrdoljak (2002) argue that South African gated communities justify the control of space to solve the problem of security, but it exceeds this function. They note, “Rather than the necessary response to a dangerous ‘actuality’, they operate as a precedent, a legitimatory [sic] basis upon which to further extend and concretise the prerogatives of exclusion, separation, and privilege, forming the beginning points of a broader political rationality” (Hook & Vrdoljak, 2002, p. 217).

Extending the research on gated residential communities to gated or privatized public spaces sheds light on the reasons behind the fortification of cities like Cape Town and Johannesburg. The perceived need for security fueled by fear of the Other in unregulated spaces has led to the restriction of access in part or in full to formerly public areas. In his discussion of
post-1994 neoliberal Israel and South Africa, Clarno states, “symbolically transforming the marginalized into the sources of violence, disorder, and insecurity, racialized threat discourses are deployed to conceal structures of oppression and exploitation and to justify racial, colonial, and capitalist projects” (2017, p. 16). Although the regulation of space is historically rooted in colonialism, there is a marked difference in the ways space is constructed into particular spaces post-apartheid. The legislative restrictions around who has the right to circulate in a space have been removed and what remains are forms of control that are based in a social and economic understanding of the politics of belonging in a place. Once that is determined, communities use various methods to uphold and police belonging. The decision to gate the new Protea Village community is one example of the politics of belonging being applied. Gating and other similar techniques create physical boundaries around what was often already a space meant only for certain bodies and not others. However, before a gate, fence, or rules begin restricting movement in public or private spaces, there are already more insidious ways people may feel excluded because certain spaces are not “meant” for them. The case of the petting zoo discussed above shows clearly that there are still incidences where clashes around belonging occur, and the language employed to defend such clashes are racialized and classed. The following incident at a public beach in Cape Town further illustrates my argument.

#ReclaimClifton

In contrast to the case at Queens Park, where a few individuals attempted to control and regulate space but ultimately were shamed for doing so, private ownership and notions of “security” can be employed collectively as strategies of exclusion much more effectively. These strategies are more insidious than overt attempts to control and exclude because they are not immediately visible and are deeply embedded in how people perceive reality. While security is a
consideration for most, if not all, residents of Cape Town, security concerns and their accompanying policies and actions are successfully used to exclude certain people from some spaces. The securitization of space has become so normalized it is left unquestioned even by a formally excluded community such as Protea Village as they plan to rebuild. The resulting exclusion of “dangerous” outsiders is a positive outcome rather than a negative one to be examined.

A series of events that unfolded at Clifton Beach in late 2018 highlighted the more clandestine and effective means of exclusion. The controversy began when residents living around Clifton’s fourth beach hired a private security company to monitor the beach to “assist the city’s law enforcement officers [to] maintain ‘law and order’ after a ‘spate of incidents’ in the Clifton and Camps Bay areas” (Nombembe, 2018b). Clifton Beach is a series of four beaches separated by large boulders in the Cape Town oceanfront suburb of Clifton. There are grand, expensive homes owned mostly by White residents and foreigners built into the cliffs that overlook the Atlantic Ocean. The beach’s exclusive clubs, bars, and restaurants cater to the rich and famous. At the same time, the beaches are accessible via the public bus system. Clifton’s fourth beach is a popular destination for all residents of Cape Town, regardless of race or where they live. Every time I visited, it was filled with small groups of families, friends, and tourists.

On December 23, 2018, a security company hired by local residents, Professional Protection Alternatives (PPA), kicked out several Black visitors and informed them that after 8 p.m., the beach was closed to the public (IOL News, 2018). Immediately, after a few posts on social media by those who had been forced to leave, the incident sparked outrage in traditional media, and activists planned a protest on the beach. On social media, the movement became
known as #ReclaimClifton. In response, PPA claimed they had been acting under the authority of the City of Cape Town, which the city denied (Nombembe, 2018b).

Many people, including the Deputy Police Minister, Bongani Mkhongi, likened the incident to apartheid legislation that prohibited Black people from going to certain beaches reserved for White people. In an interview with SABC media at the protest, he said:

> In 1989, I was a small boy. I was here, I wanted to enter. It was a defiance campaign…I think [if] you were in Cape Town, you still remember [being] bitten by dogs here and other people who were White were swimming here, and they didn’t allow us to swim here because we are Black. We cannot allow that to happen in 2018. We must make sure that we defend our people—we must share these spaces. These are our spaces. If a person wants a beach, he must build his own beach at the back of his house. (SABC, 2018b)

Mr. Bongani said the beach should be shared, then added, “These are our spaces,” clearly taking a stance against the exclusion of Black visitors while also pointing to their legal right to belong to such spaces in a democratic South Africa as opposed to the oppressive racial exclusion of apartheid-era laws and restrictions. Although the laws are different in post-apartheid South Africa and they give everyone equal rights to access public spaces and therefore the opportunity to belong, there are pernicious ways that hinder certain people’s ability to claim those rights. The criteria wealthy local residents employed to determine who belongs at the beach are steeped in racially and class-based notions of security and the politics of belonging that are derived from apartheid-era policies. It is this type of insidious control of space that limits the ability of some Black South Africans to substantively belong to these spaces.

In response to the group of men being kicked out of the beach, the Fees Must Fall Western Cape group called for a protest on Clifton’s fourth beach on December 28, 2018, saying, “We are calling on all self-respecting Black people (Indians, Coloureds, and Africans) to descend at Clifton’s fourth beach” (The Citizen, 2018). One of the protest organizers was former
Rhodes Must Fall activist Chumani Maxwele (Nombembe, 2018a). Part of the planned protest involved the sacrifice of a sheep on the beach to “cleanse off racists’ spirits” (Vernac News, 2018) from the beach. As Maxwele slaughtered the sheep he said, “Today, the dignity of the black people has been restored. This is an offering to our ancestors. The sheep will be slaughtered here and eaten here” (TimesLIVE, 2018). Animal rights activists, many of whom were White, opposed the sacrifice and protested at the beach that day to try to prevent the slaughter of the sheep (SABC, 2018a). The animal slaughter protest directly opposed the underlying assumptions about politics of belonging that informed the hiring of the security guard, which is that the beach belongs to wealthy White property owners. In sacrificing a sheep, the protestors were using a cultural practice they associated with “African” traditions but one that is viewed negatively by many White South Africans as a way to assert their right to belong in this space. Their actions were meant to call out the overt exclusion and disrupt and overtly challenge the established politics of belonging and forms of control that are dominant at the beach. It also showed they would not adhere to the norms of behaviour prescribed by the White residents. Interestingly, the counter-protest against the slaughter of an animal was immediately launched by animal rights activists who were predominantly White. Immediately after the slaughter, one animal rights activist can be heard saying “the only thing you know is to kill” (TimesLIVE, 2018).

The Deputy Minister for the Police also said that regarding “the matter that happened in Clifton, […] security companies which are private…are employed to protect private property. This is public property; therefore, it must be protected by public police officers” (News 24, 2018). His statement clearly reinforces the division of private versus public property and confirms that only the state controls public land. Members of the Economic Freedom Fighters
EFF, a populist political party in South Africa, also attended the protest. In a news interview, one member said, “We are not here protesting; we are here to enjoy ourselves on the beach because it’s a public space and we are part of the public” (News 24, 2018). The EFF member was making a different kind of political statement by claiming their right to be in a public space legally open to everyone. The protest, which was sparked by public space being treated as though it were private, quickly became about much broader issues relating to racism and belonging in South Africa. This is because coded in the discourse on public property were racialized understandings about belonging to a specific place and others like it, such as a park, or a shopping mall.

The mayor of Cape Town, Dan Plato, accused political parties of trying to create racial divisions (News 24, 2018). In a media interview, the mayor downplayed the racial tensions, commenting, “the beach belongs to each and every one…all the holiday goers and makers, they are all welcome in the city of Cape Town […] what they see is harmony […] what you see down here, you will see Africans and Coloureds and Whites all on this beach. You don’t see racism on this beach” (News 24, 2018). It is interesting he stated one would not see racism on the beach when it is clear many experienced the incident at the beach as racism. Changes in laws and policies allow the beach to be frequented by people of all races, and to a certain extent, all classes. However, upon closer inspection, exclusionary acts of racism did happen as a result of the way belonging was asserted by the wealthy residents around Clifton Beach. Though they are less explicit than the overt acts of the apartheid period, the result is a desire by some with access to power to exclude certain bodies from the space.

In South Africa, the private security industry and residential associations are developing “increasingly aggressive strategies for securing urban space and policing the poor. In doing so,
they have expanded the power of private actors to regulate urban space” (Clarno, 2014, p. 1727).

One of the residents who paid for the security guards, Monique Harrisberg, a White woman, spoke to Vernac news about the protests. She felt they were justified in hiring a security company because there were safety concerns at night:

“There has been a shocking amount of crime at night with gangs coming and playing out their fights with each other. And we, the residents, are feeling very unsafe. And we can’t even come home and enter our own homes, so we’ve had to get private security to assist the police who are understaffed. And they have been assisting us to feel a little bit safer in our homes. (Vernac News, 2018)

When asked by the media how she determines who is a “gangster,” she said it was “based on how they dressed, the liquor they bring, how they speak, and the loud noises they make while on the beach” (Vernac News, 2018). In South Africa, the term “gangster” is a racialized term, so in using it, she is identifying these African late-night alleged noisemakers as more than just a nuisance but as aggressive and/or dangerous. In addition, her comments on their behaviour reflect that she and fellow residents felt the beachgoers were not behaving within accepted norms. Her response to the “gangsters” on the beach is similar to that of Ms. Furniss upon seeing a group of Coloured people gathered around a goat allegedly in distress. Both White women saw a group of people who were different from them, not only in terms of skin colour, but perhaps language, religion, and cultural beliefs and practices. Without knowing or verifying the identities of the group of beach visitors, the Clifton woman associated this group to a history of criminal activity and visits that had been disruptive to the residents of the area. By all accounts in the media and social media, the group was not engaging in any criminal behaviour at the time they were asked to leave. The group’s removal, then, was justified by assumptions on the part of the security company that are rooted in racism and a particular understanding of the politics of belonging to certain public space. In both cases, confronted with the Other, the women made
assumptions about what was happening based on their understanding and ordering of the world. The Clifton residents’ norms of belonging to this public space is clearly raced. In South Africa, Black bodies have historically been constructed as negative, dangerous, and unable to “properly” care for the environment and animals in the imaginaries of many White South Africans.

The racist assumptions about the way Black people use space garnered national and international attention when a woman in Durban named Penny Sparrow made a post on Facebook likening Black beachgoers to monkeys because they apparently left litter on the beach. In her “defence,” Ms. Sparrow responded that she was merely stating facts, “I wasn’t being nasty or rude or horrible, but it’s just that they [Black people] make a mess. It is just how they are” (as cited by News 24, 2016), which is especially ironic when one considers that the vast majority of cleaning done in the country is performed by Black people. In addition to the overt racism present in her comments, her statements also reflect her perceived right to police that space according to her norms of belonging. Similarly, in seeing Black people in or near a place they feel should be safe, the residents of Clifton responded with alarm and concern, ultimately deciding through the security company that the group of Black visitors did not belong in that space. They then took steps to police the public space and ensure they were protected and secured against a potential threat. It is this type of reaction that fuels the desire for walls, gates, and other means of separation from a racialized Other.

Although the mayor’s response immediately downplayed the racial nature of the conflict, presumably to mitigate the risk of losing lucrative tourist dollars, it is clear this incident struck a nerve with Black South Africans precisely because space and race are so connected in the ways they shape belonging. If the people involved in either the park incident or at the beach had been White, they would not have been read as suspect or policed by certain White gatekeepers
because they would have fit neatly within the criteria that would deem them as belonging to that space. That is not to say White people cannot be perceived as nuisances or annoying presences, but in the case of Black bodies being viewed as a strange presence, they are met with suspicion and fear rather than just annoyance. This chapter illustrates that many wealthy White people in Cape Town feel a sense of entitlement to public space and want such spaces to conform to their conceptions of safety and comfort as well as the strategies they employ to this end. They actively regulate the space in the way available to them extra-legally, either through discourse and practice, or by overt measures, in this case by hiring a security guard to police a completely public beach. The wealthy residents of Clifton Beach limited the circulation of non-labouring Black people so they could feel safe and comfortable. In this case it seems that affective modes of belonging for the White people who live at Clifton Beach do not permit Black people to circulate freely in certain spaces.

**Conclusion**

This chapter examined belonging and the regulation and control of space influenced by race and class dynamics that reinforce and create exclusion. When examined alongside each other, the incidents shed light on the affective modes of belonging and the power dynamics that broadly shape belonging. The Queen’s Park incident was an obvious attempt to regulate and control space due to White residents’ affective modes of belonging. The online posters attempted to “rectify” the situation, which rattled their sense of safety and their norms of comportment in this space, to match their affective modes of belonging in the park. The encounter explains in part why it can be difficult for some Black South Africans to substantively belong in the city. Competing notions of belonging create tensions daily in public spaces, some of which are
resolved more peacefully, and others end up like the Clifton case as a protest to assert belonging in the face of a competing, seemingly dominant mode of belonging.

Highly visible methods of control like security guards and gates are generally accepted as part of what makes a space safe and go unquestioned by most who frequent that space. However, this type of control of space is more insidious, invisible, and successful because it is embedded into real perceptions of safety and closely tied to affective modes of belonging, even in spaces that are ostensibly “public.” That a space needs to be safe is not in question; instead, what is problematic is that the real need for security is applied in such a way as to reinforce the exclusion of poor, mostly Black South Africans, that are read by many as being “dangerous” or in some cases simply too poor to belong in that space. In other words, attempted exclusion in this case and others is deeply rooted in notions of who belongs not only based on race but also class. The protesters at Clifton Beach disrupted and challenged this understanding of space and its exclusionary modes of belonging. In so doing, they asserted their right to belong and challenged the reading of the space as an exclusive, middle-class space that was not made for them. Substantive belonging is only possible when people can claim their structural rights to belong and exercise them. The protest was a way for the residents to assert their rights, which is one part of substantive belonging.

The events around Clifton Beach and the redevelopment plans for Protea Village further demonstrate the efficacy of exclusionary strategies based on notions of securitization and private property. The more these strategies are clandestine, which is to say invisible and normalized, the more effective they are at exclusion because they become part of perceived reality. The politics of belonging influence how people are determined to belong (or not) in a particular space. Based on these constructed notions of belonging, the residents around Clifton Beach attempted to
regulate access, or to act as gatekeepers, to the beach, revealing how power dynamics often determine the parameters for exclusion. The decision of the Protea Village claimants to build a security village reproduces the exclusionary and segregationist parameters the Clifton residents were enacting. The backlash to the local residents was swift, similar to the Queens Park incident. In both cases, White people hold disproportionate power in making such determinations. In contrast, they hold virtually no official power to enforce this determination in post-apartheid South Africa compared to apartheid-era power distribution. However, the principal difference with this case is that the residents, once called out, were not shamed; instead, they defended their right and need for increased security from the unwanted and “dangerous” beachgoers. The protest response shows that exclusion strategies can be made visible and contested.
Chapter Five: Forced Removals and Gentrification

Introduction

There is a long history of displacement of Black people in South Africa that began with colonization and continued during apartheid. The apartheid government displaced “non-Whites” from desirable areas under the Group Areas Act; these displacements became known as “forced removals.” The massive displacement of people changed the organization of many South African cities with White people concentrated in the center and Black people living on the periphery. Despite changes made to laws and policies in post-apartheid South Africa, space is still organized, regulated, and constrained by a particular cultural politics of race and class that some call spatial apartheid, as discussed in Chapter 4. This organization of space is not only mapped onto the land (see Figure 6 in Chapter 4), but also felt in the everyday interactions undergirded by understandings of race and class. The people being displaced as a result of gentrification today are the same people—or at least the same racially and classed category of people—who were oppressed and displaced under apartheid. Many of my informants refer to spatial apartheid when discussing gentrification because they feel it reproduces the same effects as apartheid spatial planning. As one of my participants said to me, “it’s economic apartheid and although not codified, the effects are the same” (see also Bond, 2000). McDonald (2008) has suggested the apartheid-era forced removals were like a “racialized, government-led form of gentrification” (McDonald, 2008 quoted in Visser & Kotze 2008, p. 2686). The “new” South African government has worked towards greater equality, redress, and improving the lives of all citizens and for that reason the parallels between the displacements related to gentrification occurring in the present and the displacement under apartheid are concerning to many residents.
Chapter 4 provided examples of the ways space is regulated and shaped by racial and class dynamics as well as the effects this has on affective modes of belonging using a case study approach. This chapter builds on this argument and maintains that in the context of gentrification-led displacement, notions of belonging transcends daily experiences of belonging and bleed into visceral claims of the right to the city. Belonging in this context includes more than simply being able to go to the park or beach without being met with acts of exclusion; it is about more than people being once again forced to leave a neighbourhood. In the context of belonging and gentrification-led displacement one must also consider where those who are forced to leave are forced to go—another lasting impact of the forced removals of the past. The evictions in the neighbourhood of Woodstock demonstrate that claiming the right to belong is not just a matter of personal preference or being accepted, but rather about claiming the right to live with dignity and well-being. The right to belong to a place is significant when put in context of the anticipated promise of “freedom” in the transition to post-apartheid living and government.

In claiming the right to remain in Woodstock the residents who are facing eviction are claiming the right to belonging substantively to a place that would allow them to not only claim their rights as citizens, but also to live in a place where they can thrive. Through their protests, the residents are arguing the current arrangements of rights and resources do not match those promised by the “new” South Africa and indeed the new constitution. In addition, the residents are calling on their affective connection to place, including their sense of belonging, to challenge the practices and forces that not only practically exclude them from certain spaces but also work to maintain their racially defined political economic positions.

Prior to delving into the historic, contextual, and ethnographic details of this chapter, a note on my positionality is required here. My role as a participant observer at times in my
The planned protest discussed below was the first time I chose to take a political stand by using the colour of my skin deliberately and strategically to access power and privilege in the context of my fieldwork. I did so in the hopes of helping my participants protest the unequal development happening across the city, which is disproportionately affecting poor Black residents of Cape Town. By the time I sat in on the planning of this intervention, I was well aware my position as a foreign White woman influenced how I was perceived and how I could negotiate certain situations in South Africa. In fact, as Ahmed (2007) would argue, in many cases I was able to fit easily because my whiteness and my presence at certain events (which will be discussed below) went unnoticed, granting me a different degree of access than many of my Black informants.

**District Six Museum Commemorates the 50th Anniversary of Forced Removals**

In February 2016, I attended the 50th anniversary commemoration events of the forced removals held by the District Six Museum over the course of two days. These events served to commemorate the past and further cement the sense of community the museum fosters in opposition to the issue of forced removals. First, I attended a march on February 11th, the day that forced removals started 50 years prior. The day began with a march to a large auditorium where there were speeches from residents and other people involved in the restitution of District Six. I joined a group of assembled marchers in a field surrounded by a brown landscape of hills and rubble left over from the destruction of homes and other buildings by the apartheid government. What rubble is left is now covered by grass and dirt and there are a few parking lots and buildings that pepper the desolate and half-empty neighbourhood. I marched with the former residents of District Six who, after all these years, still feel a connection to these barren fields and empty streets. I joined an elderly woman named Ruth who had been my guide at the museum.
the previous week. She was a teenager when she and her family had been forced to leave the neighbourhood.

As noted in Chapter 1, in 1966, using the Group Areas act, the government declared District Six a White area and subsequently, some 60,000 people—many of them Coloured—were forced to move out of their homes and relocate to the Cape Flats (Layne, 2008). Forced removals happened throughout the whole country; however, one of the most well-known and documented areas of displacement was District Six. The city of Cape Town demolished most of the buildings on the 90 hectares of land from 1968 to 1982, but 42 hectares remained undeveloped because there was strong opposition to it being redeveloped as a White neighbourhood by evicted District Six residents (Beyers & Fay, 2015, p. 439).

As the march got underway, a group of over a hundred people began talking, chanting, and singing as we walked along the empty road amidst the fields once filled with their homes. Our group was a mix of older middle-aged women and men, as well as some families with children, and comprised mostly Coloured and Cape Malay people, with a few White people. As we walked, the barren streets came to life with the energy of the marchers. A Cape Malay choir16 sang, and people joined in as we walked. We turned left onto a street in the heart of downtown Cape Town near city hall and the District Six Museum. As we walked up the hill, Ruth and her friend pointed things out about their old neighbourhood. She gestured to an empty lot and said, “We used to play there. Everyone in the neighbourhood came together in these parks. We were happy. When I had to leave, it was very sad.” As we continued walking, she added, “There used to be a store here where I would buy sweets as a child…. It was very difficult to leave everything behind.” As we walked up the street and passed the Cape University of Technology (CPUT) we

16 Cape Malay choirs or minstrels are well-known musicians who typically play during Carnival in Cape Town in early January.
passed a group of apartment buildings on the right. Ruth told me that she used to live there and that “now it's all White people.”\textsuperscript{17} As we walked by the final section of the building, a group of White people were assembled on their balconies looking down at us and a man in front of Ruth and me, who works on the District Six working committee, shouted up to them, “We will be back!” Ruth immediately turned to me and said, “we can’t come back, the government sold the apartments, we can’t come back.” As we continued walking, Ruth and other District Sixers, as they are sometimes called, shared their thoughts on the prospect of returning to the neighbourhood, which included a mix of what seemed to be hope that things would finally improve, despair that they were in this position in the first place, and impatience that things had already taken so long.

