



**University of Cape Town**  
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**THE DEVELOPMENT OF COUNTER-SURVEYING AS A METHODOLOGY TO  
DOCUMENT FORCED REMOVALS: CASE STUDIES OF DISTRICT SIX AND DIE  
VLAKTE**

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Philosophy (by dissertation) in Civil Engineering at the University of Cape Town.

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## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my late grandfather, *Ntate Moholo*, may your soul rest in eternal peace.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

To my supervisor, Siddique Motala, thank you for your time, guidance, and support. It has been such an honour to learn from you and see an important part of South Africa's history through your lens. Thank you for the ideas that brought the vision I had for my dissertation to life. Your empathy, positivity and kindness made the journey enjoyable and will not be forgotten.

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To God, for where I am, and the journey ahead, thank You.

## **ABSTRACT**

Nearly 30 years post-apartheid, many victims of forced removals remain displaced, their sense of place and identity fractured. The methodology of counter-surveying, though underdeveloped, has been proposed to identify sites of forced removals and engage with affected communities. According to Motala and Bozalek (2022), counter-surveying is a method that uses traditional surveying techniques to temporarily mark and engage with demolished sites, particularly in the contexts of dispossession and forced removals. This study further develops, enhances and describes the counter-surveying methodology through an interdisciplinary approach, integrating Geographic Information Systems (GIS), archival research, site visits, interviews, and hauntology to map forced removal sites. It seeks to document the lives and spaces of those displaced, asking: How can counter-surveying be optimised to capture and document the stories of forced removals?

The research centres on ex-residents of District Six and Die Vlakte as they revisit the locations where their former homes once stood. It highlights the danger of oversimplifying the complex ordeals faced by a group and the erasure of individual experiences. The analysis of interviews with ex-residents reveals significant work needed towards reparations for victims of forced removals. Additionally, the results emphasise the importance of ‘exact place’ and using non-traditional methods to engage with the past, preserving, and giving life to historical events. This research aims to provide a framework for addressing historical injustices through an innovative methodological approach highlighting the ongoing impacts of past injustices.

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## **Glossary of Relevant Terms and Acts**

Anarchiving: engaging with the historical record in a manner that resists fixed archival practices. Contrary to traditional archives, anarchiving adopts participatory ways of remembering by incorporating oral histories, embodied experiences, and other forms of memory to challenge historical narratives.

Archiving - the process of making decisions about what has lasting value and the accession, description, preservation, accessibility, and utility of archives, heritage, and memory institutions. It also involves the creation and change of archives, heritage, and memory institutions, and how they can transcend time to be experienced by future generations and beyond and serve as evidence of social justice and injustice (Wallace et al., 2020).

Cadastral data - official documentation of the dimensions, location, occupancy, ownership, and value of parcels of land.

Cadastral noting sheet - a document that details specifics on pieces of land such as dimensions, boundaries, ownership, and any changes on the property over time.

Cartography - the art and science of making maps by representing spatial information about the world - such as roads, rivers, and mountains etc, - into an easily discernible visual format.

Chief Surveyor General – the government office responsible for documenting a country’s property boundaries and cadastral data.

Diffraction- a method of interacting with history and memory to highlight the interaction of the present and the past in overlapping and reshaping each other rather than merely reflecting or repeating the past.

District Six Museum – established in 1994, the museum is dedicated to preserving the memory and spirit of District Six by closely working with the community.

Ex-residents – people of colour who were forcibly evicted from their homes after the declaration of the Group Areas Act in 1950 during apartheid.

Group Areas Act of 1950 – an apartheid law that classified urban areas into racial zones, determining where different racial groups could live and own property.

Hauntology – coined by Jacques Derrida, is a play on ontology (the study of being), suggesting that traces of the past haunt the present through ideas, histories, or futures that were lost never fully disappear.

Memory work – the practice of actively remembering personal and collective memories to gain insight into how they form part of individual identity and community (Onyx and Small, 2001).