In Cape Town, the apartheid relocation scheme forcibly removed communities to different areas on the outskirts of the city in the Cape Flats: Ryland Estate, Belhar, Hanover Park, and Manenberg (see Figure 3 in Chapter 1). According to Dewar (2001), the apartheid government forcibly moved many residents to “newly built sub-economic or rental council estates” (p. 50), which were far from the city. Property owners were granted minimal compensation while tenants received nothing. Additionally, renters who were in arrears were evicted without being resettled. The forced removals left many without guaranteed housing and many lost their livelihoods as they were moved far from their places of work. Removees experienced extreme material loss as a result of the often-rapid eviction process (Dewar, 2001, p. 50). In addition, many of the new settlements were built on landfills and sand and were therefore

\textsuperscript{17} She later explained, as we walked past some apartments, that now there are a few Black families there as well. Her earlier comments are reflective of her overall sentiments about the way District Six has been developed outside of the land claims process. According to her and other participants I interviewed, the site remains a desirable location to live; it is close to the downtown core and therefore what little land is available for development and housing is being sold to the highest bidder, resulting in mostly White people being able to live there.
prone to flooding and fire (Spocter, 2007). There were informal sections (like Harare and Joe Slovo), planned high-density areas (like the single homes of Langa), and large apartment complexes (like the ones in Mitchell’s Plain), all of which were in areas far from most of the paid work opportunities available in Cape Town itself.

The material losses are only a part of the trauma these communities experienced. There were social and psychological consequences of the removals as communities were fractured, and friends and families were separated. Several of my participants lamented the loss of the social ties and support networks neighbours traditionally provided. One woman I spoke with who used to live in Walmer Estate, just above Woodstock, said, “before the Group Areas Act, everyone helped each other in difficult times, but when we were forced to relocate, that changed. We no longer trusted our neighbours.” This lack of trust is striking given that the new neighbourhoods were made up of other victims of removal—in most cases also Coloured people (Trotter 2009, p. 55). The townships were racially defined and as a result Coloured removees had very little interaction with Whites, Africans, and Indians (Trotter 2009, p. 55).

The Group Areas Act and its resulting evictions sent a powerful message that “non-Whites” did not belong—legally or otherwise—to certain areas of the city. The legal measures taken by the apartheid government to enforce exclusion went beyond the Act, limiting where one could work, who one could marry, as well as where one could eat, sit, and use the toilet. The sum of these policies along with economic policies and other unofficial norms and practices created a racialized structural mode of belonging during apartheid that excluded “non-Whites” in myriad ways and racially defined their political economic positions within apartheid-era South Africa.

The mass removal of people from neighbourhoods such as District Six was carried out in the name of development and progress. Apartheid government officials planned how the city
would be reorganized to benefit White South Africans while also claiming interest in the “social upliftment” of African and Coloured residents. T.E. Donges, the Minister of the Interior who introduced the Group Areas Act in 1950, said: “Truly, for the majority of people, the advantage would be that they will be provided with better housing and living under much better hygienic circumstances” (quoted in Trotter, 2009, 52). In retrospect, it is clear the apartheid government was looking to increase the White population in optimal areas of the city rather than to uplift “non-Whites.” In pushing “non-Whites” outside of the city center, the government effectively mapped apartheid-era ideas of racial belonging and exclusion onto the landscape and into the social fabric of the city, a legacy that residents are still coping with today and that is being exacerbated by gentrification. For instance, under apartheid “segregation rather than better policing was touted as the solution to crime” (Trotter, 2009, p.52). This ideology continues to inform present-day understandings of race and space, including the regulation of public and quasi-public space discussed in Chapter 4, namely who belongs where and how. Additionally, the notion that “non-Whites” were living unhygienically and were criminal elements in the city lingers and places Black South Africans as sources of fear for some while also being considered by others as less able to care for the natural environment and their own homes.

The march ended at a school, and everyone was invited into the auditorium to hear speeches, music, and poetry about the removal and the planned return to District Six. Bonita Bennett, the director of the District Six Museum, stood up and addressed the large crowd saying “The 11th of February is an important day! Why does it still matter? Because the past is still here, it's in our DNA. The past is always with us.” She went on to say, “commemoration can’t change the world, it can’t give you a house, change the economic situation, but it can celebrate, be part of the ritual, […] it can show pain and sadness [about the past].” As Probyn (1996)
argues, people yearn for connection and affiliation and constantly work to achieve it; the claimants’ strong sense of community fed their sense of belonging. As one District Six member said to the crowd, “you can take people out of District Six, but you can’t take their spirit.” The happiness they expressed was often juxtaposed with the remembrance of the trauma the removals caused and the hardships they faced after removal. During the event, the former finance minister Trevor Manuel spoke about the effects of the forced removals and said, “the proximity to family and friends was no longer there; it was not the pain of moving out that was so traumatic and problematic, but it was the pain of families [and communities] strewn across the Cape Flats.” As my informants also discussed, the move to the Cape Flats left people with a lack of personal connection to their neighbours or markers of belonging and that likely created an environment of distrust.

Trotter (2009) examined in depth the experience of Coloured removees from District Six by collecting over a hundred oral histories. He found that their narratives have similarities with each other and with those of Coloured removees from other areas. For example, the loss of community and change in wholesome values were common laments from removees regardless of location (Trotter, 2009, p. 59). He also found that in reflecting on life prior to being forcibly removed, there is a tendency to focus on the positives of life. He suggests one of the reasons for this is the imposed insularity they were subjected to:

Their removal to racially defined townships ensured that they shared their memories almost exclusively with other Coloured people and only infrequently with Africans, Indians, or Whites. Apartheid social engineering determined the spatial limits within which Coloured memories circulated, creating a reflexive, mutually reinforcing pattern of narrative traffic. (2009, p. 50)

Left in a place cut off from the rest of their communities, removees shared stories and helped each other move on to heal from the trauma of removal. This process reinforced certain positive,
if not nostalgic, narratives of life before the Group Areas Act, such as District Six being an idyllic, racially harmonious neighbourhood. In fact, at the commemoration event, one of the former residents of District Six shared that prior to the removals even the skollies (gangsters) were friendly to her. Whether or not this idyllic picture of life was a reality in the past, it is certainly not a reality in the present in the Cape Flats. Most of the residents of the Cape Flats who I spoke with complained about violence, theft, and a general lack of security (see also Goga & Goredema, 2014; Standing, 2003; Kinnes, 2014). At the event I attended, Trevor Manuel made a connection between the legacy of the removals and their connection to the establishment of gangs in the Cape Flats and said, “What has happened is a terrible thing” and the crowd cheered. This was the first of a few times that he and others mentioned the gangs on the Cape Flats. He continued: “The crime and people there are part of this too, they deserved respect […] It's not just the original displaced, it's their children and grandchildren that struggle.” Trotter (2009) argues that, in comparison to the violence and lack of community on the Cape Flats, the crime rates, and other difficulties they may have faced when living in District Six seem inconsequential now; it is therefore easier to discount them (p. 58).

Twenty-five years after the end of apartheid, even with a concerted effort on the part of District Sixers to return to their land, fewer than 200 households have returned (see Chapter 6). The speeches at the commemoration made clear that many former residents have died before being able to return and others are afraid of dying before they get the chance. In addition, many of them still feel the trauma and loss of community strongly, as well as the real economic consequences of their removal to the city’s outskirts. Despite this, they have a well-developed sense of belonging, which can be seen with their continued commemoration and community involvement in the District Six Museum. The significance of the District Six claimants’ reality in
the present, including how it was shaped by the past, cannot be ignored when examining present-day forms of displacement occurring in the city. Many of the people who were removed over 50 years ago are still suffering the economic, spatial, and social repercussions of their removal. They were forced into spaces that barely met adequate standards of life, safety, community, and economic potential. This injustice still has not been fully rectified in a satisfactory way, and indeed, depending on certain criteria, it may never be. Many of my informants felt that gentrification-led displacement in Cape Town is affecting people in ways that were reminiscent of the forced removals, and they were concerned with the outcomes of displacement in terms of economics, community, safety, and quality of life.

Gentrification

Gentrification is one of the factors that reinforce the historical structures of inequality that work to keep people in racially defined political economic positions in Cape Town. First, as a result of gentrification, current residents of Woodstock who are not part of the middle or upper class are being excluded economically and socially from the newer businesses and community events and in some cases, they are also directly or indirectly being forced out of their homes. The Old Biscuit Mill, a former factory turned shopping and eating destination, is a prime example of this phenomenon in the heart of Woodstock. The Biscuit Mill, as it is commonly referred to, was converted to a courtyard with stores and restaurants, including a micro-roaster café and a French-style deli. It is also home to the Test Kitchen and the Pot Luck Club, two of South Africa’s most expensive and well-known restaurants. It is a destination for an afternoon of fun for tourists and middle- and upper-class Capetonians.

On Saturdays, the inner parking areas of the Biscuit Mill are converted into an open-air market called the Neighbourhood Goods Market, a spacious, tidy, and seemingly safe space that
features many food and alcohol vendors, live music, and locally made clothes, housewares, and gift items for sale at relatively expensive prices. While the offerings to the public are made by people of all races, the store and kiosk owners are almost exclusively White people. The Biscuit Mill is a success because it appeals to both tourists and middle-class Capetonians; it feels like any other commercial, middle-class space found in the global North. Those who enjoy or are regularly involved in the Biscuit Mill space, see it as a great part of the community and a force of positive change like the other development projects in the neighbourhood. Yet most who visit and own shops there do not live in the immediate community of Woodstock. At a community meeting about gentrification in Woodstock, a resident stood up and asked, “How is it [Biscuit Mill] the ‘Neighbourhood’ Goods Market when no one from the neighbourhood sells goods or goes there? Who is it really for?” The Market and its associated experiences and goods target a middle-class or wealthy clientele, which excludes the majority of the residents of lower Woodstock. This division along class lines is also racialized.

The Biscuit Mill is a middle-class space and because of the close connection of class and race in Cape Town, most of the Coloured, Asian, and African informants I spoke with believed it was a space reserved for White people or wealthy tourists. To further confirm this, I observed, on multiple occasions, security guards policing the space to keep people who looked poor from entering the courtyard. It is left up to the security guards, authorised as gatekeepers to police the belonging by the owners of the mall, to determine who belongs and who should be excluded, and often these categories are shaped by racialized notions of class: White people inherently belong, some African, Asian, or Coloured people will be seen to belong based on their class, whereas if they look poor they are mostly excluded from this space except as service employees, such as security guards, janitorial staff, servers, and sales staff. A local, Coloured shop owner in
Woodstock who applied to have a shop inside the Old Biscuit Mill when it opened, explained to a journalist: “It looked very White, but I put my name down for a place, anyway. We heard nothing more. That place is not for people like us and few, if any, of the goods sold there are from around here” (Joseph, 2014). I heard the same story from the African owner of a leather goods manufacturer whose shop was at risk of eviction from another condominium development project. He explained that when he initially wanted to open his business, he applied to rent in the Old Biscuit Mill, but he never heard anything, and he assumed it was because the place was for White people. He also stated later on that the price was too high to rent a space and he felt the Biscuit Mill should have tried to include more local shops.

In addition to contributing to the exclusion of local residents, the Old Biscuit Mill has contributed to the rise of the cost of living in the area; several businesses owned by Coloured, Asian, and African people had to relocate or close in 2016.¹⁸ The pattern of exclusion from the Old Biscuit Mill, both potential visitors and business owners, is a prime example of the type of exclusionary dynamics created by gentrification. It also clearly illustrates the gaps between the inclusive laws and policies around space put in place after the transition to democracy and their translation into daily life. The transition to democracy meant the laws that limited the rights of African, Coloured, and Asian people were removed, which granted everyone the ability to live and work and socialize freely. However, in practice, there are many structural and socioeconomic factors that limit the ability of members of these population groups to exercise those rights fully.

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¹⁸ The Black owner of a textile shop and the Black owner of a furniture and rustic frames company told me that they each had been forced to relocate their businesses because they could no longer afford the rising cost of rent. A third business owner of a leather goods company was also forced to leave Woodstock.
Gentrification is a complex topic and although there is not one set definition, most can agree it includes “processes of spatial, economic, and social restructuring” (Lees, 2015, p. 47). The term “gentrification” was first coined by Ruth Glass (1964) to describe changes occurring in housing in different areas of London. She noted middle- and upper-middle classes were taking over working-class residences after their leases expired and renovating them. She stated: “Once this process of ‘gentrification’ starts in a district, it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working-class occupiers are displaced and the social character of the district is changed” (Glass, 1964, p. xviii–xix). Smith (1982) examined how disinvestment and uneven development created places for capital investments for profit across the city, creating an environment where gentrification could occur; cheap properties became investment opportunities. For example, if property owners poorly maintained or stopped maintaining their buildings altogether as the government at multiple levels decreased or eliminated funding to the same areas, the neighbourhood would quickly become rundown. As a result, people with means would leave the area, leaving it to those who had less income. Eventually, as the properties continue to deteriorate, the property prices would decrease, which could trigger reinvestment and redevelopment in the area for a substantial profit. To further examine this issue, Smith suggests focusing on how seemingly separate processes connect and together restructure neighbourhoods in ways that lead to gentrification (Smith, 1982, p. 139; see Lees, 2015, for a history of gentrification theory).

While I lived in Woodstock, I noticed small, subtler signs of socioeconomic demographic change in the neighbourhood. A liquor store was renovated, seemingly over the course of a weekend, to target a burgeoning, young, middle-class, “hipster” clientele. Its name was changed from Liquor Store Woodstock (Figure 7) to Woodstock Liquors: Craft Beer and Fine Wine
The newly styled liquor store prominently displayed craft beer and craft liquor in wooden displays made of wooden pallets, which for a time was a common design style found in gentrified areas. Instantly, it went from being one of the shops lower income locals frequented to a place targeting middle-and upper-class shoppers who frequent places like the higher-end Biscuit Mill and the Woodstock Exchange. When I asked in April 2016 why they renovated their store, the owners shared that previously the shop was unable to bring in more upscale clientele and they were unable to survive by just catering to the local residents who would buy cheaper alcohol from their store. The renovation of the liquor store in Woodstock was a visual sign to some local residents that the neighbourhood was changing. One day I drove past the store with a late 20s White couple who lived in Woodstock and they commented how quickly the liquor store had been completed overhauled. They lived nearby and were disappointed because they often bought inexpensive wine at the liquor store. As we kept chatting about the changes to the store and what it meant for the neighbourhood, one of them added that the store’s low-income customers would probably have to go somewhere else as the store no longer sold things in their price range. The physical changes signaled a new type of clientele was preferred at the liquor store. As a result, the symbols and signs associated with middle-class businesses – such as, the simplified black and white logo (Figure 9) and overall decluttered display and marketing as well as the wooden, rustic looking crates – were retrofitted onto the shop so as to communicate the new politics of belonging they ushered in, while at the same time indicating who was no longer welcome. In practical ways too, this kind of change impacts the ability of lower income residents to afford to remain in the area; as shops are renovated or replaced with newer upscale versions, the cost of goods and property overall increases.
FIGURE 7 WOODSTOCK LIQUOR STORE CIRCA 2015

Source: Google maps 2023

FIGURE 8 WOODSTOCK LIQUORS CIRCA 2017
The controversy around the Old Biscuit Mill and gentrification in Woodstock boiled to the surface at an event with M.I.A., a British musician and activist who is known for her anti-capitalist stance. In 2018, she was scheduled to perform at the Old Biscuit Mill. Prior to that event, she went to a screening of a documentary about her life in the high-density, Black township of Khayelitsha in the deeply impoverished Cape Flats. While there, she was asked by a fan why she was performing at the Biscuit Mill. Her response at first was that she had not known the venue was embroiled in controversy and a symbol for gentrification. She ultimately told her fans:

If you want to make some point heard, then you need to come to my show and we’ll make it a thing. We’ll stop the show and we’ll address it and then you have to get them to bend to what your needs are. As much as getting people to go to areas like that and be a part of it and claim it. We shouldn’t make it into a hostile thing but use my show to have that conversation (Pather, 2018).

M.I.A. used her celebrity status to give a voice to those who wanted to protest gentrification in the city. The event also highlighted the inherent contradiction with places like the Biscuit Mill. The news coverage on the controversy stated, “for many in the audience at the movie house, gentrification is a no-no, making M.I.A.’s concert a highly-anticipate event albeit tinged with guilt” (Pather, 2018). The night of the concert, M.I.A did not directly address the topic of
gentrification but prior to the event she offered free concert tickets to the residents adversely affected by the Biscuit Mill. One reviewer stated:

It was a slight disappointment that the issue of gentrification wasn’t addressed at the event, but was that really her responsibility? The onus was put on us when she said, ‘You need to come to my show and we’ll make it a thing’. But she created a space inside an area where people of colour usually feel alien and uninvited. And that, accompanied by the joy of her incredible performance, was a relief (Hendricks, 2018).

The concert ended up being a way to, at least temporarily, open the space to people who are usually excluded economically, socially, and politically from spaces like the Biscuit Mill. By attending the concert, the residents of Woodstock and those opposing gentrification claimed the space as theirs to belong to rather than as a middle-class White space, thus transforming it from a guilt-inducing event for many into a moment of protest and a (temporary) space of inclusion.

The second way gentrification is reinforcing the historical structures of inequality that keep people in racially defined political economic positions is through the displacement of lower-class residents by people from a higher class (Visser & Kotze, 2008). This can lead to their exclusion from their neighbourhoods but can also exclude them from the “benefits” of gentrification, such as better services and stores, safer neighbourhoods, and more jobs. Herein lies the crux of the problem with gentrification: it is a process involving class transformation, meaning one class slowly replaces another in an area, leading to a neighbourhood’s class structure becoming slowly transformed from working class to middle-class and upper middle-class. As Slater et al. state:

Whether gentrification is urban, suburban, or rural, new-build or the renovation of existing stock, it refers, as its gentri-suffixes attest, to nothing more or less than the class dimensions of neighbourhood change—in short, not simply changes in the housing stock, but changes in housing class. (Slater et al., 2004, p.1144, emphasis in original)
Accompanying this class shift is displacement. Scholars and activists often raise displacement as a consequence of gentrification, yet some scholars debate the extent to which gentrification actually causes displacement (Freeman & Braconi, 2004; Vigdor, 2002). Some media reports that have examined long-term data (Gillespie, 2015; The Economist, 2018) found no evidence that low-income residents in gentrifying neighbourhoods are more likely to move out of that area than any other non-gentrifying area. However, these studies fail to address the larger social and economic fallout of gentrification. A 2019 report from the National Community Reinvestment Coalition, which examined over a decade of data on gentrification in the United States, confirmed that gentrification and displacement occurred in the country’s largest cities between 2000 and 2013 (Richardson, et. al., 2019). In addition to direct displacement, Davidson (2008) notes that indirect displacement is an “often neglected and under-theorised set of complex and interrelated displacement processes” (p. 2388). In this case, it is not a one-for-one replacement of poor by the relatively richer; the trend in gentrifying neighbourhoods is that of upper-class residents slowly, indirectly replacing poorer residents. Key questions in terms of these interrelations include the following: Who is able to move in to replace those who have moved out and why? Are the new residents moving into a neighbourhood because it is a good investment? Is it an up-and-coming area they want to be a part of? Why have they chosen to move out of their existing neighbourhoods? Studies focusing on direct displacement may miss more complex processes that lead to displacement. Often, housing or rental prices increase and people are forced to leave, but there are also “landlords [who] have also been known to employ underhanded methods such as offering cash sums to tenants to vacate the premises, harassment, violence, and intimidation, as well as eviction” (Atkinson, 2000, p. 318). When gentrification occurs, it involves the displacement of at least some of a neighbourhood’s poorer residents.
Millard-Ball (2002) asserts “the people displaced have to move somewhere, and the consequences can ripple up the ‘chain of moves’ that is initiated” (p. 834). Therefore, gentrification affects more than a few properties or even single neighbourhoods.