Population Registration Act of 1950 – an apartheid law that mandated that all citizens classify themselves according to their race and racial characteristics (RSA, 1950a)

Restitution – the return of something lost or stolen to its rightful owner.

Restitution of Land Rights Act of 1994 – the Act that mandates the return of land rights to people and communities it was dispossessed from under the Group Areas Act of 1950.

Shapefile – a digital file that stores spatial data such as maps, boundaries, or locations. The three possible types are points, lines, and polygons, which can be described through attribute data (labels, properties, descriptions).

Slums – also known as informal settlements, these are overcrowded and dilapidated residential dwellings that house low to no-income people.

Slum Areas Act of 1934 – a racially motivated Act disguised as an effort to clean up dilapidated areas (Barnett, 1993). The Act took effect by the displacement of non-White populations.

Swipe (GIS feature) – a tool used to compare two GIS layers (in the same location) by moving a slider to reveal one layer below another.

Total station – a surveying tool used to measure distance and angles. It is useful for mapping land, building foundations, and marking property boundaries. It combines functions such as calculating distance, direction, height differences, and angles.

Township – a term used to describe a residential area that is usually underdeveloped and was reserved for non-Whites during apartheid.

Trilateration – a method used to determine the exact location by measuring distances from known (reference) points.

Vlakte Community Forum – A tribunal of ex-residents and descendants of ex-residents of Die Vlakte seeking to document the history of forced removals in Stellenbosch, fighting for restitution and holding the responsible institutions accountable.

## 1. Introduction

District Six and Die Vlakte are symbols of apartheid-era forced removals in South Africa, embodying both loss and resilience. These neighbourhoods were both known for their vibrance, diversity and strong community ties until they were declared as Whites-only areas following the enactment of the Group Areas Act (Grundlingh, n.d.; Pistorius et al., 2002). By the 1980s, over 60,000 people of colour (POC) had been moved from District Six (Breytenbach, 2016) and over 3000 from Die Vlakte (Grundlingh, n.d.). They were moved to townships designated for Blacks, Coloureds, and Indians, whereby most would experience a downgrade in their quality of life (Pistorius et al., 2002).

Initially conceptualised by Motala and Bozalek (2022), counter-surveying emerged as a practice for recalling memories and using the landscape as an archive through the embodied experience of walking through sites affected by forced removals. This approach highlighted how walking can evoke emotion, with the body acting as a conduit for reclaiming lost histories. This research seeks to refine and elaborate upon the original counter-surveying approach by further expanding on documenting the history, narratives, and spaces of those marginalised by these forced displacements.

Traditional surveying and historical bookkeeping often exclude the voices of those who were marginalised. This research aims to develop and document counter-surveying as a methodology that preserves the history of forced removals in District Six and Die Vlakte by incorporating silenced narratives. It seeks to answer the questions: How can counter-surveying be applied to document the lived experiences of communities affected by the forced removals? How might this methodology be used to re-interpret these sites as important parts of South Africa's heritage?

The methodology incorporates interviews with ex-residents, archival data, and geomatics techniques (surveying and mapping). This helps gain insight into the impact of forced removals on former residents, analyse the dominant historical narrative, and map the changes in the spatial landscape to help understand forced removals beyond the destruction of the social fabric of affected communities.

Hauntology is a concept introduced by Derrida (1993) to explain how the future is shaped by traces of the past, making the present feel 'haunted' by what was or could have been. This phenomenon shapes the methodology by exploring how landscapes evoke or hold memories. Geomatics provides the spatial tools to trace changes in the landscape and recreate the past.

Counter-surveying was thus developed through a combination of archival social justice, hauntology, geomatics, and the foundational work of Motala and Bozalek (2022) which focused on anarchival work in combination with walking methodologies.