Gentrification limits the ability of lower income people to live, work, and socialize in the city. Wacquant (2008) describes the effects of gentrification in terms of effacement of the proletariat in the city as a result of withdrawing a social support system to policies that favour business and middle- and upper-class needs:

This literal and figurative effacing of the proletariat in the city is reinforced by the growing heteronomy of urban research, as the latter becomes ever more tightly tethered to the concerns and outlook of city rulers, and correspondingly unmoored from self-defined and self-propelled theoretical agendas. And both tendencies in turn reveal, confirm, and abet the shifting role of the state from provider of social support for lower-income populations to supplier of business services and amenities for middle- and upper-class urbanites—chief among them the cleansing of the built environment and the streets from the physical and human detritus wrought by economic deregulation and welfare retrenchment so as to make the city over into a pleasant site of and for bourgeois consumption. (2008, p. 199)

The shifting role of the state Wacquant describes is particularly relevant in the South African context. The expectation most South Africans had for the “new” state after the end of apartheid was that it would lift the poor out of poverty while also working toward equality. This anticipation disproportionately affects Black people because of the racialized nature of class dynamics in South Africa. The removal of racist and oppressive laws and policies opened up a new way for “non-White” South Africans to negotiate belonging both structurally and affectively. However, political economic forces and structures are slow to change and that means that the way belonging is constituted and articulated is still highly influenced by the modes of belonging that stem from the apartheid era. Added to this is the weight of the new policies the “new” government has implemented that favour neoliberalism and reduce social supports that created an environment where gentrification can thrive. Gentrification has usually been
understood as an unintended consequence of “well-meaning urban policy frameworks, such as urban densification, inner-city regeneration, and urban heritage conservation” (Donaldson et al., 2013, p. 173). However, some have argued gentrification is deliberately being included in neoliberal public policy that aims to attract investment capital. The reinvestment in inner-city neighbourhoods is carried out to foster economic prosperity, but more often than not, the municipal governments do not focus on issues of “social and spatial justice” (Winkler, 2009, p. 363).

According to Visser and Kotze (2008), gentrification in South Africa began in the 1980s but faced little resistance or academic attention at the time. They note “the realities of inner-city South Africa since the 1980s have not been conducive to discussions of gentrification. Rather, inner-city decline has been the main theme of local urban chronicles” (p. 2569). Several scholars have examined the origins of gentrification in South Africa (Garside, 1993; Kotze, 1996, 1998; Kotze & Van Der Merwe, 2000; Visser & Kotze, 2008; Visser, 2019). More recently, scholars have focused on how South African cities are affected by gentrification. Winkler (2009) analysed urban regeneration in Johannesburg, while Carls (2016) examined gentrification in Woodstock. In both cases, they found that policies aimed at making a city economically competitive to attract business and investment—that do not take into account social factors—make it almost impossible for low-income people to benefit from positive changes in that city; instead, they are pushed out to other, less pricey areas. Andersen’s (2021) master’s thesis presents a literature study on the impact of gentrification on Woodstock and concluded “gentrification can be considered a continuation of the state-led forced removal during apartheid” (p. 3).
In the 1980s, cheaper homes in Upper and Lower Woodstock were purchased by middle-and upper-class households, predominantly White investors and residents but also by Coloured residents and sometimes by foreign investors. In some cases, these properties were then renovated so the owners could increase the cost of rent. For many working-class tenants, the increase in rent meant they could no longer afford their homes and had to either move to a less expensive house in the area or leave the neighbourhood altogether. In other cases, the new property owners renovated their own property. Over time the improvements led to increased property values in the areas, which meant high costs of living in general. This process gradually saw the replacement of low-income residents with middle-class residents in Woodstock. At the same time, it raised the demand for homes, and homeowners were able to sell their homes for a greater profit, a cycle that fueled the rise in housing costs in the area. In Lower Woodstock, middle-class Coloured people started moving in, replacing primarily Coloured and Cape Malay working-class tenants, while in Upper Woodstock, wealthy White people replaced working-class White people (Visser & Kotze, 2008, p. 2570).

In 2003, with encouragement from local businesses, the municipal government launched the Woodstock Upliftment Project (Woodstock Improvement District, 2018). Two years later, the City of Cape Town, the South African Police Service (SAPS), and property and business owners established a cooperative agreement. The result was the creation of a Central City Improvement District (CCID), which was briefly discussed in Chapter 2, called the Woodstock Improvement District (WID). The WID is a private/public partnership where property owners agree to pay additional rates to fund a business plan made for the area (Woodstock Improvement District, 2018). The WID offers additional cleaning and security services for the neighbourhood in an effort to make “Woodstock a desirable place to live, work, and play” (Woodstock
Among other measures—such as cleaning the streets, solid waste removal, helping to place homeless individuals into shelters—security guards are also posted in trailers at key intersections to offer information and assistance to residents and visitors (Carls, 2016).

I encountered the effects of the CCID policies regularly while in Woodstock. On early morning walks around the neighbourhood, I would often see street cleaners on the main streets and I would regularly walk by security guards posted in their trailers at several intersections in the neighbourhood. On the neighbourhood Facebook group, there are several posts from homeowners lamenting or asking for help because there are homeless people living near or on their property and in other cases, stealing, defecating, or urinating near or on their properties. When these posts come up, several respondents frequently mention that instead of the police there is a unit available to try and assist homeless people. CCID policies have been effective in providing services and security when state measures are not sufficient, however, as stated previously they have also been heavily criticized as pushing problems from the city centre to the outskirts and have been linked to the complex gentrification process.

WEX Living: Protest and Aftermath

Gentrification has led to exclusion and displacement in Woodstock and some residents have chosen to fight back and challenge the reproduction of spatial apartheid. Through protest and legal action, they are asserting their right to belong and thrive in place while highlighting the problems they face as a result of gentrification. Protest in post-apartheid South Africa remains an important way that residents express their discontent with the state (Jolaosho, 2019). Protest is enshrined in the constitution and is therefore normalized so it was not suppressed during
apartheid. Nevertheless, many of the protest songs and organizing methods employed today have roots in the protest movements of the apartheid period.

In late October 2016, I sat with five activists who were planning what they called “an intervention” to protest the construction of a new condominium complex in Woodstock called WEX Living (now called WEX1) that would result in the displacement of primarily Coloured and African residents. The five men, four of whom were African or Coloured and one who was White, were in their twenties and thirties and had been engaged in this type of activism for a few years. In fact, they had all come from a protest at Parliament earlier that day for the Fees Must Fall movement, which demanded a halt to increases in university fees for students and increases in government funding for South African universities. Many of these young activists were involved with Reclaim the City, whose members protest urban development across the city that goes against the principle of an inclusive and equal city while also offering legal support to residents at risk of eviction. Their slogan, “Land for the people, not for profit,” affirms the value of land as a place for people to live and use rather than as a means for financial gain. Ndifuna Ukwazi, an NGO that advocates for spatial justice in Cape Town and is associated with Reclaim the City, believes land in the city cannot be solely organized for the sake of profit because this type of management does not allow for the provision of the social parts of life. Although land is unquestionably enmeshed in the market economy, it also serves multiple other purposes, such as being a place where people feel a sense of belonging as well as where they can do all the things that come with that belonging: live, work, gather, socialize, and protest.

During the meeting, the group of activists discussed possible types of interventions they could execute during the launch and sale of the WEX development. They were aiming for “something creative that doesn’t get us thrown out but infiltrates, flips the messaging or
disrupts.” The original goal was to stage a protest that would interrupt a press event for the launch of WEX Living with some protesters stationed near the entrance of the event to hand out flyers with information on the displacement of Woodstock residents disguised as promotional material for the event. I agreed to attend the event with the activists and take on an active role in their plan if the occasion presented itself. They told me I should ask questions during the question period of the presentation to raise concerns about the displacement of people in Woodstock. Other protesters would enter the building and disrupt the event by interrupting the sales pitch and presentation for the planned development. Once the activists attracted the potential buyers’ attention, they would inform the crowd that many Coloured or African people were being displaced as a result of the development. To gain access to the event, the activists and I signed up to attend the event on the WEX Living website. We had to provide our names and email addresses.

On the day of the WEX Living intervention on October 27, 2016, private security was heightened. The activists shared via a WhatsApp group that the condo development company had heard there was going to be a protest, and they sent a letter from their lawyer to one of the organizers warning him to stay away. An hour before the protest, I met with three young Black members of Reclaim the City and, as we folded flyers, I asked them about the planned protest and the measures the company was taking to prevent any kind of activism. One woman in her early twenties wondered what would happen if the company or security guards recognized them as protesters. The small group decided they would hand out the flyers a few blocks away from the building to avoid the security guards who were posted on each corner. In the WhatsApp group, one of the organisers shared a photo of the security guards (see Figure 10). Once the

19 The name of the group chat and individuals participating in the group chat have been blacked out to protect their anonymity.
flyers were all folded, I walked with them as they chose a spot to begin handing out the flyers to people walking toward the event. Many of the activists from Reclaim the City I met had been in earlier clashes with the police and private security guards as part of other protests and seemed ready for such conflicts if it came to that. When I asked one of the lead organizers what first prompted him to protest land injustice, he replied, “Protesting is in my blood; you can’t look at what is happening and not protest.” His father had protested during the apartheid period, and the man I spoke to now felt it was his duty to protest the inequality he saw that still exists in South Africa.

FIGURE 10 WHATSAPP GROUP CONVERSATION

Source: Author
Once the press event for the condominium sale began, I left the group and walked a block and a half to the Woodstock Exchange building where the event was being held. The private security guards\textsuperscript{20} stood on the corners of the public street to intervene and deny access to the private event by anyone who did not appear to belong. I walked past the posted guards and into the Woodstock Exchange. When I entered, I was greeted by a White woman who worked for the development company. She had a clipboard in hand with a list of people who had signed up to attend the sales event via the company’s website. She was checking people’s names before allowing them to move into the event. She told me to help myself to wine and snacks before I went through the large black doors where the condo sale was happening. When I arrived, two very tall African men dressed in modern suits and top hats opened the doors. Inside, I saw a room packed full of potential buyers who were mostly White, middle-aged, heterosexual couples and single men; there were a few Black couples but not many. In contrast to the security guards who were ostensibly meant to keep the space safe from protest for the buyers, the African doormen signaled the privilege of being welcomed into an exclusive space that harkened back to colonial times. Their suits in combination with their top hats are not typically part of contemporary fashion, but rather are remnants of an outdated style of dress that emphasized their link to the colonial era.\textsuperscript{21} This formal accoutrement in combination with their modern suits signaled to all the importance of their role and the event. Their race in conjunction with their physical labor of opening and closing the door for each entry, and their quiet demeanor could also be read as signals of their subservience. While the public-facing security guards were hired

\textsuperscript{20} As discussed in Chapter 4, private security guards, who are largely Coloured or African, are sometimes hired by rich, often White, South Africans to police spaces where they wish to be safe or undisturbed.

\textsuperscript{21} In South Africa, heavily influenced by English customs, hats were a symbol to distinguish “the formal public self” (Ross, 1990, p. 91).
to keep out the “undesirable poor” and their allies, the doormen positioned inside were there to welcome the wealthy to the safe and sanitized space through a performance of servitude.

Very quickly, I realized that contrary to what the protesters had expected—to interrupt speakers during the event or raise concerns by publicly asking questions—there would be no presentations, speeches, or question-and-answer period. I reported back what I saw to the activist group on the outside via the WhatsApp chat group and waited to see if they would make an alternate plan and if others would join me inside. In the end they told me to take photos and talk to the organizers if I could, and that is what I did.

The event space was separated into three rooms set up to look like one of the condominium units for sale. On the walls hung concept art, architectural plans, and company logos to give the potential buyers an idea of what the development would look like. In the middle of each room, small high-top tables were set up where potential buyers could stand and talk to a salesperson and choose which unit to purchase. In one corner, a woman and man, both White, sat at a lower table with two chairs facing them. This was the area of the event where those who had questions about financing their purchase could talk to a financial consultant. I toured the three rooms and saw that the condo units were selling very, very quickly. Every few minutes, one of the Black men in a suit and top hat added new “sold” signs to corresponding units on a board featuring a diagram of the complex (see Figure 11).

In the end, I was one of the only protesters admitted into the event and so I kept mostly to myself and observed since the protest could not go on as planned. Two other activists were admitted as part of the media and began filming and taking photos, but within about 15 minutes, they were escorted out of the event when the organizers realized they were not part of the official press. They were pushed and shoved by the guards and forced to leave. A few of the younger
Black activists tried to get into the sale but were refused immediately. After the event was over, they blamed the refusal on their youth and their Blackness. However, someone else in the organization had registered for them using different names, and when it came time to provide their names to the woman with the clipboard, they did not give the names that had been used to sign up to attend the event. Although it is likely that their race and their youth may have flagged them as inherently not belonging in this space, it is impossible to tell whether they would have been admitted had they used the correct names.

**FIGURE 11 WEX LIVING EVENT**

![Image](image_url)

Source: author

During the event, I used my whiteness and foreignness to fit in with the sellers and potential buyers. I was able to talk to a salesman about the construction of the condo development. He answered all of my questions, and when asked, he shared his impressions about the safety of the neighbourhood. He said, “No, don’t worry, it’s completely safe. There’s very little crime. I would have no problem walking around at night.” I doubted the sincerity of this claim since many local residents had told me it was generally not safe to walk around Woodstock at night. Then I asked him a question I knew was important to the activist group: Were there any
current residents in the buildings earmarked for demolition to make room for the new condos? He shook his head vigorously and said, “No, no one lives there.” He then gestured to the buildings across the street that would be torn down and said, “They are completely empty.” The members of Ndifuna Ukwazi and I would later find out this claim was a lie. The activists considered the day a partial success because they were able to gather more information about the development, but they had not been able to protest in a way that would raise awareness for the potential buyers and media.

The WEX Living development, WEX 1, has been built and is fully open since 2017 and a second residential property across the street has been built called WEX 2. According to the sale documents provided to me and other attendees of the event, the price of the WEX 1 condominiums ranged from 1,400,000 ZAR (106,000 CAD) and 3,750,000 ZAR (284,803 CAD). At the same time, the average income in Cape Town in 2011 was 57,500 ZAR 4,329 CAD) (Statistics South Africa, 2011) and in 2016, 28.2% households lived below the poverty line, which is 35,000 ZAR/month (2658 CAD). The people buying the condominiums were clearly not working-class residents of Cape Town, and the construction of the new buildings did displace several people. Urban renewal projects like WEX are reshaping and rebuilding the city and expose the power structures at work. Despite vocal opposition, political economic forces that influence gentrification won the day.

While gentrification ostensibly brings much needed “positives,” such as improved infrastructure and lower crime rates, to the city and to individuals, people do not experience these improvements equally (Lees 2015; Visser & Kotze, 2008). The forces that make things better in a neighbourhood also lead to increased cost of living and residents with lower incomes are priced out of the area; as a result, they do not get to stay and benefit from the changes to the

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neighbourhood they once called home. The negative effects and unequal distribution of benefits have received widespread coverage in the media (Christianson & Haynie, 2019; Joseph 2014; Charles 2021a). In fact, in Cape Town, the downsides of urban renewal—such as eviction, severed social and kin networks, job loss or increased commutes, the rising cost of food and property, business closures, and income loss—disproportionately affect residents who already have less access to economic resources and social capital; in South Africa, these are mainly Black residents. While post-apartheid South Africa has changed laws and policies related to housing that prevented “non-Whites” from living and working in certain areas, the effects of gentrification are considered by many residents and activists to be a continuation of a much longer historical process, including forced removals like District Six, that sought to exclude Black people and sanitize urban space so White people exclusively could enjoy it (Layne, 2008).

Through protest and awareness-raising on social media, the activist group made a statement to express their concern for the changes occurring in Woodstock. They were also trying to make potential buyers aware they would be investing in a project that would significantly and adversely change the neighbourhood while also impacting current residents’ ability to work and live in the area. Such protests, and others like them around the city, centre on claiming a right to the city as defined by Lefebvre (1996). Rather than focusing on citizenship as only a legal membership to a nation-state, the protestors are employing what Holston calls “urban citizenship,” which places the city at the centre of their political community as they try to “address city living at its substance” (Holston, 2011, p. 336). They also challenge the limitations of the rights that were won after the transition to democracy and advocate for substantive belonging. This means residents of neighbourhoods like Woodstock should have the right to live, work, and participate in social life in the city while also helping shape the city’s political future.
so the city is continually fashioned by those who live within it. This includes having the ability to be heard and to shape the city (Staeheli 2003) and, as Secor (2004) says, to become a producer of the city. Additionally, by using the city as territory, they are able to claim representation and belonging to counter the dominant narrative of land and property in the gentrified place (Schein 2009).

The Bromwell Street Evictions Court Case

The Bromwell Street evictions in Woodstock became a very public and emblematic case for the rights of residents who were facing evictions due to gentrification-led displacement. In 2015, a company called the Woodstock Hub bought several properties on Bromwell Street, which is located at the bottom of Lower Woodstock. The company intended to build new properties once the old ones had been demolished. Many of the residents had been living there as tenants of the previous owners for decades. Once the Woodstock Hub purchased the houses, they began the eviction process, which became very complicated. The Bromwell residents argued that the alternative accommodations offered by the city were not adequate because the residents would have to leave their jobs, schools, and the community they built to live very far away from the city. The plaintiffs asked the court whether it is the city’s responsibility to provide alternative (emergency) accommodation near or in the neighbourhood the residents live. Undergirding this case are several other legal battles, occupation of buildings, and social media campaigns to raise awareness of the housing crisis while also holding the city accountable. In a statement to the media, the director of Ndifuna Ukwazi stated that “the housing backlog is estimated close to

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22 Reclaim the City activists have been occupying a building in the neighbourhood of Sea Point to protest the sale of a property known as Tafelberg. The province had declared the site suitable for social housing in 2012 but then sold it to private developers in 2015 (McCool, 2017). In August 2020, the sale was set aside by the Western Cape High Court (Charles, 2020b); the city and province are currently planning a second appeal to the Supreme Court of Appeal as their first was denied by the Western Cape High Court (Charles, 2021c).
400,000 qualifying households and there are possibly a lot more than that. More homes need to be built at a faster rate, by both the state and the private sector” (Damons, 2021). They asserted the need to build faster but also the need for more land for social housing. In 2016, residents at risk of eviction across the city, along with activists and NGOs, had been vocal opponents of many urban development projects, and gentrification became part of a larger discussion on rights, belonging, and transformation in Cape Town. This section elaborates on the residents’ struggle to secure the legal right to remain in the city by leveraging their right to belong. In this case and many others like it, the notion of belonging becomes entangled with dignity and the ability of those at risk of displacement to exercise the rights and ways of living anticipated in the transition to the post-apartheid era.

With the help of lawyers from Ndifuna Ukwazi, the Bromwell Street tenants brought the city and the Woodstock Hub to court. On November 9, 2016, Bromwell Street residents and their lawyers attended one of many court proceedings to determine whether the other parties—the Woodstock Hub and the city—could evict them, given the constitutional requirements that no one be made homeless. Many of the tenants had no other options for housing within the neighbourhood for financial reasons. In the spirit of the constitutional requirements to not leave anyone homeless through eviction processes, the city of Cape Town had offered to move the tenants who could not secure other housing to Wolwerivier, a new state-built settlement 27 kilometers outside of the city. This suggestion was not well-received by the tenants and was the root of their concerns. The housing offered at this camp consists of small, approximately 6m by 8m cement buildings roughly 1.5m apart. Figure 12 shows Wolwerivier; Woodstock is at the base of Lion’s Head, the mountain on the left seen in the photo far off in the distance. By all accounts, it is far away from all services, schools, churches, and job opportunities. Figure 3 (in
Chapter 1) shows the distance of Wolwerivier from Woodstock and the rest of the city on a map. It is “a place you go to die,” one at-risk tenant risk told me.

During an informal meeting between Ndifuna Ukwazi organizers and tenants at risk of eviction, the latter shared their fears about potentially having to relocate. A Coloured woman shared that she would be unable to keep her job and her kids would be unable to continue at their school since she had no car. Another man chimed in and said that “once you move there, there is no way back.” There is no doubt harsh living conditions are compounded by the distance from the city. Like the experience of people forced to relocate to the Cape Flats beginning in the 1960s, Wolwerivier is far from the city and has a lack of services and opportunity. There is also a lack of schools, churches, commercial shops, parks, playgrounds, and no space for subsistence farming in the small yard space available. Most of the aspects of residential life that make living tolerable or even pleasant are absent, along with a lack of basic services. In fact, in 2021, five years after moving from an informal settlement to the now-overcrowded Wolwerivier, residents feel life in the camp is stagnant. Some residents stated, “We’re as desperate as the day we moved in” (Hendricks, 2021). The site is categorized as an emergency settlement as well as an incremental development area, but little has been done to develop the site into anything more than what it resembled in 2015 when it was first built (Hendricks, 2021).
The Bromwell residents were not the only people faced with eviction and displacement around the same time. In 2017, the residents of 53 Albert Road in Woodstock were served with eviction notices. Many of the people at risk of eviction had already been evicted from Gympie Street, Woodstock, where a large number of apartments were slated to be demolished. Others had previously been homeless or were forced to leave other neighbourhoods during the forced removals of the 1960s–1980s. They faced the same situation again and expressed identical concerns as the Bromwell street residents. For example, in an interview with a journalist, a 13-year resident of Albert Street commented that life in Woodstock was convenient, with work and school nearby whereas, she said, “If we have to move to Wolwerivier it would be a setback in my life and for all my children” (Feni, 2017). Like the Bromwell street residents, the Albert Road residents challenged their eviction in court as a way of claiming their right to belong in the city (Feni, 2017).

The day after the protest event at the WEX Living launch, I accompanied a few members of Ndifuna Ukwazi, some of whom were White and others Black, to investigate whether people
still lived in the buildings across the street from the Woodstock Exchange slated to be torn down to make way for the new condominiums. Within 10 minutes of our arrival, a crowd of people gathered around us and explained that they did, in fact, live in the two buildings. They had all received eviction notices within the preceding 30 days; the respective landlords had shut off the water in one of the buildings, and electricity in the other. According to the residents, the former property owners promised the developers the apartments would be empty before they took possession. This is a frequent technique employed by landlords in South Africa, according to several members of Ndifuna Ukwazi. At the end of the meeting, a man said to me and a member of Ndifuna Ukwazi, “This is like apartheid only it’s not the colour of your skin, it’s the colour of your money,” alluding to the fact that present-day money and economics primarily drive the evictions, rather than race, as happened during apartheid. The member of Ndifuna Ukwazi responded, “Yes, instead of moving an entire neighbourhood, they are doing it one house at a time.” For the persistently poor underclass, evictions, and a lack of ability to choose where and how to live, are failures of substantive belonging.

Under apartheid, evictions by the state and private landowners were common, but the new constitution of South Africa makes it illegal to make someone homeless without following certain procedures. For instance, no one can be evicted without a court order. Section 26 of the

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23 The process to evict someone goes through the court system and is lengthy. First, the landlord must present the tenants with a notice to vacate, which cancels the lease for cause; this is not an eviction notice since those can only be issued by a judge. However, some tenants fear exercising their full legal rights or do not have the means to hire legal counsel, and others are unaware and sometimes view this notice to vacate as a notice of eviction and make the difficult decision to leave their residence at this point. However, tenants have the right to choose to oppose the notice to vacate and negotiate with the landlord to reinstate the lease (for example if the rent was in arrears, the tenants could make a payment schedule with the landlord). If the two parties cannot come to an agreement, the next step is to go to court to let the judge decide. At this stage, the tenants can still ask that the eviction notice be rescinded if they consider it to be unlawful or they can ask for more time to leave the property or they can ask the government to provide alternative emergency housing if they have no other options for relocation (OpenUp, 2021). For more details on the process, see “Know your rights: when can you be evicted and how?” (Marongo, 2018).
Constitution, which concerns housing rights, states, “No one may be evicted from their homes, or have their homes demolished, without an order of court made after considering all the relevant circumstances. No legislation may permit arbitrary evictions” (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, § 26 cl. 3). Certain factors must be taken into consideration by the judge issuing the eviction order, including “whether the occupiers include vulnerable people (such as the elderly, people living with disabilities, children, and woman-headed households); the duration of occupation; and whether the occupiers will be homeless as a result of the eviction” (Marongo, 2018, n.p). If the individuals being evicted will be made homeless and cannot afford accommodations, then it is the state’s obligation to provide alternative accommodations within the limits of its resources (Marongo, 2018). Along with the constitution, the ANC government has put in place other laws to protect citizens from unlawful eviction (Miraftab & Willis, 2005). Nevertheless, South Africa’s neoliberal-driven policies have affected its ability to live up to Section 26 of the constitution that says housing is a human right (Jenkins, 1999; Mackay, 1999; Miraftab, 2003; Tomlinson, 1999). Evictions have persisted in post-apartheid South Africa, which exposes the limits of laws to enable people to fully exercise their substantive rights to citizenship as they have been laid out in the post-apartheid constitution.

On a hot afternoon in Woodstock, Bromwell Street residents, community members, and members of Ndifuna Ukwazi prepared to hand out pamphlets in Woodstock to encourage members of the community to attend the court proceedings and offer their support for the tenants. I walked to meet the group on Bromwell Street and although I had not yet visited the area, I knew it was only a 10–15-minute walk from where I lived. There was very little shade and few people walking on the street. Those who were out clung to the narrow strips of shade as they walked or waited for the bus. As I turned onto the street, I could see the buildings looked broken
down and poorly maintained. The street was full of potholes and people were walking around it as if cars never passed. I recognized a woman from Ndifuna Ukwazi who was talking to a few women. They were standing in an empty lot adjacent to the street and were all wearing torn and threadbare clothing. In the open area there were a few water taps and about 10–15 chemical toilets, all looking a little run down with rubbish strewn about. Some of the women seemed to be just hanging out while others were using the outdoor tap to wash clothes or other things or to fill up containers. As I chatted with the group about the upcoming court case, I felt shocked that these women experienced such harsh living conditions in the city just 15 minutes away from my own (comfortable) home. The lack of running water in this case could be a direct or indirect result of illegal eviction tactics. In some cases, landlords have valid reasons to start eviction procedures but then carry out unlawful methods of forcing their tenants out more quickly (OpenUp, 2021).

Attempted evictions of residents with a verbal or written lease happen regularly for several reasons; it becomes an illegal eviction when the landlord does not follow required procedures or uses intimidation tactics or other nefarious methods to force residents out. For example, some of the residents and activists I spoke with explained that in an effort to force tenants out, a landlord will not maintain the property or will sometimes stop providing municipal services such as water, refuse collection, or sewerage when they are required in the lease to do so. In another case, some of the participants I spoke with expressed confusion about their rights, deadlines for eviction, and whether they were required to continue paying for utilities if they were waiting for eviction procedures. In spite of the robust legal protections available to tenants under the law, the practice of illegal evictions of residents with a legal lease continues in the post-apartheid period and is “being implemented on a daily basis […] by private landowners,
companies, and various levels and spheres of government” (du Plessis, 2005, p. 126). Evictions often target “poor and vulnerable communities living on the edge of legality under informal tenure arrangements, who are evicted, without consultation and without compensation or alternative housing” (Miraftab & Willis, 2005, p. 123).

Given that belonging is relational and rooted in sociality, the Bromwell Street tenants at risk of eviction were being shown they do not belong. They do not have the financial means to remain in the city given rising costs, lack of employment opportunity, and a combination of socio-economic factors rooted in historical inequality. As such they cannot compete with the increasing urbanization and the incoming capital investment that drives structural modes of belonging in this gentrifying area. Regardless of their sense of belonging, their poverty also makes them “hypervisible” (Ahmed 2007) and the politics of belonging in this gentrifying area marks them as outsiders in many spaces such as the Biscuit Mill. Ultimately, they are trying to address structural, systemic racism at its core, which can be hard to see and name. Wolwerivier is a physical manifestation of exclusion and a failure of belonging that represents the effects of racism and connections to history. As such, many of the Woodstock residents at risk of eviction whom I spoke with drew a direct parallel with the modern-day evictions and the forced removals of the past. They were dismayed that the municipal government was not acting to protect them from the structural forces that led to these evictions.

Once I was finished chatting with the group of women, I joined Andre, a member of Ndifuna Ukwazi, to distribute the pamphlets around Woodstock (see Appendix 4). We walked around the neighbourhood to speak with anyone who would stop and listen. Andre told each person he stopped that if they cared about Woodstock, they should come to the court on November 9th because “eventually, if the developments go unchecked, everyone will have to
leave.” He also emphasized the place where the Bromwell residents might be forced to relocate was very far from the city and not a suitable living situation. He was speaking of Wolwerivier. Andre explained passionately to another person he stopped that, “Wolwerivier is very remote. If you get hurt, you will die [as there are no nearby health facilities].” He stopped everyone we came across and would walk with them even as they tried to walk away until he was finished making his point. He left pamphlets in a sewing shop and other small businesses around the neighbourhood. The reaction from many of the businesses was sympathetic; many had heard of the case or knew people who were affected by it. In fact, one of the businesses Andre visited was an antique furniture store that had also been evicted and forced to move because its previous building was purchased by a new owner.

On the day of the court case, Ndifuna Ukwazi members and the tenants gathered at the courthouse early. They started unloading items they would be using to stage a protest on the court steps before going into the courtroom. They brought cardboard, paint, and paint brushes to make signs. They also brought a microphone and speaker and some T-shirts with a hand-printed slogan reading, “land for people not for profit.” As the assembled group put on the T-shirts, a tenant offered me one, which I initially declined out of concern there weren’t enough for everyone. Later Andre gave me one directly and told me to put it on. By offering me a T-shirt, Andre was extending an opportunity for me to show my support for the tenants while also presenting me with a marker of belonging to and showing support for the activist group. Although a few people sitting in the courtroom were White, namely some members of Ndifuna Ukwazi and some of the lawyers and media, the courtroom was mostly filled with Black people. Once offered a T-shirt, I felt it important to wear it at the court to, once again, use the privilege accorded me by my race and foreignness to signal my support of the plaintiffs.
The group sang protest songs while they waited for their hearing. They also chanted things like, “Reclaim our rights, reclaim our city, reclaim our land” while carrying signs with slogans such as, “Dismantle the colonial agenda” and “365 days of equality, we all belong here.” The chants as well as their signs were suggestive of a particular sense of belonging that they were using to stake a claim to life in the city. They placed the concept of equality alongside belonging, referring to the equality and freedom that has been promised under the post-apartheid government. Legal equality is a universal in the “new” South Africa and as such the assembled group were taking legal action to translate that into meaningful belonging. Given what awaits many of the tenants if they are forced to relocate to Wolwerivier, belonging represents more than having the ability to live in a particular place. On the most basic level, living in the city as a marker of belonging means being able to survive. When gentrification causes displacement to places like Wolwerivier, it has the potential to lead to crippling and lasting socio-economic exclusion similar to the effects of the forced removals of the past.

During the hearing, the judge extended the stay on evictions to give the residents time to apply for alternative affordable housing in the city, the next best option for the day because it meant they would not be evicted immediately. However, it fell short of granting them the right to “adequate” housing in the city. The lawyers for the Woodstock Hub were displeased and lamented the delays and costs their clients were incurring while the development project was stalled. They argued it was only the court’s mandate to decide whether they should be evicted, not where they should be allowed to live. The judge dismissed this concern, and court was adjourned until a further date a few months later, giving the residents more time to find alternative housing.
The consequences of eviction range from damage or destruction of property to the loss of livelihoods and social networks. In these cases, people are faced with few other options for living arrangements due to cost and location. There have also been documented cases of discrimination based on race by landlords (News 24, 2014; Simpson, 2021). In some cases, those who have been evicted have little choice but to resort to living in informal settlements. At a November 2016 colloquium for Urban Land Justice hosted by the District Six Museum and Ndifuna Ukwazi, several residents of informal settlements explained they were left with no options after being evicted, with not enough income to find housing; thus, they were forced to set up illegal and precarious settlements. Many were angry at the government for its failure to provide housing and services for the displaced. Not only do informal settlements lack proper sanitation and services, but certain areas of the townships frequently lack transportation and security. As low-income people from certain neighbourhoods in the city of Cape Town are being expelled to the outskirts (Lees et al., 2015), the city is failing to provide adequate service delivery to those areas, highlighting the unequal ways in which some are able to exercise their rights compared to others. While it is not a right to live anywhere one wants, for many Black people in Cape Town, their options and ability to exercise them are constrained in a way that most White people’s are not. As such, these “rights” get shaped by economic and sociopolitical inequities and varied forms of belonging.

Informal and formal discussions about the Bromwell Street evictions raised questions about perceptions of race and class that tangibly translated into who belongs in the city, who has the right to decide who can belong, and what belonging means. On January 31, 2017, during a hearing for the Bromwell case, presiding judge Leslie Weinkove made comments that revealed the pervasive nature of racial and class prejudice in Cape Town. The judge asked the plaintiff’s
lawyers, “What’s the point of being near a school? What’s the point of them [the Bromwell residents] being near transport? Where are they going to go?” (Evans, 2017). His comments imply he feels the residents are not functional members of society and so have no need for transport to and from the city or schools. For the judge, the ability to live and work in the city was not a consideration as he could not understand why the residents would need these things in the first place. Later, as he looked at a list of alternative accommodations for the displaced compiled by the tenants’ spokesperson, Charnell Commando, he said:

> What’s her name? Charnell? She is a kitchen assistant in Observatory and now she’s an expert. She doesn’t know what the budget of the city council is; she doesn’t know what money they get. She doesn’t know this stuff; she is a kitchen assistant. (Evans, 2017)

Judge Weinkove’s attitude toward the residents illustrates how people’s ability to achieve substantive belonging is constrained by the prejudices and assumptions of those who hold power to make decisions that impact their lives in fundamental ways. It also exposes the assumptions made by the judge based on Ms. Charnell’s place of employment. He immediately equated her status as a manual labourer not only with being uneducated and uninformed, but also as reason to disregard her opinion on being relocated. In his view, her class precluded her from being able to speak on her community’s behalf. His attitude underscores how deeply connected gentrification is with wealth and also, in most cases, with whiteness; which is to say those who benefit are generally White and wealthy, whereas those who are hurt by gentrification are generally Black and poor. Following his remarks, an attorney representing the fisheries department requested Judge Weinkove be removed from a different case “concerning fishing quotas for poor communities,” saying his comments, if correctly reported, “reflect a particular bias, which is against the values of the constitution” (Pather, 2017b). Judge Weinkove is White, and the extensive media coverage of his controversial remarks usually included photographs of him. This
indicates to all readers the bias he is being accused of is racially motivated rather than simply class-based. A few weeks after the controversy, the judge recused himself from the high-profile case (Sesant, 2017). Then, in September 2017, he stepped down from the Bromwell case, and Judge Mark Sher took over.

The court case received a very mixed response in Woodstock. Some stood in solidarity with the tenants; others felt the tenants should leave and have no legal recourse. For example, a business owner at the Biscuit Mill said the residents had apparently not been paying their rent, and as a result, they should be evicted; the tenants’ ability to belong hinged solely on their ability to pay rent for their homes. For the business owner, their long history of living in the area, their feelings of belonging, and their ties to the community were not relevant criteria to consider in deciding whether to evict them or not. Absent in her reflection was a consideration for where many of them would be forced to move, what the conditions they would encounter, and the underlying power structures that dictate their lack of opportunity or choice. For the residents, the question of belonging did not hinge on whether they could or should pay their rent. The tenants argued instead that based on their history of living in the area and their attachment to place, they belong in the city, not on the outskirts, and they feel it is the state’s job to ensure they do not get forced out, even in the face of shifting economic and social pressures.

The residents leaned heavily on the sense of belonging afforded to them within the new power structures of post-apartheid government to articulate their various claims of being equal citizens in the state precisely because the stakes were nothing short of being able to exist in a place rather than being relegated to an underserved camp for the poor. The residents were also claiming their right to a basic form of existence beyond what Agamben (1998) refers to as a “bare life,” a condition that leaves people divested of political status, reduced to the barest
subsistence, and vulnerable to forms of violence. Although a very different context than my research, Mbembe’s work that expands on Agamben’s work, writes about the intersection of state sovereignty and death. He argues that beyond death individuals also experience social and political death if they are unable to have sovereignty over their bodies and make their own determinations with respect to boundaries and limitations. In these circumstances, he argues that individuals are not alive because their autonomy has been removed by the state. The residents were claiming the right to a place that is safe, secure, with reasonable proximity to work, school, and other services, such as transportation and medical care. Pushed to the extreme, they and others in their situation were trying to avoid what Achille Mbembe calls “the status of the living dead” (2003, p. 40).

On November 18, 2020, the judgement for the Bromwell Street court case was reserved by the judge, which means that all relevant evidence and oral presentation and submissions were presented to the courts and the judge considered all evidence to make his decision (Charles, 2020a). On September 7, 2021, Judge Sher ruled that the City of Cape Town’s emergency housing program was unconstitutional. He is quoted in a news article as saying: “In my view the differentiation in treatment which the City’s emergency housing programme affords to homeless evictees in the inner City, and in Woodstock and Salt River in particular, is not only unreasonable but also irrational, because it is arbitrary in its implementation” (Broughton, 2021). The judge ordered the city to report back in four months with the progress it had made in finding suitable accommodation for the families. The city of Cape Town appealed the court’s decision in November 2021 (Williams, 2021). The case was transferred to the Supreme Court of Appeals in Bloemfontein and in late November 2022, the court heard the case (Ntseku, 2022). The years-long court battle means that most Bromwell residents did not move to Wolwerivier but they also
have not been able to secure a legal right to remaining in the city in their Woodstock units. Until the case is resolved, their only option has been to find alternative accommodations for themselves. In fact, several families have already moved out of their homes and now live in the Cape Flats. Other former residents moved into the abandoned Woodstock Hospital and are illegally occupying it. The remaining six families were allowed to remain in their homes while the court makes its decision (Ntseku, 2022).

Conclusion

In this chapter I examined belonging in the context of displacement and argued that despite the complete change of government in 1994 and all the promise that entailed, the long history of evictions of poor, Black residents is recurring in ways many argue are parallel to the forced removals of apartheid. There are clear differences between the two types of displacement; rather than being completely similar, this linkage is, on one level, affective rhetoric aimed at sparking a reaction and action by the post-apartheid state. But for many of the evicted and displaced residents I spoke with, this connection is also a deeply felt recurrence of apartheid-era traumas of displacement and discrimination, and a stark reminder that the equality promised during the transition to democracy has not manifested significant change for many in need of urban housing. Cases like the Bromwell Street evictions are a small part of the larger housing problem in and around Cape Town and beyond. Not only have removees like the District Sixers been largely unable to return to the city, but there are also new forms of exclusion low-income residents from all over the city are fighting against. The government of Cape Town is once again permitting the tacit removal of people who do not fit within the vision of the “new” Cape Town that is being redeveloped.
The people of Bromwell Street were not only fighting to remain in the city because this option presented the most realistic possibility for thriving as compared to a camp like Wolwerivier. They were also fighting against much broader effects of neoliberal policies and gentrification that have exacerbated poverty, housing, and job security in the city while also increasing the racialized class difference between White and Black people. The displacement of people was recognized by Judge Sher, who presided over the Bromwell case after Judge Weinkove recused himself following public outcry. In court in 2018, Judge Sher said, “We are still exporting the poorest of the poor to the periphery—people of colour and Black people who are unable to afford housing…. The result is that we are still giving effect to the legacy of spatial apartheid” (Stent, 2020). When speaking about the court proceedings, Ndifuna Ukwazi asserted “it’s very clear that the province and the City of Cape Town did not take reasonable steps to combat spatial apartheid in central Cape Town. There is no denial that both the province and City are not working together on the development of housing” (Charles, 2021b).

For the Bromwell residents, the uncertainty and lack of power to fight exclusion are very similar to victims’ experiences of forced removal 50 years ago. Understanding how those forcibly removed under apartheid have processed the loss of their land and their communities is key to understanding the difficulties facing the evictees from Bromwell Street, not only on a level of affective belonging but more importantly as an example of the type of structural violence that occurs when a group of people are stripped of political status and left to live a ‘bare life’.

Considering the many challenges the District Six removees have faced, it is easy to understand

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24 Although it is beyond the scope of my focus, it is important to note that government corruption or mismanagement may significantly contribute to the problems related to housing. A recent report released by Corruption Watch (South Africa needs Clean Hands, 2021) indicates “According to whistle-blowers, corruption has exacerbated the ubiquitous backlog problems experienced by those who have applied for subsidised [sic] housing” (p. 12).
why the Bromwell Street residents are resistant to being pushed out to places like Wolwerivier. The Bromwell evictees and many others just like them are fighting to remain in the city. Their narratives are similar to those from District Six about their happy lives in Woodstock, as well as fears and sadness about having to leave their homes and neighbourhoods the way removees did 50 years ago. The residents are left with few housing options in the city, and a move to Wolwerivier will likely result in similar exclusion from the city and community that apartheid-era removals created. One Woodstock resident told me he felt the only difference between the two types of removals was that the forces requiring them to leave the neighbourhood now are economic rather than explicitly racial. While he is correct in that there is no overarching law that has entrenched the removal of a certain type of people based on race from an area, there is no denying that the racialized nature of class in South Africa highly influences the urban development happening in Cape Town and, by extension, who is able to belong and live. In this context, belonging somewhere becomes linked to quality of life, social connection, and dignity.
Introduction

In Chapter 4, I argued that space is organized, regulated, and constrained by race and class, which influences the way belonging is constructed. The ways people behave and circulate in space are constantly sending messages to others about belonging, either confirming or denying their right to belong comfortably in that space. Chapter 5 examined the forced removals of the apartheid era and present-day gentrification-led displacement to show the circumstances under which belonging can become entangled with quality of life and well-being. Together these chapters reveal that even with structural and affective changes in post-apartheid South Africa, there are still forces and processes that reproduce spatial apartheid and keep people in racialized and classed positions.