### 1.1 Problem Statement

Under apartheid, District Six and Die Vlakte, like many areas of South Africa populated by POC, experienced massive racially motivated displacement. Despite documentation efforts by researchers and organisations like the District Six Museum and Die Vlakte Community Forum, current methods of preserving this history are dated and fragmented. While the forced removals in District Six have been extensively documented through various media, including books, newspapers and exhibitions, there is a notable gap in the literature and data concerning Die Vlakte.

### 1.2 Significance of Research

With many ex-residents ageing, it is important to document and preserve their narratives to avoid the risk of the past being lost forever. This research is significant for preserving history and ensuring that communal memory is maintained, honouring the experiences of those affected and promoting social justice. Addressing this problem will facilitate a more holistic view of forced removals, benefiting future research and providing a different interpretation of the past.

The research aims to develop a comprehensive counter-surveying methodology to advance the understanding of forced removals by integrating qualitative and quantitative data into a cohesive and engaging format. This involves identifying key data inputs from archival material, spatial data, and other disciplines, then conducting land surveys, GIS mapping and interviews to capture ex-resident's experiences effectively.

### 1.3 Research Objectives

#### 1.3.1 General Objective

The development of a methodology for counter-surveying using multi-disciplinary techniques and inquiry.

#### 1.3.2 Specific Objectives

Achieving the following specific research goals is necessary to accomplish the general objective of this body of work:

- Developing the counter-surveying methodology: To create an in-depth methodology that integrates qualitative and quantitative data to document forced removals.
  - Identify and integrate key data inputs: To determine what type of data from archival, spatial, and other relevant disciplines inform and support the process of counter-surveying.
  - Engage with communities: The process should place primacy on the experiences of communities who were dispossessed and capture their points of view.
  - Conduct mapping and fieldwork: To mark out the locations of the demolished buildings.
- Preserve historical narratives and spatial information: To create an archive that documents and integrates narratives of ex-residents, mapping data over time and locational information of the past relative to the present landscape.
- Analyse data: To analyse the collected spatial data and oral histories to enhance the understanding of the impacts of forced removals and how they may be incorporated into the counter-surveying methodology.

### 1.4 Research Questions

The research questions and methodology are guided by the proposition: Integrating oral histories, physical site surveying, site visits, spatial data, and archives will result in a comprehensive and inclusive documentation of forced removals in District Six and Die Vlakte.

This research is an inquiry into:

- What processes and techniques are necessary to develop a comprehensive methodology?

- Which data inputs are significant for the process of counter-surveying?
- How can the data be analysed and integrated to create a cohesive representation of forced removals?
- How can the site survey and interviews be conducted to capture the detailed experiences of ex-residents?
- What is the impact of the developed counter-surveying methodology on ex-residents?
- How can the methodology facilitate future research?

### 1.5 Research Assumptions

- The areas of study (District Six and Die Vlakte) are accessible.
- Archival material, spatial data, necessary equipment, and software are available for the research.
- Ex-residents/community members will cooperate with the research team to engage and participate in the site visits and interviews.
- The research will be conducted ethically, respecting the rights and memories of ex-residents.

### 1.6 Key Research Outputs

- The formulation of a well-defined, comprehensive, and multidisciplinary methodology for documenting forced removals.
- Reporting on the significant data inputs and a designed set of processes to inform the methodology.
- The creation of a visual, narrative, and geo-spatial representation of the history of parts of District Six and Die Vlakte gathered through interviews.
- An archiving of narratives of ex-residents, ensuring their stories contribute to communal memory.

### 1.7 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 below shows the conceptual framework of the research undertaken in the study. A conceptual framework is a tool used to limit and focus the scope of research to refine relevant objectives (Rossiter, 2013). It ensures that only relevant information is included in a study. The arrows show the data flow from one element to the next and the relationship between variables.

The independent variables in the study are the data sources, as they can be collected and manipulated. These are archival science, GIS/surveying and oral histories (interviews), and they inform counter-surveying by providing data. The outcome and result of the study are the counter-surveying methodology and its integration and synthesis, as shown in Figure 1. This is the dependent variable, as it depends on the independent variables.