Although post-apartheid restitution in Cape Town has made strides in addressing land inequality through the land claims process, it has not been adequate in helping claimants in their efforts to achieve substantive belonging, which is the ability to belong to a place both formally (such as with citizenship) and affectively (feeling a sense of belonging). Together this means that one not only has the right to belong to a place but also feels a deep attachment to that place while also feeling at home and welcome. Chapters 4 and 5 expose the limits of legal and economic policies in repairing the immaterial and structural inequalities and prejudices that stem from apartheid and earlier colonization as well as their inability to correct the ongoing racialized politics of belonging that shape people’s senses of who belongs and who does not. This chapter focuses on the land claims process, one of the key strategies for material redress employed by the post-apartheid government to illustrate how these dynamics make the restitution and reconciliation process particularly difficult for claimants trying to return to their site of removal.
Examine two high-profile community land claims cases through the lens of belonging—one based out of Protea Village and the other out of District Six—exposes parts of the land claims process that hinder the claimants’ ability to achieve restitution and substantive belonging.

**Land claims**

The land claims program in South Africa is an initiative spearheaded by the ANC government that aims to address the wrongs of the past on a national scale while also signaling a more inclusive mode of belonging where land ownership is concerned. Beginning in 1995, those who were part of the forced removals after 1913 were able to lodge a land claim against the state. In 1996, the Land Claims Court was established as a High Court specializing in legal proceedings related to land reform in South Africa, which included the Restitution of Land Rights Act of 1994, the Land Reform (Labour Tenants) Act of 1996, and the Extension of Security of Tenure Act of 1997 (The Land Claims Court of South Africa, 2019). The claims process targets “all individuals and communities who were dispossessed of their right to land as a result of racially discriminatory laws and practices after June 1913, and who missed the initial cut-off date of 31 December 1998” (The Land Claims Court of South Africa, 2019).25 According to the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform’s website, to be eligible for a claim, one must be “a person or a community that was dispossessed of a right in land after 19 June 1913 as a result of past racially discriminatory laws or practices, and who did not receive just and equitable compensation at the time of dispossession” (Frequently Asked Questions [FAQ], (n.d.) para 4). Potential claimants are required to complete a claim form and provide documentation to support their claim to help determine whether they have a right to that land. Such proof includes

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25 The original deadline for potential claimants to lodge a claim was December 31, 1998. However, it became evident that many claimants had not lodged a claim by that date, and in 2014, the state re-opened the land claims process with a new deadline of June 30, 2019 (The Land Claims Court of South Africa, 2019). The deadline has now passed, and no new claims are being accepted.
“research; documentation from archives; deeds registration; information relating to companies; as well as information relating to land dispossessions (by whom and how they were carried out)” (FAQ, (n.d.) para 15). The land claims process applies to land-owners as well as tenants. The context of colonialism and apartheid rarely allowed the granting of legal title to land to African, Coloured, and Asian residents and as such, the land claims process formally recognizes that being able to prove long-term occupation in a particular place constitutes a legal right to belong to that place. This indicates that the post-apartheid government is making formal attempts to redress past injustices that may eventually close the gaps of substantive belonging.

Approximately 80,000 land claims were lodged by the 1998 cut-off date. “As of 2019, 60,319 of those claims have been finalised. The Commission on Restitution of Land Rights has so far awarded 30.8 billion ZAR (2.8 billion CAD) for the restitution program” (Commission on Restitution of Land Rights, 2019). Since re-opening the claims process in 2014, over 55,000 new land claims have been lodged (Commission on Restitution of Land Rights, 2019). This means the government has processed less than half the claims filed from 1995, when the process began. While the process has been criticized for being slow and not sufficiently prioritized, the achievements of the program are significant; Walker et al. (2010, p.14) argue the “official national numbers are very poor indicators of what is actually happening in projects at the local level” (p.14).

The land claims discussed in this chapter are “community-based”, which means a community of displaced people work together to stake a claim to the land they were removed from. One of the main ways a community claim is managed is with a Communal Property Association (CPA). The Communal Property Associations Act 28/1996 allows for community members to apply to the Director-General of Rural Development and Land Reform and register a
community property association that has the authority to hold land and manage property. There is an official record of the names and identifying documents of each member, and elections must be held for a governing committee. The CPA Act also has rules that allow for dissolution of the CPA if it is insolvent or not administered properly (Barry, 2011, p.140).

Once a claim is awarded, a claimant or claimant group has four options: 1) reclaim their original land if it is available; 2) receive monetary compensation by the state for the lost property; 3) claim alternative state land if it is available and the original land is not; 4) choose to get priority access to state housing and land if available (Beyers 2007, p 273). Once a claimant group has been awarded land, that land must be developed. Developing a land claims site is a complex process that includes managing stakeholders, finances, and bureaucracy. It falls primarily to the claimants to manage the development of the land for residential or commercial purposes. As a result, many of the early land claimants struggled to properly manage the land they were awarded by the state (Barry, 2011).

In addition to these issues, land claims cases that settle land outside the city or that provide monetary compensation rather than land in the city do not positively influence the rebalancing of housing, property, and demographics in cities like Cape Town. This is because the government has chosen so far not to expropriate land to provide land for claimants. The land provided is already empty and owned by the state. Secondary claims sites and financial settlements do not address the lack of affordable land and housing, which is a particular problem in urban areas (Beyers, 2013). Similarly, monetary settlements are problematic for the larger...

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26 The current president of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, has said that he plans to expropriate land without compensation by amending the constitution to redistribute land that is in the hands of White to Black people (Clark, 2019; SABC, 2021). The ANC, Ramaphosa’s party, sees this as a way to redress inequality that stems from the apartheid era (Mkokeli, 2018). This planned policy has fueled already existing tensions over land ownership and belonging, for example with White farmers asserting their rights to the land and their strong sense of belonging and Khoisan people asserting their Indigenous status and ancestral claims to land (Smith, 2019).
mission of addressing the unequal division of space, housing, and land in the city. Most of the desirable land in an urban area was appropriated for use by White people under apartheid and as a result of the way the land claims process has been organized and legislated, there has been limited success in addressing the geographical legacies of these policies. In an urban setting, Beyers suggests the challenges that many claims face is the “tangle of red tape, political obstruction, and/or conflicts among claimants” (2013, p. 967).

Barry (2011) has detailed the Elandskloof land claims case; Elandskloof is located about an hour and a half west of Cape Town by car and is well-known as the first parcel of land to be returned to claimants by the government in 1996. The state was eager to return the land, and many steps were left out, such as ensuring the list of members for the claim was accurate and complete. Instead, the state turned over the land to the Elandskloof CPA, who spent years trying to finalize their membership list. The site has also been plagued with problems, mismanagement, and infighting. In some cases, the conflicts generated in post-settlement communities have led to violent and deadly consequences (Barry, 2011). Barry (2011) explains:

“The claimants in the Elandskloof case expected the government to provide housing and infrastructure, including waste management and engineering services, electricity, and telecommunications as part of the restitution that accompanies the land claim. These additional measures would have ensured claimants a minimum standard of living on the site. This did not happen, and many felt angry that the restitution process remained incomplete in their eyes” (p.140).

Many claimants have ongoing concerns that have not been addressed, such as creating self-sufficient modes of operation and management that would allow the community to adequately self-govern the claim site (Barry, 2011, p. 140).

Barry (2011) argues, “Elandskloof illustrates the difficulties involved in reconstructing a community and developing a communally based social and economic entity in the aftermath of the peaceful resolution of a conflict” (p. 140). The underlying socioeconomic structures that stem
from the apartheid era have been slowly dismantled, and this means meaningful change—both materially and socially—have been equally slow. The Elandskloof case shows that developing a thriving community that has the ability to exercise their substantive rights conferred by the land claims process has proved challenging because the process is built on the structural remnants of the unequal apartheid system. Walker (2008) questions whether it is even possible to restore a community the way the land restitution process promises. The divergent experiences and interests of claimants make it very difficult to “restore” a community that has been dispossessed (Kepe, 1999; Hall, 2004). In the intervening years between displacement and return, much has changed in society at large, as well as within the claimant groups. These circumstances influence feelings of belonging and might make it difficult to re-establish a community. As the cases below will reveal, returning land is only a small part of repairing substantive belonging for those who were forcibly removed from their land.

By awarding land and transferring the land title to claimants, the claim is finalized from the perspective of the government. Many involved in the Elandskloof case, including researchers, have been critical of the government’s assertion that the restitution process has been a success. They feel the state’s responsibility extends far beyond simply returning the land to the claimants (Barry, 2011, p. 140). Walker et.al. (2010) argue, “the restoration of land as the formal settlement of a claim marks not the end of the restitution road but an early stage in an ongoing and often extremely complex process of community reconstruction” (p. 15). Land ownership by claimants is part of establishing a territorial mode of belonging to a site and contributes to the country’s project of redress; but returning land does not address other structural and affective modes of belonging. It also does not address other forms of material losses and it does not significantly diminish ongoing racialized and systemic poverty in the country (Kepe, 2012;
James, 2000). Furthermore, the legal transfer of land does not address the ongoing racial and class inequality created during colonization, which impacts claimants’ ability to exercise their sense of belonging to their land claims site. The transfer of land to claimants, although important, is often only the beginning of the process, which is riddled with challenges and potential pitfalls. Much of the failure of land claims sites to thrive after the handover is attributed to a lack of government support (Barry, 2011, p. 140), which underscores the important role of the state in continuing to assist claimants, as well as the complex nature of restitution and belonging that extends well beyond the transfer of the land title.

Land is only a part of shaping both material and immaterial restitution. The two land claims sites discussed below are in the process of being developed so claimants can live on the land. They illustrate the ways a community can continue to foster a sense of belonging in the absence of land while also showing the compromises to belonging many have had to face to achieve even a part of restitution.

Protea Village Land Claim

Protea Village is located across the street from the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden, and borders two neighbourhoods: Bishopscourt and Fernwood. The Protea site was a highly desirable area in Cape Town and as a result, the apartheid government forcibly removed approximately 600-800 people from Protea Village beginning in 1966. The families were relocated to the Cape Flats in high-density urban suburbs in places like Lotus River and Steenberg, among others. Most of the residents’ former homes were destroyed after their removal, and newer multi-story, high-end homes on large lots were built on the land by incoming White residents. Today, wealthy South Africans, as well as foreign diplomats, live in the area, which is one of the most expensive and exclusive neighborhoods in the region.
Figure 13 shows an aerial view of Bishopscourt and Protea Village while Figure 14 shows an aerial view of Lotus River. The scales of the two images are the same, and as such, the differences between the two places are stark. In Bishopscourt each large estate home is surrounded by a large inner yard and trees, providing separation from the properties next door. There are ample woods and open spaces for the local residents to enjoy, and the proximity of the botanical gardens provides clean air and a large and beautiful public space to visit. Lotus River, on the other hand, has homes and businesses in much more densely packed lots. There is little green space, and what little open space is present is made up of empty, greying fields or covered in concrete. Figure 15 shows the population density of Cape Town. Bishopscourt falls within the least populated category marked in light yellow, reflecting 1-3 inhabitants per square kilometer. Lotus River is deep red indicating 3,000 inhabitants per square kilometer.

FIGURE 13 AERIAL VIEW OF BISHOPSCOURT, FERNWOOD, AND PROTEA VILLAGE

Source: Google maps 2021
FIGURE 14 AERIAL VIEW OF LOTUS RIVER

Source Google maps 2021
When the Protea claimants were forcibly removed in the 1960s, they were expelled outright from their land. The creation of the arboretum by the new residents of the neighbourhood was a subtle and temporarily successful way of eliminating traces of Protea residents’ past occupation of—and thus potential entitlement to—the land. While there is always an outsider and insider where belonging is concerned (Schein 2009, p. 813), the creation of the arboretum and the eventual court case against the claimants are concerted exclusionary practices designed to keep the claimants from returning to their land. In addition to these orchestrated acts against them, the Protea Village claimants have been further disempowered and excluded as they negotiate the significant gap in wealth and socioeconomic

Source: adapted from Statistics South Africa 2011
status between them and their neighbours. Given this, as they make plans to return to their land, the Protea Village claimants are also considering how best to fit in with the neighbourhood, both materially in the form of houses that look like they belong to the place, and immaterially in the way they behave and live.

The Protea Village claimants are in the process of redeveloping the land claim site they were awarded so many of the families who were forcibly removed in the 1960s will be able to move back and live on the site. In actively planning to return to Protea Village, the claimants have decided to sell part of their land to finance the construction of their homes, and they face many pressures to conform to racialized, class-based norms and practices to fit into the wealthy neighbourhood more easily. These constraints shape how they will be able to rebuild their community, as well as how they construct a sense of belonging.

In March of 1995, members of the displaced community formed the Protea Village Action Campaign (PROVAC) after they attended a reunion to manage the land claims application. After they won the land claim, they hired a consultant to help with the development of the site. The former residents placed advertisements in the newspaper to reach members of their community dispersed around Cape Town and beyond who might be interested in filing for the land claim. In September 1995, PROVAC filed a land claim on behalf of its community of 132 claimants (Bohlin, 2011). In 2002, 46 families opted for a financial settlement of 17,500 ZAR (2310 CAD at the time). A member of PROVAC shared that many opted for the financial settlement because they had a more immediate need for the money, some did not believe the site would be redeveloped so they could return, and others were not interested in uprooting themselves again. Even still, many felt that the sum of money offered to claimants does not seem sufficient given the quality of the land they were forced to leave and the resulting trauma and
difficulties they faced. Eighty-six families opted to resettle the land. The community won the land claim against the government in 2002, and the land transfer occurred in 2006. The total size of the land returned is 12.5 hectares (Bohlin, 2014, p.100). The site is divided into two erven: E212, which contains the arboretum described previously, and E242, which has three stone cottages that remained after the evictions (Bohlin, 2014, p. 103). The South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) owns part of the land as it is directly across from the Kirstenbosch Garden and is involved in helping develop the site (see Baduza, 2007 for a detailed history of Protea).

After the community won the land claim, they began to plan its development with the help of a development company. However, in 2007, they were taken to court by neighbouring residents who opposed the redevelopment. William Booth, a lawyer and resident of Bishopscourt at the time, spearheaded the court case for both the Bishopscourt and Fernwood residents’ associations. The neighbours felt they should have a legal right to be consulted about the redevelopment of land that bordered their property. Through the court case and armed with their historically rooted sense of power and authority, the neighbourhood residents were attempting to draw the boundaries of belonging to exclude the claimants once again. They argued they were “interested parties” and as such, should have a say in what happens to the land. According to Cedrik van Dieman, the head of PROVAC, Booth and the other residents were afraid the claimants would build small, poorly constructed homes that would bring down the value of the other homes in the neighbourhood. Their assumption was based on the class of the claimants and

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27 There is a second community land claim for Protea Village that was made once the government allowed new claims to be made from 2014 to 2019. The secondary land claim, filed in 2014, will not affect the claims the original claimants made, nor will it affect redevelopment plans. At this time no updates are available on the status of the second claim.

28 Erf (pl. Erven) is a legal term in South Africa meaning a piece of land in a deeds registry.
presumably on the conditions of the homes in the Cape Flats. Booth and the others associated the living conditions of the claimants—which were created by the forced removals—as a core part of their cultural make-up, meaning that given the chance, the claimants would choose to reproduce their living conditions in the Cape Flats, which would be profoundly undesirable for the residents of Bishopscourt and Fernwood. The Protea claimants were put in the position of defending their legal right to belong to the site once again, only this time they were facing bias and exclusion from their present-day neighbours rather than apartheid-era policies. In this case, as soon as the claimants won a material victory, they were faced with a material and symbolic challenge to their right to belong and live on the site.

The reality of returning to neighbourhoods like Bishopscourt, where wealthy, mostly White people took over the neighbourhood, has been difficult for other claimants. Hartfield Village is another Cape Town site of forced removal that became a desirable location for White people during apartheid and was restored to some of those displaced. In Siona O’Connell’s documentary film An Impossible Return, an elderly Coloured man explained that he has returned to Hartfield Village but he feels like he is being scrutinized. He said, “I’m back in the area, people who greet me, they make remarks: ‘What are they doing here?’ Well, they don’t know the history. I was born here” (O’Connell, 2015). The claimant feels the neighbourhood has not been an open and welcoming place and that his presence had been met with suspicion and scrutiny. Despite possessing the legal right to belong to the claim site, he experiences exclusionary attitudes from his (White) neighbours rooted in the particular apartheid-era politics of belonging that were also applied to the group of people assembled at the park in Woodstock or at the beach at Clifton.
The Protea Village court case attempting to block the claimants’ return lasted from 2007–2011. Although the claimants ultimately won the court case, they were forced to put all plans for relocation and development on hold during the legal battle. One of the PROVAC members shared that Booth attempted to appeal the decision but abandoned the project due to lack of funds and support from the Fernwood Residents Association. Booth has since sold his house and moved out of Bishopscourt. According to the head of the Protea Residents Committee, the Fernwood Residents Association now has a good relationship with the Protea Village claimants and is supportive of their return. In fact, they have a page on their website that acknowledges the painful history of the site.29

Although the Protea land claim was awarded in 2006, 11 years after they filed it, the community had not yet taken possession of the land to avoid paying for property rights and maintenance fees until they are ready to manage it actively. David White, one of the PROVAC members, explained many land claims have a 10-year “tax holiday,” but once that period is over, the claimants must pay taxes. They have opted for this strategy to ensure they can save money, execute the redevelopment, and return to the site when they have set it up so it will be successful and sustainable. Along with the land, a state grant of 30-32 million ZAR (26.4-28.1 million CAD in 2016) was awarded to a communal property association to contribute to the costs of developing the land, but it would not be enough to finance the entire project. The community decided to subdivide the land into three sections and sell one of the subdivisions to help finance the project in addition to the grant.

Community Meeting

The Protea Village land claims site is a beautiful green space amid huge and opulent houses that are hidden behind large fences just outside the city center of Cape Town. There are low fences around many of the plots that seem to denote that this land belongs to someone and is not truly vacant. The low-fenced areas mark the land owned by the Protea claimants. As I walked through the site with Mr. van Dieman, the head of PROVAC, he pointed out where he used to live and where the community school had been, attached to the church. He stopped and showed me where the original steps to the school still stood. As we left, he drove us past a few homes now owned by others that were left standing after the removals of the 1960s and 1970s and subsequent demolitions. The homes looked like they had been modernized. Next to these houses was an original corner store dating back to when he used to live there.

As we continued to drive past, Mr. van Dieman pointed to a sign that said “Arboretum” and explained that the municipality had decided to establish an arboretum in 1990 because the land had been vacant for decades. He shared that the neighbouring residents hoped this change would prevent the claimants from building on the land. At the time, the Protea claimants tried to intervene with the municipality to block the arboretum but they were unsuccessful. Then, in an attempt at compromise, the Protea claimants requested it be called the Protea Arboretum, but their request was not granted, and it is now simply called Arboretum.

A month after meeting Mr. van Dieman, I attended a community meeting held between the claimants and developers they hired to build their new homes. During this meeting, the discussion of the strategies required to successfully develop the land were permeated by the nuances of constructing a new sense of belonging for the community. The type of houses to be built, their layouts, and how the homes will be managed are all ways the community is
constructing a sense of belonging. There are many people involved in the redevelopment of the Protea Village site. The steering committee oversees managing the site development\(^{30}\) and is charged with ensuring the claimants are consulted when there is a decision to be made. When I met with the community, they had been working with a new property development firm, Bethel Partners—run by Daniel Philip and his partner, Richard Glass—for approximately two months. The previous developers had been let go because they did not meet the community’s expectations or needs. Although he did not discuss it at great length, Mr. van Dieman explained the first developers the group hired were not responsive to the needs of the community with respect to the delicate balance they felt needed to be struck between building homes that were suitable to the claimants that would also fit in with the neighbourhood. In particular, the claimants were looking for a developer that would be able to negotiate the financial complexities of the project with the entangled socio-historic context. They did not feel the first developer had enough understanding of the delicate situation the claimants found themselves in.

PROVAC held a meeting with all claimants on April 23, 2016, at St. Augustine Church, in Lotus River, part of the Cape Flats, one of the townships where many of the residents were relocated. Like most properties in South Africa, the church had a large gate around the building and parking lot. As I walked into the vestibule, I saw a woman with her two young children and some older men and women. The church’s main hall was relatively small. There was a stage at the back, the walls were covered in wood paneling, and burgundy plastic chairs were lined up facing the front of the hall. Poster-sized printouts of development plans, land usages boundaries, architectural plans, and photographs of houses were displayed on the walls.

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\(^{30}\) Representatives from the municipal government, public works, the land claims commission, and a 4–5 person residents’ (claimants) committee make up the steering committee. They must all agree on the development plan, and as such, each of the other three parties has one vote while the residents have the equivalent of four votes.
Committee members and the developers were still hanging up some of the plans as more people arrived. With the exception of the two developers, the architect, the town planner, the financial adviser who worked with the developers, and me, everyone was Coloured or African. People greeted each other, and Mr. van Dieman was shaking hands with many of the new arrivals.