Archival social justice and hauntology provide the theoretical basis for analysing the data. They influence the dependent and independent variables that surround them both. Iteration and synthesis represent the research's outcome. The final methodology is synthesised from the original methodology by Motala and Bozalek (2022). Scope and limitations are at the border of the framework as they set the research's parameters.

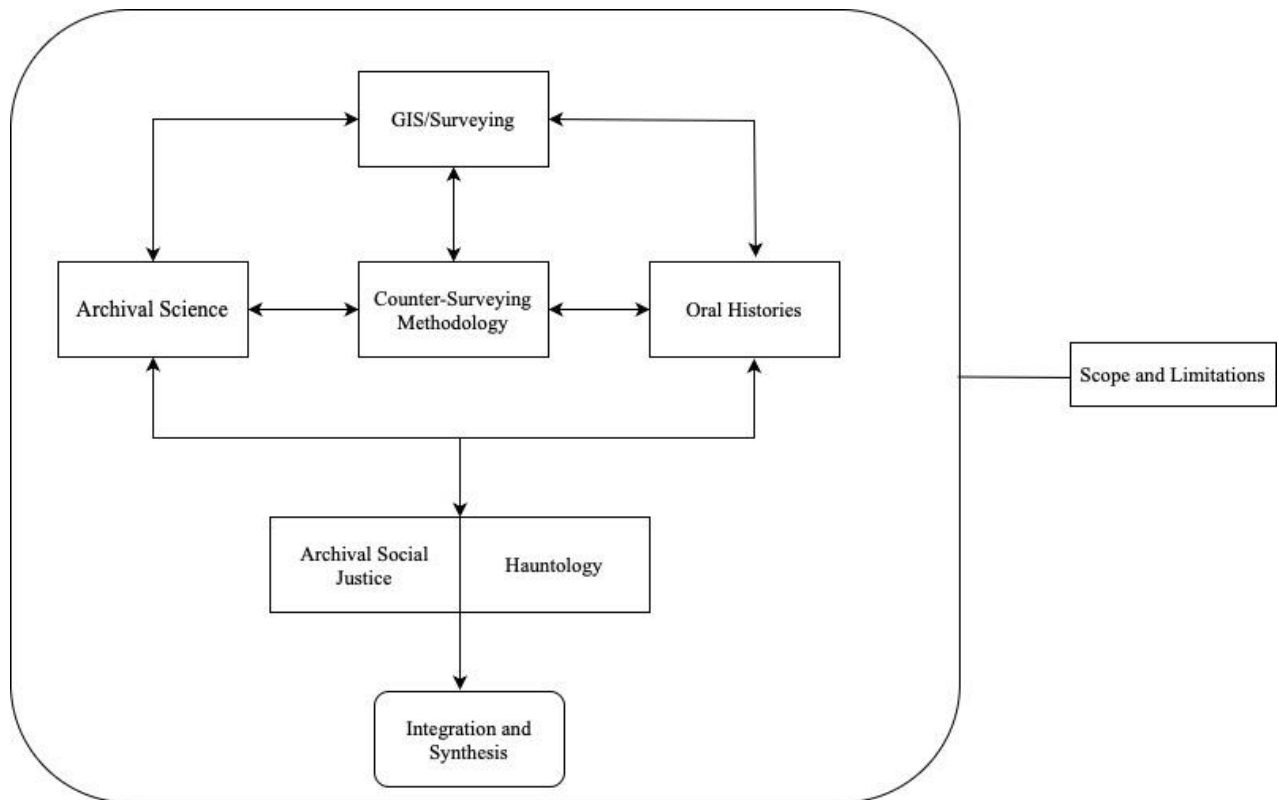


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 shows a bi-directional flow of information between counter-surveying and the three key disciplines in this study: archival science, GIS/surveying, and oral histories. These elements form the foundation of this research, reinforcing the transdisciplinary approach that integrates counter-surveying with archival social justice (Wallace et al., 2020). The diagram reflects how counter-surveying does not operate in isolation but interacts dynamically with

other disciplines, embodying the concept of diffraction highlighted by Motala and Bozalek (2022), which rejects strict hierarchies between disciplines.