PROVAC gathered the claimants for the purpose of granting Bethel Partners power of attorney so the firm could begin construction of the site on the community’s behalf. This would allow the developers to make decisions quickly, since they would not have to consult the entire community each time they had to make a decision. The power of attorney would be granted first from the community to the steering committee, and then from the steering committee to the developers. The developers explained later in the meeting that they were doing it that way to ensure the steering committee retains ultimate control over the decisions relating to the development. This way, if the relationship between the community and the developers were to sour, the steering committee would have the ability to revoke the power of attorney from the developers and restore control to the community. Mr. van Dieman and several other community members I spoke with stressed the importance of retaining control of the land, since their rights and land were taken away originally. Until the houses are built and the claimants return, owning land is one of the only tangible parts of the restitution process and an important symbol of their right to belong.

The meeting began with a prayer, the first part in English and then in Afrikaans. Then Mr. van Dieman, who was chairing the meeting, had all the claimants stand, as well as those acting as proxies for claimants, and counted them; there were 53 claimants and 11 proxies. The meeting was one claimant short of the 65 required for a quorum for decision-making. Everyone started to look around, and then finally, a woman walked in. There were a few barely audible
chuckles. The meeting could officially begin. Mr. van Dieman began by addressing the group. As a retired Anglican minister, he seemed to be very comfortable speaking to the crowd and commanded their attention. He spoke about the claim, saying, “It is the 21st year of the claim being launched. If I had known it was going to take so long, I may not have embarked on this journey.” Nevertheless, he stressed, he was glad he had, since they were starting to see the fruits of their labour.

During the meeting, the steering committee explained a land assessment had been done to plan for construction of houses on the site. Additionally, a tree survey was carried out to try to keep all the mature trees and design the new village around the trees to make it appear like an organically built neighbourhood rather than a new development. The desire to make the neighbourhood seem organic was driven by the notion that it would make the new homes and their homeowners appear as though they had always been there. In addition to being aesthetically appealing, the trees would provide shade, a natural windbreak, and the psychological benefits of nature, a marked difference from the accommodations many of them were initially offered on the Cape Flats. In addition, it would accomplish two significant things: first, it would shield the Protea Village claimants from criticism that their new homes do not fit with the look and feel of the homes near them, thus eliminating the appearance of difference and allowing the claimants to adhere to the area’s politics of belonging. This is perhaps also rooted in the notion that it is “civilized” to care for the environment and the racist notions that Black people are less able than White people to care for the environment. This is ironic, given that the creation of an arboretum was used to try to exclude them from the land. Second, having trees symbolically allows the Protea Village claimants to reclaim one of the only parts of their land that remains intact from the time of their removal. The community cannot change the fact that they were forced to leave
or that they are less wealthy than their neighbours, but they are strategically, and with the guidance of the developers they hired, planning their new village to make it feel like a community that belongs to them.

Daniel Philip and Richard Glass went on to detail the development plan and the layout of the houses. Mr. Philip spoke about the process of land claims and development as a journey through a tunnel saying, “There is an end to the tunnel.” He explained what had been decided up to that point, starting with the designs for the houses they would be building. The committee had originally suggested constructing single-dwelling homes, but they had to abandon that plan due to the high cost related to building the type of homes they wanted. The steering committee then proposed the community build row houses, a style that features homes built one right next to the other. Row houses typically share a common wall with houses on either side; it is a very popular style in Woodstock and other suburbs of Cape Town. Row housing would maximize the number of single dwelling homes that could be built in the area but it would also mean the only way to access the back of the house and courtyard would be by walking through the house. The community rejected the idea at one of the earlier meetings with the developers because they wanted to be able to get to the back of each house from outside. The steering committee next proposed semi-detached style homes, and the community accepted this. The houses will be built as an estate and have gates all around, similar to a gated community. This means each home would have a yard, and the entire development would be surrounded by a wall with one or two gated entrances to the land. Each family can choose to have two or three bedrooms, and there is an option to have a mezzanine if they want to pay for it. The outside of each home would be identical, and there would be development guidelines to “maintain value.” However, each family could customize the inside of their home.
It was clear from the way the development team was presenting the project that the steering committee had done a very good job of ensuring the project would be viable, sustainable, and desirable, both in the short- and long-term. With every action the community took, they tried to ensure that in the end, the project would be something everyone could benefit from and enjoy. At stake was not just the material return of the claimants, but also the financial viability of the project, as well as the more complex task of reinstating their ability to belong to the land, both materially and immaterially.

According to Mr. van Dieman, several considerations had to be managed at once to ensure the overall success of the project. First, as part of the terms of their CPA, the claimants have a 10-year title deed restriction, which means they cannot sell their houses for 10 years once they take possession, but they can rent them out. After 10 years, it is expected the houses will be worth several million Rand (616,000 CAD in 2016). The goal of limiting the premature sale of the homes was to foster a sense of community amongst the claimants who moved back. Mr. van Dieman explained, “This way, you can’t have a claimant’s young son selling the property for cash right away. We want people who return to live here.”

Second, they meticulously planned how the parcels of land would be used. Mr. Glass talked about two different plots of land that make up the claim. Because the claimants have not taken legal possession of their claims site, the first is E242, which is currently owned by the Department of Public Works. This is the section of their land where the claimants will live and totals 12.5 hectares. They intend to build 43 units of semi-detached houses for the claimants on E242, which would be 80–100m² each for the 86 different claimant families. In this first section,

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31 Under the conditions of the Communal Property Associations Act 28 of 1996, the constitution of the CPA must dictate membership rights including “whether members may sell their rights and, if so, to whom” (The Land Claims Court of South Africa, 1996). When setting up the CPA, the Protea Village claimants decided the terms they would need to follow.
11 stands will be reserved for the construction of additional houses that will be sold on the market. The goal of these 11 additional houses is for the claimants to be able to gauge the value of their homes during the 10 years they cannot sell their homes as per the land claims settlement. E212, meanwhile, is still technically owned by the city of Cape Town. It is this area that will be subdivided, and a section of land sold to help finance the construction of the claimant’s homes. The other section of E212 will be leased to a private school for approximately 50 million ZAR (44 million CAD in 2016) for a 99-year lease.

Third, the construction of a school on the claimant’s land provides a few important benefits, one of which is the money the community will get from leasing the land. However, the construction of the school was not a simple process. In one of my earlier conversations with Mr. van Dieman, he stated, “The school needs an area of land for a sports field, but we don’t have enough land for that, so we will need to sign agreements with the city to use land outside of the land claim that is nearby for the sports fields.” Assuming they can manage to secure the extra land needed, part of the lease agreement would give each claimant family the right to a 5-year bursary for one child. This guarantees admission to the school in the context of a history of academic segregation that would have barred “non-White” students from enrolling under apartheid. However, the legacies of segregation and oppressive policies remain in the form of classed segregation that becomes effectively racialized through fee structures that render access (not to mention admittance) impossible for many of the claimants’ children. In having a contract that guarantees formal education for at least one family member, each family will gain a foothold into social and cultural forms of belonging, credentials, knowledge, and advancement, which effectively work toward partially dismantling exclusionary barriers of discrimination children will encounter throughout their lives and even after they move out of the neighborhood. The
nuances of the contract with the school reveal that belonging is a complex process that is not immediately obvious unless further scrutinized.

When I drove through the land with Mr. van Dieman a few weeks prior to the meeting, he pointed to the spot where the school would be built. I asked if it would be primary or high school, and he replied, “I don’t know and don’t really care as long as we get the money.” Then he laughed. Developing the site strategically is important so the claimants can return to the site and live there. Building the school is important to Mr. van Dieman because it helps this goal, but for him, an elderly man with grown children, the school is not relevant to his particular life circumstances. For him and other claimants, it is a means to an end. Part of returning to Protea Village for these claimants has required many compromises along the way. Most of the direct claimants have children and grandchildren; they will have to choose how they use the house that will be built for them. Given the size of the families, it is unlikely everyone could live together. Although the school will be a future public good for the neighbourhood and perhaps the claimants, they have to lease the land to be able to afford the development of the site. By leasing some of their land for the school, they can secure needed capital to finance their project. They are compromising on the size of their own homes and land to be able to afford them in the first place. In other words, the claimants must judiciously make use of the resources and institutional arrangements at their disposal to be able to return to their land claim site and exercise their legal rights to belong; albeit, as will become clear below, the complexities of belonging for the claimants is entangled with the cultural and political power dynamics rooted in colonial history. To belong substantively, they must adhere to a particular politics of belonging.
Compromising to Belong: Clever Capitalist Heart

The exclusionary acts experienced by the claimants—first their forcible removal, second the planting of the arboretum, and then the court case against the claimants—set a precedent where the claimants felt they needed to carefully develop their site so they would not only feel like they fit in to the area and increase the chances they would be welcomed rather than ostracized. The developers were trying to ensure the claimants would like their new homes and that they would fit in with the aesthetics of the wealthy neighbourhood. Out of necessity, they are trying to create a new community in a way that does not threaten their neighbours’ sense of belonging, particularly as it relates to their sense of safety, aesthetics, and property values. I interviewed developer Richard Glass a few weeks after meeting him at the community meeting in Langa, and he explained this dynamic:

So, you hear about land restitution, and if you think about it, it sounds like people are gonna get small, little houses, washing hanging everywhere; it’s crime, it’s different elements coming in. How would you feel? That’s the bridge we have to build here, good communication…They have a perception of who you are, [but] they haven’t even seen you. You can’t blame them. If this thing is upmarket and beautiful and good, then it’s part of the community. But if it’s big plots of rubbish [and] little houses, [then] it’s a mess. It’s dangerous whatever the perception is. The reality is your [property] values are going to go down.

The idea of what constitutes a community is closely tied to classed and raced conformity, which manifests itself in the varied value of the homes. Value is understood here as monetary value, but there is more to it than that. White South Africans have learned to modify their language and instead of using race and racialized discourse, “neighbourhood space is often invested with codes of morality and value (Clarno, 2013, p. 1206). Ballard (2004) examined White resentment of informal settlements in South Africa and found that defending property value was only one factor. He argues that the presence of informal settlements for these White South Africans is unsettling beyond racial and class lines; the way White people construct value is threatened by
informal settlements. He stated, “they impact on residents’ sense of place and therefore on their self-perception as western, modern, civilised people” (Ballard 2004, p.49). This in combination with “middle-class residential areas in urban South Africa [being] strongly opposed to the residential proximity of their poorer citizens” (Lemanski, 2006, p. 401) means the Protea Village claimants have to work harder and be more strategic in their actions to be accepted by their neighbours, which is part of feeling a sense of belonging.

In his analysis of the northern suburbs of Johannesburg, Clarno argues that suburbs are still perceived as “White” space and residents have employed various tactics to “consolidate and defend this territory” (p. 1206). A similar mechanism of control was enacted against the Protea claimants by neighbouring residents in an attempt to prevent them from returning. Once that failed, other more subtle mechanisms of control were deployed to ensure the property value and presumed moral correctness. Conversations with the claimants and the developers highlighted that the homes must not only conform in their outer appearance (which must be carefully tailored to match the neighbouring houses); the claimants who end up occupying the homes must also conform to the unspoken codes of behaviour and lifestyle the neighbours expect. In the context of Protea Village, this means newly returned neighbours have to avoid any behaviour that might mark them as outsiders and signify that they do not belong (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 207), such as hanging their washing outside, having small houses, or houses that are left in disrepair, which are generally understood to be markers of lower income, racialized residents in Cape Town. The Protea claimants are generally lower-middle to middle class and cannot afford the lifestyle of their extremely wealthy neighbours. However, they can try to follow the norms and aesthetics of their neighbours to approximate conformity. Here, the look and perceived value of one’s property is tied closely to the person’s perceived moral and social value, which has been shaped
by ideas tied to racialized class stemming from apartheid and colonialism more broadly. To deviate from the accepted norms and aesthetics of the wealthy neighbourhood is to face rejection in small and—given the court case brought against them—potentially life-altering ways.

At work here are the same perceptions as the case of the petting zoo in Woodstock or the beach in Clifton. The claimants need to behave and look like they belong to the area because to transgress the boundaries of belonging means they will be met with questions, concerns, fear, and hostility as the people in the park and beach experienced. The colour of their skin—and the history of the country—means Black people are under greater scrutiny than White people in places of relative wealth. This scrutiny extends to behaviour, the appearance of houses and property, and how people go about their daily lives (e.g., managing their washing in a way that resembles their neighbours’ practices). In the case of the claimants, the stakes are much higher than for the visitors to the beach. For the beachgoers, the consequence of falling outside of belonging means being excluded from a recreational space whereas for the claimants the failure to “fit in” and belong becomes an existential need. The existential part of belonging, similar to the need to belong for well-being discussed in Chapter 5, exposes where true power lies in determining substantive belonging in post-apartheid South Africa. It is not only, as many would like, in the hands of the people.

Mr. Glass went on to explain that given that they would have wealthy neighbours who are “looking for a fight,” the best solution was to build a “security village” (enclosed estate) where the houses are uniform and all maintained to certain predetermined standards as part of estate rules typically put in place for upkeep; a homeowners’ association would be set up by the residents to ensure everything is uniform and therefore aesthetically like other homes in the area. “You won’t have one run-down house next to a really nice one,” he commented. Implied in this
discussion of standards is that they are generally “White standards” similar to those discussed in Chapter 4. The decision to create the new development as a security village was a mitigation strategy to ensure conformity with surrounding homes (Lemanski, 2006; Durington, 2009), although Mr. Glass also felt strongly it would increase the value of the homes because they would be considered safer than detached homes, which would benefit both the old and new communities.

I asked Mr. Glass what he thought about how some community members seemed disappointed by the size of the homes that would be built, and he looked at it as an issue of compromise, explaining they could make the plots of land larger, but then they would not be able to afford to build houses for everyone. He said, “the claimants have to sacrifice size in exchange for obtaining funds for the construction of [everyone’s] homes.” The implication here is that the project’s viability hinges on a narrow set of compromises fitting together: the size of the homes; selling part of the land; and building homes that aesthetically “match” the neighbourhood. Mr. Glass added that they would be getting houses in one of the wealthiest areas of Cape Town. These homes would generate around 4 million ZAR (3.5 million CAD in 2016) worth of value for each family. “You’re getting 4 million in value—don’t look at the size. You can earn 15-18,000 Rand (15,840 CAD) a month in rental income if you rent your property out (there is no restriction on renting out the property),” he said. “If size is that important, then I say take 4 million Rand value, in 10 years’ time sell it, and go buy a farm. But this is harsh reality.”

It is not so much a harsh reality, though, as it is not reflecting the entire picture; the community is not only thinking about monetary value. Mr. White, one of the PROVAC members, said many of the claimants are hoping to live there as their primary residence. If it is a small home, then this may not be possible if their family is too large. The homes are not big
enough to fit multigenerational families, which limits the reach of restitution to monetary awards that do not sufficiently address the families’ current needs and wishes. Many have waited decades to return, and although the financial benefits of renting out the home—or eventually selling it—are indeed welcomed by many claimants with whom I spoke, there were more complicated factors at play. Since the claim is settled for each family unit, the possibility of rebuilding the community is seriously undercut by the fact that most of the claimants cannot return to the land claim site. For example, if one of the claimants has two adult children and grandchildren, they all fall under one family unit and receive one home. In a case where there are several children, the family must decide among themselves who gets to live there. It is difficult to quantify the loss communities like Protea Village experienced when they were forcibly removed, but one thing is certain: receiving a new house, even in an expensive neighbourhood, cannot account for the immaterial and unknowable losses such as their sense of community, social ties, connection with meaningful cultural institutions like churches, mosques, and community centres, civic organizations like sports clubs, and access to schooling and employment opportunities. This means of course, pushed to the extreme, money can never serve as a substitute for intangible things because what was lost is measured according to a different value system. The small house size is one of many compromises the claimants were forced to make to achieve some measure of restitution and the ability to forge a new community and sense of belonging to the site.

Another compromise the claimants had to make arose during my discussion with Mr. Glass, who feels strongly that taking in the Protea Village project would benefit the community and make his company some profit. Despite this, he shared the following about their claim:

The other side that most people don’t know is that most of these claimants didn’t even own the land; they were just tenants there, but they’re getting the land.
That’s a bonus. [In] a lot of these restitution cases, they were just tenants. They didn’t have title, they didn’t own land, [and] they just lived there. So, there’s a bit of a balance. Some of these people that complain now [when] you’re getting a 4 million Rand (3.5 million CAD in 2016) home…You or not even you, your grandparents lived there; they were tenants. It’s nice! You can also see this as something nice for you, for free. Always two sides to the story.

While it is true many removees across the country were tenants and not owners, the perception of the restitution process here is not the same for Mr. Glass as it is for the claimants. He feels the land claims process is a balance because the claimants are “getting a house for free.” The claimants—and the government through the land claims process—have agreed the land is rightfully theirs because, regardless of previous property ownership or tenancy, these families lived there and were unjustly removed. The land claims process corrects the moral injustice, regardless of whether or not the claimants legally owned the land32 (Commission on Restitution of Land Rights, 2014, p. 2). That the claimants must contend with this false narrative around “receiving a free house” from one of their more vocal champions indicates there are others (who are perhaps their neighbours) who feel even more strongly that the land claims process is giving “charity” to potentially undeserving communities.

One of the residents shared with me that originally, Cecil Rhodes’ servants and workers lived on the land claim property, as well as parts of Bishopscourt and Fernwood. There is a longer history of the land being lived on by Coloured people that gives them a sense of belonging to this land. Before they were forcibly removed, a whole host of other laws and practices prevented them from purchasing land and owning it. Mr. Glass’s comment stating they are getting the land for “free” elides the complex factors that led to Black people being unable to

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32 According to the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights (2014), “A land right is a registered or unregistered right in land, the interests of labour tenants and sharecroppers, customary law interests or beneficial occupation for a period of more than 10 years […] People must have occupied land OR must have proof in the form of a document, e.g., a title deed, permission to occupy, etc, for them to have a right in land” (p. 2).
own property in the first place and then being removed altogether, all of which are part of the historic, economic, and moral conditions the post-apartheid land claims system was designed to address. With more than (at least) two sides to a story, Mr. Glass’s comments point to the importance of context. In this case, the “other side” of the story is that the restitution process is not simply about returning “property” in the sense of land ownership; it is also about partially accounting for the multitude of ways the apartheid government excluded and oppressed Black people and a reclaiming of political and economic self-determination and the right to the city. Winning the land claim and returning the land is not a “gift”; it is part of a much larger process of redressing past wrongs and accounting for the socioeconomic losses resulting from forced removals and dispossession, including the deep sense of attachment and belonging removees feel to the land they were forced to leave.

The restitution process encompasses different kinds of value, some of them priceless or intangible. Land and other forms of compensation are meant to stand in for much of the intangible forms of oppression or inequality that are not possible to quantify. Nevertheless, for a land claim to be successfully developed the claimants have to take into consideration that the process is predicated on a capitalist view of the land market: meaning that money invested must lead to profit (Cousins, 2016, Hall 2004). For the claimants to be successful in their efforts to develop the site and return, they have to participate in the capitalist market, ensuring their houses are competitive in the real estate market to assure their economic value. They must do this while also trying to reconstitute their community materially and symbolically.

When I asked the developer how he became involved in this particular land claim development project, he explained that Bethel Partners had simply applied for a tender and won. Mr. Glass expressed how he felt community engagement and improvement was very important,
but at the same time, he was doing it for his own benefit because presumably if the “have-nots” keep growing, he would no longer be able to live his life the way he desires. In addition to this, as he is helping the community, his firm must also benefit from the development: “For us, we are less greedy than the others; that’s why we win some of the tenders. If you take too much out, there isn’t enough left for the community. We have a heart for the community. One has to understand you can have a good heart. But if you’re not having a clever capitalist heart, it’s not gonna go anywhere, so we need to make some profit.” Having a “clever capitalist heart” for Mr. Glass implies ensuring his actions benefit the community but only up to the point where it also benefits his own economic interests. He acknowledged there are problems with capitalism, but believes if things are not profitable, then there is no way to help the community. “If there’s no sustainability,” he said, “there’s no point in giving a wad of money to someone; he doesn’t know how to deal with it, can’t make it grow, and he’s poorer in a few years’ time. There is a place for capitalism, and for a capitalist [to become] very wealthy if they can make a difference continuously in other people’s wealth.” The land claims process is meant to provide restitution to claimants primarily in the form of land, but it does so as part of the capitalist system, which states that unused or “improperly used” land as defined by the real estate market is worth less, while at the same time limiting the ability of those without capital to be active participants in the system. In this view, the claimants must successfully develop their land so it has value and the state’s investment in returning the land to them won’t be “a waste.” The cultural politics of real estate thus shape the mode of belonging for the land claimants.

The land claims process for Protea Village is filled with compromises. The claimants must make the new Protea Village fit within the acceptable boundaries of the area to belong; in doing so, they have to settle for small houses that may not accommodate all who want to live
there. There are multiple elements that impact one’s sense of belonging in the context of restitution, such as contending with perceptions of receiving charity, as well as needing to be an ideal capitalist who will wisely use the land they have been given. Taken together these circumstances shape how the claimants experience substantive belonging. As they are planning the construction of their new development, they are shaping their right to belong in the LeFebvrean sense but have faced social, legal, and economic constraints. The process the claimants have navigated sheds light on the ways that substantive belonging is aided and hindered. While Protea Village claimants are focused on the redevelopment of their site and the construction of new houses, District Six has focused significantly on the commemoration and memorialization of their neighbourhood.

**District Six: So Far, Commemoration More Than Restitution**

To return to my first tour of the District Six Museum, my guide Ruth showed my tour group a long cloth covered with embroidered, handwritten messages. She told us it was a memory cloth on which former residents had written their stories and experiences. To counteract the effects of the ink from degrading, women from the community embroidered the messages on all 250 metres of the cloth. For District Six residents, the commemoration of their former lives has been a way of staying connected to the site and reconstituting some of the connections with former residents that had been severed. Fenster (2004) notes that power dynamics play an important role in shaping “whose memory is being commemorated or ignored” (p. 2). The change in power that came with post-apartheid South Africa opened up new opportunities for the removees to preserve their history and memories. The museum is one key means of doing so. Longing for the past in this way is also a link to an aspirational future. Commemoration is active rather than passive as it keeps the memories of the past alive in a way that fosters a continued
spatialized sense of belonging for the removees. Commemoration as ritual fosters inclusion because it emphasizes community, while memory as a part of belonging does more than cement facts in a collective or individual recollection; it allows for “more complex symbolic narration, an affective narrative identity” (Gamba & Cattacin, 2021, p. 3).

Ruth took us into a small room that was a replica of a home prior to the forced removals. The room was filled with things from the 1960s and earlier. A table with a floral tablecloth and china on display was in the centre of the small room, reflecting that the residents had “respectable” middle-class homes prior to eviction. As we stood in the small room, she shared that her mother lived in District Six until June of 1981. The apartheid government had been trying to evict Ruth’s family without success until they turned off the electricity and water. This tactic is still employed by landlords today, as discussed in Chapter 4. Ruth and her sisters convinced their mother to move out to the new house the government had assigned her. Ruth’s mother moved on a Friday, and the following Monday, she died at 58 years old. This was a very personal story, which Ruth had probably told many of her tour groups, yet in the small room made up to be like the homes she and others had lost, the memory was all the more poignant. She took a breath and said, “For a long time, I had trouble walking through District Six and seeing the White people living here; it took a long time to forgive them.” She finished by saying that a “healed memory is not an erased memory.” Undeniably, the tour is meant to show the many ways the residents of District Six have not forgotten their past. Even as they heal and move toward resettlement, the past is very much a part of their present and is held within the space of the museum and the land claims site as a whole.

District Six claimants have a firmly articulated sense of belonging as well as a legal right to their land claims site. Nevertheless, many of the claimants have been unable to return to the
site to live. Unlike the community members of Protea Village who are managing the construction of their new homes, District Six claimants are waiting for the government to build their new homes. The complexity and size of the District Six claim has caused significant delays as all implicated stakeholders must negotiate and agree on the way to develop the new housing units (Beyers, 2007, p. 280). In the absence of the promised material reparation and restitution, they have constructed their sense of belonging to the site in a largely symbolic way with commemoration and community gatherings featuring as the primary means of cultivating and maintaining belonging. When examined side by side, the District Six claimants’ affective claims to belong, the group gathered in the park for the petting zoo, and the protesters at Clifton Beach, illustrate that symbolic demands for equality appear to be much more successful than more material or economic forms of redress, and changes in their physical circumstances (such as being able to socialize in formerly White-only spaces like beaches or parks). When it comes time to translate that sense of belonging to more structural modes of belonging, such as returning to the site of a forced removal, occupying public space, or having the right to remain in the city in the face of gentrification-led displacement, the rigidity and inflexibility of the political-economic system are exposed, which in turn explains in part why more substantive changes to equality, restitution, and reconciliation remain so challenging.

Toward the end of the tour, I asked Ruth about the land claims process, and she shared that there are thousands on the waiting list for housing while the rest of the removees who were able to file a claim took a financial settlement. The land being returned to District Six does not correspond to the exact plots of land people once occupied or owned (Beyers, 2007, p. 273). She continued to explain that in 2004, mainly elderly people were resettled in District Six, and they held a large celebration. Nelson Mandela even attended the event. Despite the symbolic and real
significance of the transfer of ownership of the homes to the first group of claimants, some felt the process did not meet their expectations. Ruth explained that many felt these first homes did not represent adequate restitution since the claimants had to secure a bond\textsuperscript{33} to pay for the homes. This meant they had been technically given a portion of the land to live on but had to finance at least a portion of the house themselves. Several claimants have had difficulty raising the funds necessary to qualify for a bond given that many are elderly and/or have few assets. For example, in 2011 a claimant was informed she was going to be relocated to one of the new housing units but had to come up with a bond of 225,000 ZAR (32,152 CAD in 2011) (Property 360, 2011). Like the discussion of Protea Village, this raises the question of what constitutes restitution for land. As others have stated, return of the land is only one piece of the process (Hall, 2010; Walker et. al., 2010), and many claimants expect they should be given homes to live in on the claims site. For many, being asked to pay for even part of the homes (in the form of a bond) does not fulfill the restitution process.

In 2004, the first group of residents were resettled into 24 homes, and then in 2012, 115 homes were delivered. According to the Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform, the department had been planning to build another 108 homes beginning in 2015, but in 2016 they had not yet been delivered (Mangxamba, 2016). This is a small portion of the 1200 homes planned by the state (Beyers & Fay, 2015, p. 439). In November 2018, the Western Cape High Court ordered the Ministry of Rural Development and Land Reform to immediately make a restitution plan for the District Six evictees. Only 11% of those who chose to return to the area have been resettled at District Six. During the court proceedings, the advocate for the

\textsuperscript{33} A bond is a loan to finance the cost of purchasing a home, similar to a mortgage.
government, Sean Rosenberg, acknowledged there had been delays in part because it was a complex case (Evans, 2018).

Then, on April 17, 2019, the court ordered the Minister, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, to personally appear in court on May 17 to answer for her failure to comply with the earlier ruling (Gerber, 2019). She appeared in May and was ordered to pay the costs of counsel since she had failed to comply with the order to present a viable plan for development (Somdyala, 2019). The City Council is the legal custodian of the land until it can be transferred to the claimants. This is often the case with urban land claims (Beyers, 2007, p. 280). In December 2019, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development submitted plans for the redevelopment of District Six. The plan will be carried out in three phases and will provide 212 housing units, containing 945 homes by 2022. The project is expected to cost 325 million ZAR (28.4 million CAD in 2021). These homes will be provided to claimants who lodged a claim between 1994 and 1998 (Stent & Hendricks, 2020). As of August 2021, the first phase of the project has been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the government has not provided a new date for the transfer of homes to claimants (Bantom, 2021).

There are multiple ideas about what constitutes “proper” restitution. In most cases, it involves receiving homes, but if the Protea Village claimants were any indication, a home is not the same as the right home. Restitution is an official process legislated and managed in large part by the government, but this official process has very personal meanings for the claimants. The resettled people cannot live in the same exact spot they were forced to leave, but in Ruth’s view, “Who cares? It’s land in District Six.” As we walked to a different section of the museum, Ruth noted they were getting ready to start building a new set of houses, but added, “I’ll believe it when I see it.” She never trusts what the government says. For Ruth and many others with whom
I spoke, their sense of belonging to District Six remains rooted in the past with the hope of returning one day.

District Six claimants I met and heard speak at different events across the city shared their frustration at the lack of progress on the construction required for their return to their land claims site. During a different walking tour of District Six, my guide, Mr. Brown, shared his thoughts and feelings about the evolution of the land claim, including his anger and sadness about what happened and his disillusionment with the current federal and city governments. Mr. Brown was an older, Coloured gentleman and a former resident of District Six. The area is a mix of residential and commercial buildings. The Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) takes up a large part of the land, which limits the availability of land for new housing. CPUT—a school built originally for White people but primarily attended by Coloured and other Black students these days—acts as a reminder of the apartheid’s government efforts to erase the removees’ place on the land. During the tour, he shared he was one of the lucky people who had been resettled in District Six in 2013. He showed me where he used to live before the removals. It is now a car park in front of a church, right next to CPUT with a small hill in front of it. Mr. Brown pointed across the street to the units built in 2013 and showed me where he lives now. It is no more than 500 metres from his old house. I asked him how it felt to be looking at the spot that his old house used to be, to have the memory of what it was and to see it as it is now. He turned to look me in the eyes and said, “Well, it is very sad.” Mr. Brown’s return to District Six has not healed the pain of removal and the destruction of his community. Mr. Brown referred to himself as one of the lucky ones who had already been resettled into one of the new housing units yet when confronted with the material and affected memories of what he lost he still felt deep sadness. The restitution process has healed some of the injustice of the past as he is “lucky”
enough to have a home in District Six, but the pain of removal and the ensuing immaterial and unquantifiable loss have evidently not been healed. Mr. Brown’s sentiments illustrate the nuances of substantive belonging; as far as the land claims process is concerned, he is closer than most to possessing all the pieces necessary to belong and feel a sense of belonging. However, when the pieces are put together, something is still missing that cannot be returned and that brings a sadness reflective of the fundamental impossibility of full restitution as the historical harms and their legacies can never be undone.

The erasure of his community cannot be undone, and the slow pace of construction for some of them to return is frustrating to many claimants. As we continued walking, Mr. Brown showed me a car park where he explained there used to be houses that were “erased” by the apartheid government. Throughout our walk, he reiterated that resettlement was not happening quickly enough, and many claimants doubted it would ever be complete. Moreover, as more time passes, more claimants are dying, and many others fear they will die before resettlement. Given that a sense of belonging denotes a sense of comfort and of being at home, the District Six claimants’ desire to return is all the more pressing; without returning, they are to a certain extent outside of their own belonging, which is deeply spatial in nature. As we walked past a field with the rubble of demolished homes, Mr. Brown explained, “The city doesn’t want people to resettle; it’s all about money. They would rather use the land for new developments that would be more profitable.” Mr. Brown was one of many claimants I spoke with who shared their distrust of the government and its intentions, a feeling that has deepened for many over the years with ongoing evidence of corruption. Most recently the increase in load shedding and cost of energy overall has been linked to corruption and has triggered outrage from residents and businesses in Cape Town (Briers, 2022).
The second day of events commemorating the 50th anniversary of the forced removals was held at the District Six Museum’s homecoming centre. I walked into the room and saw around 150 people gathered in the hot room. Some people moved around the room looking for a seat while others were sipping coffee or tea as they chatted. Eventually, the day’s events began and everyone was asked to find a seat. The second day of commemoration was similar to the previous day described in Chapter 4; it was filled with speeches, songs, and poems about the removees’ lived experiences, the history of the site, as well discussions about the status of the land claim. To begin the day’s events, the museum director, Bonita Bennett, stood on the stage and addressed the crowd. She said, “The past really does matter. We take a lot of that past with us. With the passing of time, District Six has changed. It has become part of the landscape. But with the work that is being done, it is not forgotten.” The past and the memory of it play an important part in maintaining a sense of community and justice. As McEachern (1998) argues, “the active construction and performance of memory … is at the same time a critique of apartheid itself” (p.500). During this event, Director Bennett emphasized that the commemoration day was not just about District Six but about all forced removals. The very act of commemorating and feeling something about the past kept it alive, and although it is not a panacea, as it cannot provide a tangible part of restitution, it can act as a means of connection to the land and the community, as well as provide hope while the claimants wait. In addition, their sense of belonging linked to the past has helped them to construct new forms of belonging moving into the future with the construction of the land claims site.

When referencing the status of the land claim, many speakers raised the claimants’ need to feel gratitude while also tempering their expectations. For example, several times during the
day Director Bennett mentioned that, although the restitution process had been long and frustrating, the claimants with a claim number should remember they are “fortunate” to be part of the process as there were many who do not have a claims number. Not everyone who was removed from District Six is part of the communal claim. This can be explained by a variety of reasons including: potential claimants did not understand the eligibility criteria; they were skeptical that the process would bear fruit; they did not want to be reminded of their loss; and they were settled in new areas and did not want to return (Beyers, 2007, p. 277). Director Bennett’s comments to the assembled crowd of claimants acknowledged that the land claims process was not only lengthy and incomplete for some but that others are in far worse positions. This framing of gratitude further illustrates the complexities with restitution in this case.

Restitution cannot be measured relationally where one group receiving “more” than another group means they have received restitution. However, by focusing on the hope of return, the claimants are able to lean into their sense of belonging to District Six while the structural modes of belonging remain challenging to navigate.

When the national Minister for Rural Development and Land Reform Gugile Nkwinti addressed the crowd, he also underscored the reality of the claimants’ situation and their need for managing their expectations. He explained that while District Six is important, everyone involved should be “realistic” and work together. “It’s about density,” he claimed. “We cannot expand horizontally, so we should expand vertically. The first two floors should be for old people and the third and fourth floor for younger people.”. The contrast between Ms. Bennett’s tone as hopeful and aspirational and the minister’s very practical tone reflects the complex nature of the land claims process. Emotions, ideas, experiences, and other intangible elements must be reconciled with the practicalities of building new homes for thousands of people. As in the case
of Protea Village, there may not be enough space and resources to provide the type of home everyone may be expecting, needing, or hoping for. The District Six claimants, too, must compromise on their ideas of restitution, the minister urged; this, in turn, affects how they are able to construct substantive belonging, which is not only the ability to realize their potential belonging on paper, but a sense of belonging that enables them to feel welcome, comfortable, and at home.

At this point, residents were asked to come up and speak if they had something to share. A former resident walked up to the stage and spoke, poignantly saying, “People are dying, and we know it. It’s easy to take bricks and build houses, but it is hard to build a community, a self-sustainable place. We must work with the government structure [as] they will make it possible to return.” Another resident asked, “When are they [the government] gonna build the houses?” The crowd shouted, “Yeah!” The questioner continued: “Before or after judgment day?” The crowd cheered. “We are getting old!” he continued. “When we get homes, you will all be gone. You can take people out of District Six, but you can’t take their spirit!” As this exchange showed, the event was not just about commemoration, but about asserting the community’s desire for quick and concrete action on the part of the government, one of a long process of performances of the demands for restitution. The group gathered to remember the past and ensure it was not forgotten, but they were also adamant they wanted concrete measures taken toward material restitution in the form of homes. Memory of the past, while important, has limits to building and maintaining a community. In the case of District Six, commemoration has been an important tool for maintaining a sense of belonging and community in the prolonged wait for more material forms of restitution and return. But there is a limit to the extent that commemoration can replace a more concrete form of restitution and belonging. The District Six claimant’s strong sense of
belonging fuels their desires for restitution but the structural modes of belonging make the reality of returning extremely complex.

Conclusion

The land claims process is a key component of the government’s efforts at providing restitution. It has focused primarily on legal and economic policies, which, although partially successful, have not allowed many to return and live on the land they have legally been awarded. As I have shown, the claimants from Protea Village and District Six have successfully navigated the land claims process but now they must compromise on many aspects relating to their actual, physical return to the site, including the style, size, and use of their homes, while still trying to work with the government and consultants to facilitate the construction of the homes. The Protea Village claimants, like other Black residents in the city, must contend with the power dynamics of the racialized nature of space and the real estate market and adjust their behaviour and way of living to foster a desire to include (rather than exclude) on the part of their neighbours. The modes of belonging to their claims site and its surrounding area shapes how they experience belonging in a substantive way. They have many of the parts needed to construct substantive belonging, which is to say, the legal right to live (and belong) as well as a strong degree of affiliation and desire to live on the site. However, to join these pieces together, they must compromise and continuously manage social norms, power dynamics and the politics of belonging that limit their ability ultimately to experience substantive belonging.

For District Sixers, their sense of belonging remains firmly rooted in their deep connection to the past and their land. Commemoration and the community rooted in the museum have long served as a way of preserving and growing their sense of belonging. Nevertheless, there are factors that limit their ability to achieve substantive belonging. First, the staggered and
delayed return suggests that many claimants who are now elderly may never have the opportunity to return. Second, the densification of housing required so that every claimant can live on the land allocated by the land claims process may not fully represent the restitution that claimants were hoping or planning for.

Overall, the current state of land claims has not provided a complete path toward substantive belonging. The land claims process is a way to restore legal and moral relationship to land, which is a part of belonging to a place, but it cannot restore all that was lost to these communities during apartheid and the resulting inequalities felt spatially and socially to this day, including new forms of exclusion, such as cost of living, hostility, and surveillance. Examining the parts of restitution those policies are not addressing leads to a better understanding of the challenges of belonging, both as a felt sense of belonging and as a material belonging linked to a physical space. Affective claims to belong in post-apartheid South Africa are more successful in demanding symbolic equality. When belonging is concerned, the true challenge of reckoning with past inequality and injustice of the political-economic system demands structural change.
Chapter Seven: Conclusion

The implementation of the City’s emergency housing programme continues to displace poor Black (African, Coloured, and Indian) people from well-located areas like Woodstock, Salt River, and the inner-city to relocation camps where people languish in poverty, and in unfamiliar and sometimes dangerous conditions. It replicates spatial apartheid and in the specific context of the State’s failure to provide affordable housing, check exorbitant rentals, and properly plan for people facing evictions into homelessness, this is plainly unjust and retrogressive of the rights to housing and equitable access to land.

-Disha Govender, Ndifuna Ukwazi
Quoted by Jenni Evans, News 24, February 8, 2023

On February 6, 2023, the Supreme Court of Appeals ruled that the City of Cape Town has to provide alternative accommodation for the Bromwell residents, but it does not have to be in the same neighbourhood where they live. However, the court added that accommodations should be as close as possible (Ndifuna Ukwazi. 2023). In other words, the ruling confirmed that it was not unconstitutional to provide emergency accommodations outside of a specific area in the case of evictions. Part of the judgment read, “The Constitution does not guarantee a person a right to housing at government expense at the locality of his or her choice” (quoted in Evans, 2023). The city will assist the remaining Bromwell residents who must vacate the properties by June 30, 2023 in finding emergency accommodation elsewhere (Evans, 2023).

As quoted above, Disha Govender, head of the Ndifuna Ukwazi Law Centre and the attorney for the Bromwell Street residents, declares the ruling is a disappointment to the ongoing struggle against spatial apartheid in Cape Town. It does not shore up the rights of historically disadvantaged and oppressed people to remain in the gentrifying city. Had the court ruled in favour of the residents, this would have set a legal precedent for the location and quality of emergency housing offered by the city. In doing so, it would have reaffirmed the structural modes of belonging, meaning that living somewhere for a long period of time translates to a right to belong to that area and that having the ability to exercise the rights of citizenship is integral to
belonging. However, the ruling did not impose upon the city the responsibility of using the emergency housing programme to address the continued legacies of apartheid spatial planning. The ruling confirmed that if one does not possess the economic means to remain in the city, it does not fall under the city’s responsibilities to immediately correct that through emergency housing. However, the judgement requires the city to provide the accommodations as close as possible to the residence from which they are being evicted, acknowledging at least partly the importance of belonging in place and the benefits of remaining in place for those at risk of eviction. The presiding judge, Mabindla-Bogwana, said, “It is irrefutable that the State is obliged to take positive action to meet the needs of those living in extreme conditions of poverty, homelessness, or intolerably inadequate housing” (Ndifuna Ukwazi, 2023).

The judge’s comments indicate it is not only those at risk of eviction who are faced with an existential right to belong. Many waiting for affordable housing are similarly living in extremely precarious conditions. The ruling took into consideration the mammoth task the city has before it concerning its entire housing programme. The city argued in its appeal that the previous ruling only considered the emergency housing programme and did not consider how favouring emergency accommodation in the city would affect its ability to provide long-term affordable housing (Booyens, 2023). Therefore, the ruling affirmed that long-term residence in the city is not sufficient to secure the right to belong in the city. If one has low income, one must go through the years-long waiting list of the affordable housing program. While failing to secure the rights of the Bromwell residents, the ruling highlights the city’s need to address the insufficiencies of the current housing program without requiring the city to make changes. The ruling in favour of the city upholds the gap between legal rights and the residents’ affective claims to belong, a gap that limits their ability to substantively belong.
Further research could investigate the dynamics of belonging within the affordable housing program. In particular, a comparison between the short-term nature of accommodations requested by the Bromwell case compared to the long-term wait for the affordable housing program could examine whether there are differences in the ways people understand belonging, rights to the city, or the responsibility of the government. It remains to be seen if Ndifuna Ukwazi and the Bromwell residents will appeal the latest decision and how the rest of the ongoing social protest and civil movements will affect the city’s strategy where housing is concerned.