The framework highlights the intangible, transient and ephemeral aspects of the original counter-surveying methodology (Motala and Bozalek, 2022), while also positioning this new approach as tangible, document-driven, and designed for preservation and sharing. By bridging archival science and oral histories with GIS and surveying techniques, this methodology seeks to capture, document, and contextualise histories of displacement, such as those in District Six and Die Vlakte. Although archival, it is also connected to the concept of the anarchival which imagines archival material as departure points for the creation of new experiences.

At the core of this framework is the integration of archival social justice and hauntology, which inform how counter-surveying is re-imagined. These theoretical foundations allow for engagement with the past that transcends conventional documentation and recognises the lingering presence of historical injustices. Therefore, the integration of these components underscores a justice-oriented approach to historic preservation, with counter-surveying as a method of documentation and a way of resistance.

The scope and limitations element at the periphery of the framework shows an awareness of the constraints inherent in this methodology. While counter-surveying provides an innovative way of recovering and retrieving histories, challenges such as limited or incomplete data, subjective oral histories, and institutional censorship in archival science remain important elements to consider in this study.

### 1.8 Outline

[Chapter 2](#): provides the background and historical context of the study areas.

[Chapter 3](#): consists of the literature review.

[Chapter 4](#): describes the methods undertaken to develop the counter-surveying methodology.

[Chapter 5](#): discusses the results gathered from the methodology.

[Chapter 6](#): is a summary of the steps undertaken in counter-surveying and is summarised in Figure 2.

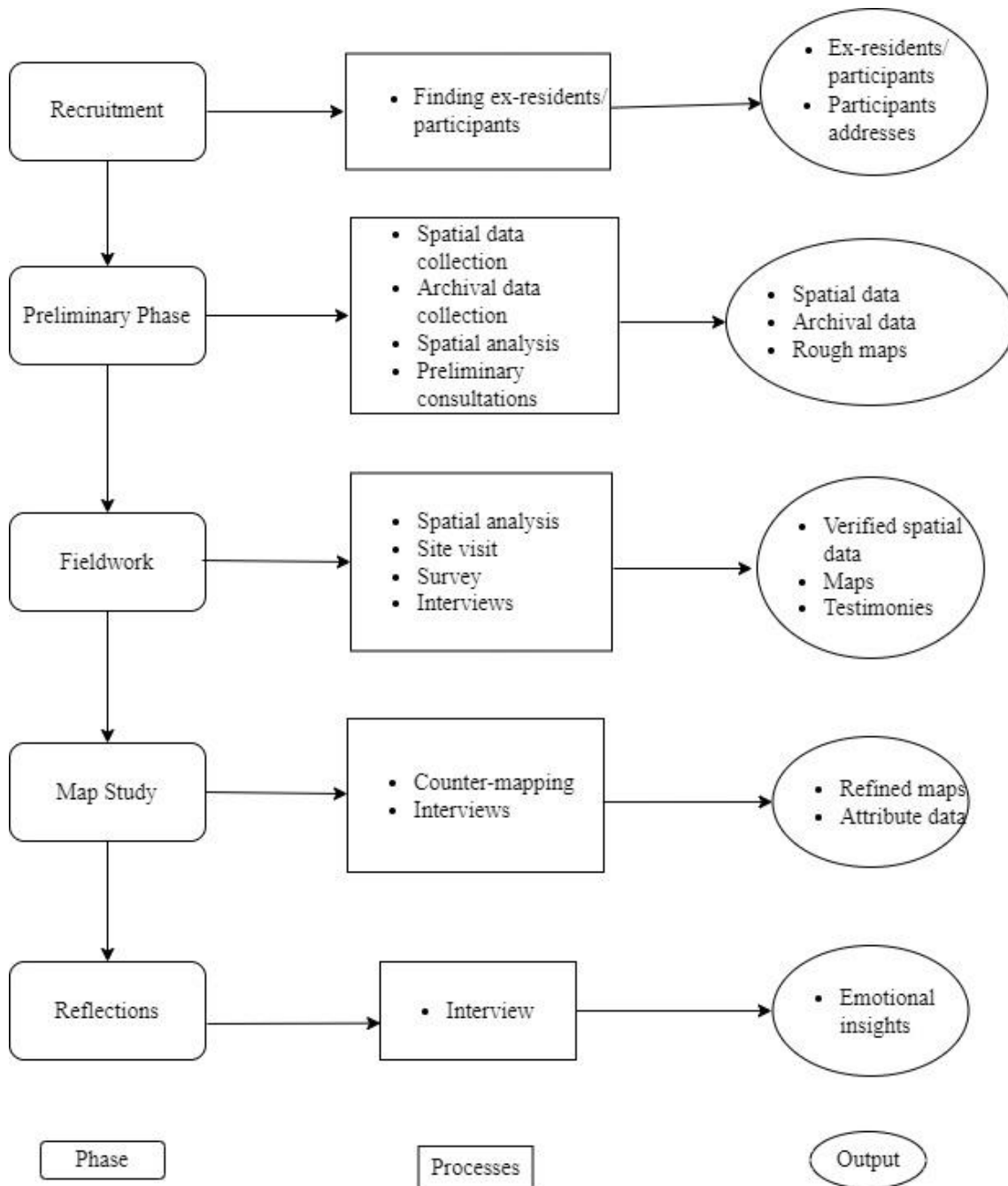


Figure 2: Counter-surveying workflow

[Chapter 7](#): is the conclusion summarising the findings and linking them to the research questions and objectives, as well as outlining recommendations for future research.

## **2. Background and History of District Six and Die Vlakte**

This chapter focuses on the historical and socio-political context of District Six in Cape Town and Die Vlakte in Stellenbosch. These areas contained vibrant and racially diverse communities that were forcibly displaced during apartheid. The areas are the subject of this study as they provide insight into the impact of apartheid policies on marginalised communities across South Africa. A broader understanding of the history of these sites is important in appreciating the significance of the counter-surveying methodology developed and documented in this research.

Forced removals were motivated by the quest to claim desirable land and resources for Whites by taking them from POC (Pistorius et al., 2002). According to the Population Registration Act of 1950, each citizen was mandated to belong to a statutory group based on race (RSA, 1950a). This paved the way for the Group Areas Act of 1950, whereby the different race groups were forced to live in areas that were reserved for their specific group only, and often resulted in POC being forcibly removed from their homes to racially homogenous residential and business areas (Republic of South Africa, 1950a).

### 2.1 District Six

In 1834, when enslaved people were declared free, Cape Town proliferated, as people from all over Africa and the world immigrated in search of jobs (Pistorius et al., 2002). As industries grew rapidly, the pressure to provide housing for the growing working population also increased. This created a demand for housing, and District Six was established in 1867 to satisfy the need for low-income housing near places of employment in the city centre (Pistorius et al., 2002). Both ex-slaves and immigrants made themselves home in the newly established settlement.

District Six sits in an attractive location, which posed it as a potential metaphorical gold mine for the apartheid government (Breytenbach, 2016); hence the mission to obtain it from POC. It is located adjacent to the Cape Town city centre and harbour and has a panoramic view of the Atlantic Ocean with a backdrop of the scenic Table Mountain. Figure 3 shows District Six in relation to the city centre, Table Mountain, and the harbour.