This dissertation examined belonging in different contexts across Cape Town. I argued that even with structural and affective changes in post-apartheid South Africa, current racialization and class dynamics are informed by apartheid and earlier regimes that strongly inform attempts at equality and full citizenship in complex ways. As a result, transforming Cape Town into a truly post-apartheid city in the context of restitution and reconciliation remains challenging. Using the theoretical concept I call substantive belonging, I examined how race, class, space, and legacies of colonialism intersect, constrain, and construct belonging in Cape Town, motivating and shaping different attempts to claim “rights to the city.” In Chapter 4, I argued that the regulation of space, through gating, policing, and internalized cultural and social norms, shapes residents’ affective modes of belonging and reinforce apartheid-era understandings of space and belonging. In Chapter 5, while drawing a parallel with the forced removals of the apartheid era, I also argued that gentrification-led displacement exposes the ways belonging becomes existential for low-income, primarily Black residents. Finally, in Chapter 6, I connected these findings and the politics of belonging to examine two land claims sites to expose parts of the process that hinder the claimants’ ability to achieve restitution and substantive
belonging. Below I summarise the principal findings based on the ethnographic evidence presented. In order to interrogate the ways space is regulated through gating, policing, and cultural and social norms I examined the ways that racialized class assumptions can influence how Black Capetonians are perceived and how some Black Capetonians respond to exclusionary attempts with resistance. I argue that Black people in Cape Town are viewed by many White people as being outside of the normative mode of belonging in many parts of the city. Race and class strongly influence one’s sense of belonging and whether or not different residents experience acts of exclusion or enact exclusion on others. Through an analysis of a Facebook exchange and a conflict over the use of a beach, I showed the ways the politics of belonging are intertwined with a dominant form of White racism in southern Africa, influencing how people are determined to belong (or not) in a particular place. The ways people behave and circulate in space constantly send messages to others about belonging that are interpreted along a spectrum of belonging with exclusion at one end and inclusion at the other. These markers of belonging are filtered through historically rooted understandings of belonging and from there some act as gatekeepers to these spaces. Stated another way, this spectrum reveals the ability of an individual or a group to possess the right to belong comfortably in a particular space.

My examination of belonging in Cape Town has applied Ahmed’s (2007) analysis of whiteness to articulate the spatial nature of racial dynamics in Cape Town. Power-infused space serves to reinforce racial segregation and acts as a stage on which the micropolitics of belonging meet and clash, which, in turn, shape a person’s sense of belonging. Following Ahmed’s work, I argue that in some public spaces in post-apartheid Cape Town where Black bodies are scrutinized by White interlocutors, there are occasions when certain White gatekeepers assert that they do not belong. Later, the politics of belonging take up the work of evaluating and
contesting that initial assessment. This understanding of bodily belonging also lends itself to analysing the protests at the Biscuit Mill. Protestors entered the quasi-public space and occupied it with their bodies first. The moment they crossed into the property, it was clear to the Biscuit Mill patrons and staff they did not belong; the exact reason they did not belong became clear by examining their slogans, T-shirts, behaviour, and listening to their chanting. At the same time, the protests illustrate how people are contesting these notions of belonging and claiming their right to space, and life in the city, and crucially the right to help shape the changing city, in other words, the right to the city. The protest put in stark and discomforting relief the racial discrepancies between the Biscuit Mill’s regular patrons, staff, and business owners, and the Bromwell residents. When the Bromwell Street protestors “invaded” this space to articulate their right to belong, they did so to disrupt the mode of belonging that normally governs the Biscuit Mill. Their behaviour, appearance, economic status, and even geographical origin was different from those who, under the dominant mode of belonging, decide who belongs in that space and who is an outsider.

The incident at Clifton Beach revealed that, based on these constructed notions of belonging, in many parts of the city Black people are met with questions, marked as outsiders, and in some cases feared by White co-residents. The colour of the visitors’ skin determined how their actions were perceived, and local residents took steps to control the space in a way that would ensure their own sense of belonging, which was predicated on the exclusion of non-labouring Black people. These types of interactions, whether in person or online, send far-reaching messages about who easily belongs in a particular space, and who has the power, or at least who claims to have the power, to determine the parameters of belonging.
Though these acts of exclusion are less explicit than the overt acts of the apartheid period, the result is a desire by some with access to power to exclude certain bodies from the space. Officially, the beach as a public space is open to all; however, the behaviour and norms deemed acceptable to surrounding residents must fit within “White” behaviour and norms. Guests are expected to be quiet, “respectable,” and restrained in a way that matches the performance of whiteness. To deviate from this expected mode of belonging brings scrutiny, which as Ahmed’s (2007) work tells us, is amplified for Black visitors. The events at Clifton Beach further demonstrate the efficacy of exclusionary strategies based in notions of securitization and private property. The more these strategies are clandestine, which is to say invisible and normalized, the more effective they are at exclusion because they become part of perceived reality. White people hold disproportionate power in South Africa and throughout much of the global North, which stems from their large land holdings, generally higher economic status, and a historically rooted sense of inherent power that has been slow to change. They use this sense of power when confronted with situations and events that they may feel are strange or dangerous. The protest responses, however, show that strategies of exclusion can be made visible and contested. Crucially, it shows that White people’s exclusion does dictate Black people’s sense of belonging or claim to belong in a politics of belonging clearly informed by the history of apartheid.

My research demonstrates that there are parallels between the forced removals of the apartheid era and current gentrification-led displacement in Cape Town. In particular, I argue that in the context of gentrification-led displacement, for some people belonging becomes entangled with well-being and quality of life. Gentrification reinforces the historical structures of inequality that work to keep people in racially defined political economic positions in Cape Town. The economic and social changes occurring within gentrifying neighbourhoods often lead
to the exclusion and displacement of lower-income Black residents, and the underlying power structures dictate a lack of opportunity or choice for some at risk of displacement. For the residents of Bromwell Street and others at risk of eviction, belonging takes on a different quality that transcends daily life. The fight to remain in the city is a fight for well-being and dignity and illustrates that having the right to belong in a city does not mean everyone has the ability to navigate the forms of control and afford land or housing, nor does it mean one would feel comfortable and welcome if one could afford it. The evictions in Woodstock clearly show that voicing the right to belong is not about choice or being welcome (which is of course still important and relevant) but about the basic human right to exist and live and to be allowed to thrive in any place. As a result of forces associated with gentrification, the Bromwell Street tenants at risk of eviction are bombarded with messages that they do not belong. The tenants do not have the financial means to relocate somewhere in the city given rising costs, lack of employment opportunity, and a combination of socio-economic factors rooted in historical inequality. Gentrification is leading to increasing urbanization and incoming capital investment is driving changes to many Black South Africans’ access to/enjoyment of structural modes of belonging. Regardless of their sense of belonging, the poverty of those at risk for displacement also makes them “hypervisible” (Ahmed 2007) and the politics of belonging in this gentrifying area marks them as outsiders in many spaces, such as the Biscuit Mill.

Ultimately, the Bromwell tenants and those who support them are trying to address structural, systemic racism at its core, which can be hard to see and name, yet Wolwerivier is a physical manifestation of exclusion and a failure of belonging that represents the effects of racism and their embeddedness in historical structures of inequality. As such, many of the Woodstock residents at risk of eviction who I spoke with drew a direct parallel with these
modern-day evictions and the forced removals of the past. They were dismayed that the municipal government was not acting to protect them from the structural forces that lead to these evictions. During a protest, the residents placed the concept of equality alongside belonging, referring to the equality and freedom that has been promised under the post-apartheid government. Considering the harsh realities that await many tenants at risk of relocation to Wolwerivier, belonging represents more than having the ability to live in a particular place. The displacement caused by gentrification can result in severe and long-lasting socio-economic marginalization, comparable to the forced removals of the past.

An examination of two claimant communities, Protea Village and District Six, illustrates the difficulties with achieving substantive belonging, given the current state of the land claims process in South Africa. Successful land restitution claims contributes to the country’s project of redress; but returning land does not address many of the gaps between structural and affective modes of belonging. It also does not address other forms of material losses, nor does it significantly diminish ongoing racialized and systemic poverty in South Africa. The land claims process has only had partial success in addressing the inequalities of the apartheid era felt spatially and socially to this day, including new forms of exclusion, such as cost of living, hostility, and surveillance. The claimants from Protea Village and District Six have successfully navigated the land claims process but the modes of belonging for the claimants are entangled with the cultural and political power dynamics rooted in colonial history. To belong, they must adhere to a particular politics of belonging and judiciously make use of the resources and institutional arrangements at their disposal. Practically, they must compromise on many aspects relating to their actual, physical return to the site, including the style, size, and use of their
homes, while still trying to work with the government and consultants to facilitate the construction of their homes.

As of January 2023, the plans to develop the two sites are still moving forward. The environmental authorization was granted in May 2021 and the land was transferred to the Protea Village communal property association in June 2021 (Protea Village, 2023). In late 2022, the community set up a website\(^{34}\) to document the site’s history and the development of the site moving forward, including digital mock-ups of the planned houses and a map with the two erven divided into individual plots of land (see Appendix 5). The plots are not yet for sale. Protea Village claimants have many of the parts needed to construct substantive belonging, which is to say, the legal right to live (and belong) and a strong degree of affective connection to the site. However, the Protea Village claimants must deal with the complexities of the gap in wealth and socioeconomic status between them and their neighbours. Given this, as they make plans to return to their land, the Protea Village claimants are also considering how best to fit in with the neighbourhood, both materially in the form of houses that look like they belong, and immaterially in the way they behave and live. Similar perceptions exist regarding belonging as seen in the case of the petting zoo and beach in Woodstock and Clifton respectively. The consequences of not fitting in and belonging are much higher for Black individuals, and it can become essential for their existence. This exposes the “true power” dynamics in determining substantive belonging in post-apartheid South Africa.

In contrast, District Six claimants have secured the land rights with a land claim. They also have a well-developed sense of belonging, with their continued identification as District Sixers and their continued commemoration and community involvement in the District Six.

\(^{34}\) www.proteavillage.co.za
Museum. Even though they have a firmly articulated sense of belonging, as well as a legal right to the land, many have yet to successfully return to the site. There have been delays in returning to the site, and many claimants are now elderly; this raises the question whether for some District Sixers restitution might come too late. Another issue that may affect the way claimants feel about the restitution they receive is the need for densification of housing in order for everyone to be able to fit in the allotted land.

There are two principal limitations to my research that future research could investigate. First, I examine a particular kind of space in Cape Town with a specific arrangement of economics and politics that makes it difficult to apply this analysis to other spaces where White South Africans do not dictate the modes of belonging. Future research could address this gap by examining how space is regulated in other areas such as in townships or informal settlements; whereas I suggest my analytical framework is applicable, the mechanisms and forms of exclusion and inclusion likely are different. Second, this study focuses on the effects of structural modes of belonging such as laws or policies on housing, gentrification, and land claims rather than interrogating the reasons that shaped their creation. Future research is needed with a legal or government-level analysis to examine the complexities that inform the state of affairs with respect to structural modes of belonging.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic brought to light new challenges and obstacles to achieving substantive belonging, not only for the land claimants, but also for fighting against spatial apartheid, which further complicate the process of restitution and reconciliation. Beginning in March 2020, the COVID-19 global pandemic was a significant force of change and hardship worldwide. South Africa implemented strict lockdown measures to limit the spread of the virus. The lockdowns forced the closure of schools and businesses and banned the sale of
alcohol and tobacco (Megannon, 2022a). The lockdown and subsequent decrease in tourism left an estimated 159,000 people in Cape Town without jobs while also facing housing insecurity. The job losses primarily affected unskilled and semi-skilled workers who generally have little to no safety net (Nzo, 2022). The massive changes had immediate and potentially long-term consequences for many. For example, the disruption to schools combined with “the constraints that poor children faced in online teaching may have negative long-term impacts on human capital formation and thus on earnings, thereby deepening existing inequalities and constraining social upward mobility (Schotte & Zizzamia, 2021a, p. 20).

A study conducted with individuals living in informal housing in the urban periphery during this period found that half of the respondents reported “having lost their main source of income, two-thirds running out of money for food, and one-third going hungry” by the end of the first lockdown (Schotte & Zizzamia 2021b). In addition, there was some unrest due to the effects of the strict lockdown measures. For example, one month into the lockdown, some looting and attacks on delivery trucks were blamed on the lack of funds and supplies, while some declared that criminals are taking advantage of the situation (Roelf, 2020). Given the social and economic shifts during the pandemic, its impact on people’s sense of belonging requires future research.

To prevent widespread economic hardship, the federal government rolled out relief measures, including cash transfers to unemployed adults, which have been extended several times and ended in March 2023 (Megannon. 2022b). Additionally, in collaboration with the banks, the government offered a temporary pause to payments for three months on home loans for property owners and landlords to stop mass evictions. This move, however, privileged those who already benefited from property ownership (Nzo, 2022). Residents in shacks or informal settlements could not secure the same hiatus; many were unable to pay their rent and were
subsequently evicted (Nzo, 2022). With no other options, many banded together to develop a new informal settlement they called COVID 30km outside the city. As of June 2022, the settlement had grown to house 27,000 people. However, the city refuses to provide water, sanitation, and electricity because the settlement is on private land (Nzo, 2022), highlighting the unequal distribution of resources in the city. Further research is needed to determine the long-term impact of the pandemic’s economic and social consequences on the housing shortage. Likely, the increase in informal housing during COVID will further complicate the city’s mission of providing housing to every resident.

A 2021 business news website reported that “despite the uncertainties surrounding COVID-19 and the ensuing lockdowns, the residential property market has proven to be one of South Africa’s more resilient sectors, despite the challenging trading environment” (Business tech, 2021). It appears likely that the pandemic may not have negatively affected the property market as much as it negatively impacted people who were already economically vulnerable. Future research is also needed to determine whether the pandemic may have slowed gentrification in Cape Town or if it increased the displacement of low-income residents from the city centre.

South Africa officially ended all restrictions related to COVID, including those related to travel, in June 2022 (Read, 2022). There are signs that things are returning to a relative normal. The city of Cape Town has once again welcomed large numbers of tourists. As of December 2022, Cape Town tourism has recovered to pre-COVID levels (Campbell, 2022). In addition, the minstrel show in Cape Town was held again in January 2023 for the first time since the global pandemic (Valentine, 2022). However, Cape Town and the rest of South Africa are facing significant issues threatening the current tourist season and beyond. In addition to the threat of
global recession and high unemployment rates, ongoing rolling blackouts continue to affect businesses and individuals (Metelerkamp, 2022). In response to the rampant and prolonged electricity grid issues, the president declared a state of disaster on February 9, 2023 (Stark, 2023).

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the deepening energy crisis, the situation in South Africa is different than the circumstances described in this dissertation. However, my research raises questions with respect to the current state of affairs. The pandemic further highlighted the need for policies and practices that might promote substantive belonging, such as access to affordable housing, emergency housing in the city, equitable access to essential services, and sustainable development. The lack of access to adequate housing, services, and resources that resulted from the pandemic, along with the electricity grid problems and high unemployment rates, have intensified existing issues for residents in Cape Town. Future research is needed to determine how residents respond to these stressors and whether it will include increased protest and claims to rights, specifically to demand greater participation in shaping the future of their city and various modes of belonging.

It is possible to trace the thread of protest in all its forms, including occupation of buildings and land, marches, court cases, and disruption of events and spaces, throughout this dissertation. Protest remains an important way for individuals and groups to signal the misalignment of rights and resources in conjunction with affective claims to belong. Stated another way, these varying forms of protest indicate a gap in substantive belonging for particular groups. Protests continue to be staged to fight spatial apartheid and assert claims to the right to the city. For example, illegal occupation of buildings by people seeking housing in the city has increased in recent years (Eidelmman, 2021). As recently as February 8, 2023, a protest was held
to demand an end to the mistreatment of landless people in Cape Town (Metelerkamp, 2023). Shortly after that, Western Cape Premier Alan Wilde blamed activists for slowing down their affordable housing programme by occupying buildings that were earmarked for affordable housing (Payne, 2023). This response from the government demonstrate not only how far out of alignment the provincial government’s position is with the activists’ but also the rigidity of the system. The provincial government does not appear open to considering the activists’ proposition that the current system is not adequate in addressing the housing crisis.

Claims based on affective experiences, like those of District Six claimants, park visitors, and beachgoers, have been more successful in demanding symbolic equality compared to material or economic forms of redress. This success is evident in their ability to access previously segregated spaces and experience a sense of belonging. However, when attempting to translate this symbolic belonging into more structural modes of belonging, such as the right to remain in gentrifying cities or returning to forcibly removed sites, the rigid and inflexible nature of the political-economic system becomes apparent. This rigidity hinders substantive changes in achieving equality, restitution, and reconciliation, making these goals challenging to attain. The recent ruling of the Bromwell case reflects this reality. Rather than forcing the city to rethink their current housing paradigm, the Supreme Court of Appeals sided with the city and agreed that claims to a right to the city need to be filtered through the long-term affordable housing program rather than via the emergency housing program. Finally, there are no easy answers to the very real and complex legacies of apartheid. However, a recent post on Ndifuna Ukwazi’s Facebook page sums up what is at stake for many who are protesting:

For how long will the poor and working class be forced to live in shacks and on small plots (which the state might demolish and displace them from), while those who benefitted from the extraction of their wealth continue to live in spacious
homes, with high walls, gardens, and the occasional beautiful view, sheltered from poverty? (Ndifuna Ukwazi, 2023b)

Waiting for change is something activists against spatial apartheid and land claimants alike understand. Sadly, Cedric van Diemen passed away in June 2021. He was not able to see the fruits of his decades-long labour and was not able to return to the beautiful place he called home. The death of a claimant prior to their resettlement is tragically common, and a source of ongoing anxiety for many claimants. In addition to being tragic for the claimant, it is also a source of pain for surviving family and friends. When these kinds of tragic disappointments occur, they unravel the small steps that have been made toward reconciliation and redress.


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Appendices

Appendix 1–WEX Living Promotional Brochure

Meet the new Woodstock!

The allure of Woodstock as a place to live, not only work, is self-evident. As City Bowl property prices soar, and the highways choke with rush hour traffic, locals and out-of-towners are flocking to this convenient and characterful district, driving the rise of the Soho / Brooklyn of Cape Town, and turning an already vibrant suburb into a bustling bohemian village with an authentic sense of inner-city living.

As we all know, evolution is exponential. And the occasionally rapid metamorphosis of cities is no exception. It’s happening in London and New York, Sydney and Shanghai. And it’s happening right here, in a uniquely Woodstockian way!

Right from the beginning, when Khoisan villagers and Dutch sailors met on a beach, Woodstock in its various iterations has been the frontier where different cultures have come together, creating a mixed community where humans of the hood live side-by-side.

This has been – and will remain – one of the suburb’s key differentiators, a dynamic that is transforming Cape town’s only-remaining fringe neighbourhood into a dynamo for residential and commercial symbiosis.
Appendix 2–WEX Living Promotional Brochure

**WEX Living: What’s that?**

**WEX** is not a building. It’s a lifestyle. An attitude.

**WEX** is about living car-free in a creative vortex.

**WEX** is about cycling and skating and ubering.

**WEX** is about warm koesusters and great flat whites.

**WEX** is about world-class street art.

**WEX** is about gin bars and craft beers.

**WEX** is about lightning WiFi and hi-speed fibre.

**WEX** is about snoek horns and fog horns and church bells and muezzins.

**WEX** is about savouring insanely attractive skylines at sunset from rooftops.

**WEX** is about embracing the crazy old funkiness of Woodstock with a huge warm hug.

**WEX** is about waking up to hot, fresh, industrial-chic, new urban design.

**WEX** is about putting your money and your mojo into the renewal of Cape Town’s original urban fringe.

**WEX** is about transforming dysfunctional dilapidation into bright, beautiful, purposeful new spaces.
Appendix 3—Interview questions

**Interview Questions**

- What is your name?
- Have you lived in South Africa your whole life?
- What do you do for a living?

**Forced removal/land claims**

- Do you or a family member have first-hand experience with the forced removals?
- Can you tell me a little about your experience?
- How would you say these events still affect you or your family or your community?
- How do you feel about the development of District Six Museum as a tourist site/heritage site?
- Why do you think the District Six Museum was opened?
- Are you involved with a land claim?
- What has the process been like dealing with the land claim?
- What does returning to the land claim site mean to you?

**Questions about Woodstock**

- How long have you lived here?
- How has Woodstock changed over the years?
- What do the changes mean for you?
- How is gentrification/development affecting you?
- What will you do if you have to move?
Appendix 4—Ndifuna Ukwazi Pamphlet

**Fight for Woodstock**

#StandWithBromwell

**Wednesday 9 November at 9 am**

Western Cape High Court
35 Keerom Str

Bromwell Street families are being threatened with eviction to a relocation camp 30 km from Cape Town.

Woodstock residents: Stand up against forced removals of the poor and working class. We will fill the High Court as families, workers, small business owners and activists.

**RECLAIM THE CITY**

**LAND FOR PEOPLE**

**NOT FOR PROFIT**
Appendix 5 —Protea Village land division map

Source: Protea Village (2023)