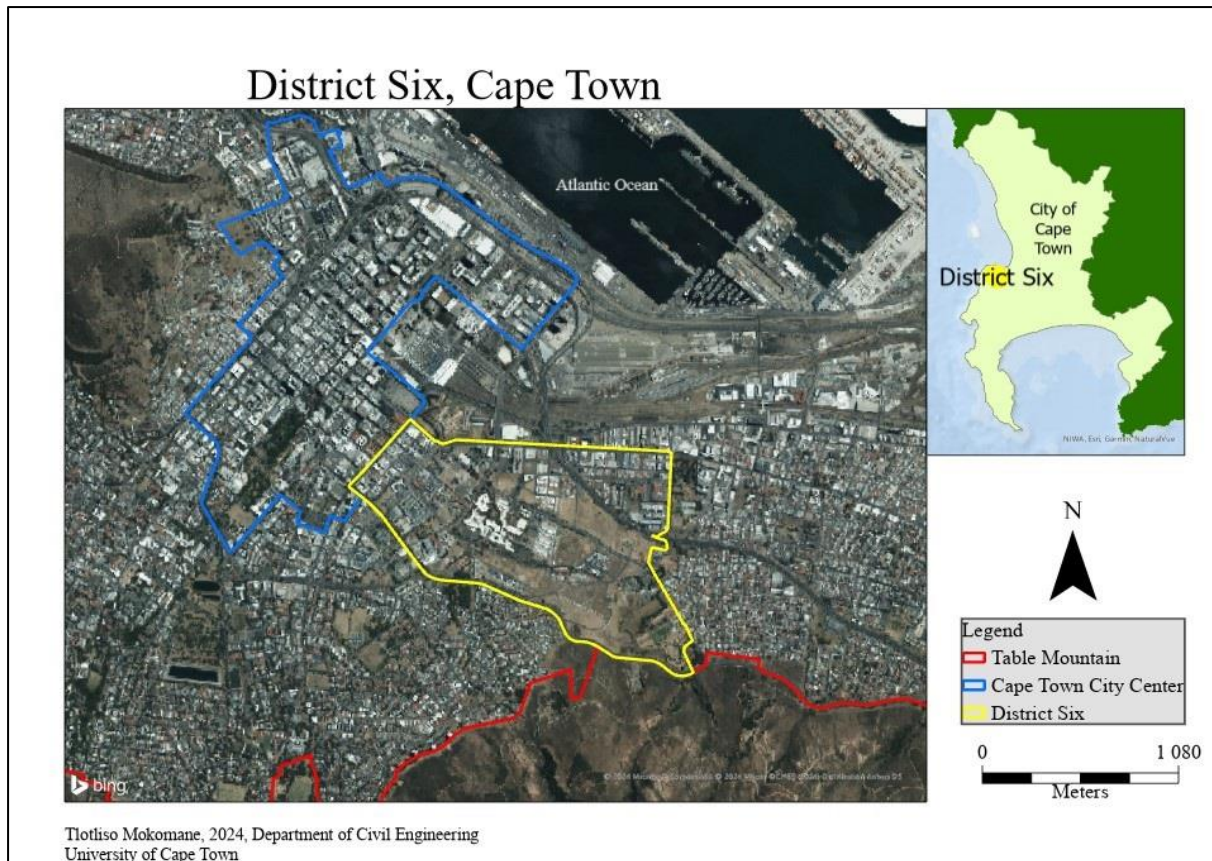


Figure 3: Map of District Six

District Six was home to working-class people due to its proximity to places of work. The municipality neglected development and maintenance, focusing on wealthier suburbs such as Claremont and Bishopscourt (Pistorius et al., 2002; Breytenbach, 2016). This left the neighbourhood underdeveloped and dilapidated. This would result in the area being declared a slum under the Slums Act of 1934 to remove POC (Barnett, 1993). Pistorius et al. (2002:40) explain that despite the massive economic growth of Cape Town, District Six remained a “poor, working-class neighbourhood.... with prevalent concerns about health and sanitation.... overcrowding and slum landlordism”. However, despite the squalor and difficult living circumstances, the community took care of itself, resulting in a strong sense of attachment to the place ex-residents still feel (Bennett, 2022).

District Six was a true precursor of the romanticised South African “rainbow nation” (Soudien, 2021:370-375). It was home to various racial and cultural groups and developed into a place with a rich cultural heritage. This contrasted with the government’s racial segregation strategy. Writers and ex-residents repeatedly mention the community as closely knit (Hart, 1988; Pistorius et al., 2002; Breytenbach, 2016). A strong sense of culture and celebration of life

preserved vitality and cohesion within the community (Adams and Hermione, 1988). This was seen in festivities, concerts, religious celebrations, and even simple gatherings that honoured community connection (Breytenbach, 2016; Bennett, 2022). Despite being a low-income community with minimal job security, initiatives were developed to ensure that food was distributed to those in need so that no family went to bed hungry (Bennett, 2022).

District Six was subject to multiple instances of forced removals. In 1901, there was an outbreak of the bubonic plague in Cape Town. It was blamed on the African population who lived on Horstley Street and were subsequently moved to Langa, the first Black township, under the guise of quarantine (Pistorius et al., 2002). The second removal occurred in 1966 when District Six was declared a White Group Area. During these apartheid-era forced removals, ex-residents were relocated to townships such as Hanover Park, Langa, and Khayelitsha on the Cape Flats.

The Cape Flats was a region designated for non-Whites during the removals (SA History Online, 2011). Pistorius et al. (2002) point out that early in the development of Cape Town, European settlers gravitated towards areas conducive to human habitation, avoiding the Cape Flats in particular. They deemed the land undesirable on sandy and windy terrain prone to floods (Pistorius et al., 2002). This meant that it was neither suitable for agriculture nor habitation. However, as the Group Areas Act was enforced, this land was designated for POC. In addition to disrupting established communities, the relocation to the Cape Flats displaced people to inhospitable and inferior living conditions.

The relocation of people to the townships was not only a geographic change but a drastic change in the quality of life. The homes provided were poorly constructed and small, yet had to accommodate large, displaced families (Todeschini, n.d.; Hart, 1988). Many of the homes lacked amenities such as running water, electricity, and proper sanitation facilities (SA History Online, 2011). The neighbourhoods designated for POC had poor infrastructure, and public transport was far, making it difficult for residents to commute to work in the city (Pistorius et al., 2002; SA History Online, 2011). The area was significantly far from the city centre, isolating it from economic activity, thus limiting employment opportunities and access to services for the residents (Pistorius et al., 2002). This separation from economic opportunities led many families into poverty (SA History Online, 2011).

The economic hardship and harsh and drastic changes in living conditions created a breeding ground for criminal activity on the Cape Flats (SA History Online, 2011). Unemployment rates rose as people lost their jobs due to the region's geographic isolation (SA History Online, 2011). In District Six, the strong community bonds helped curb criminal behaviour (Pistorius et al., 2002). However, the displacement and loss of community on the Cape Flats made individuals more vulnerable to negative influences (SA History Online, 2011). This made crime an appealing alternative for survival, and gangs emerged as they offered young people a sense of belonging and economic opportunities through illegal activity (Pistorius et al., 2002; SA History Online, 2011).

South Africa transitioned from apartheid to a democratic government in 1994. Racist laws, including the Group Areas Act, were abolished (Todeschini, n.d.). Families that were removed could lay restitution claims to return to their former homes or receive compensation under the Restitution of Land Rights Act of 1994 (The Department of Education, 1994). In the true collaborative fashion of District Six, the claim was made that they would return as a collective rather than individually (Todeschini, n.d.). Of the roughly 60,000 people who were removed, only a few hundred have been compensated or moved back to the suburb (Marvin, 2021) by the time of writing this dissertation. In 2022, 108 ex-residents received keys to their homes in phase 3 of 6 phases (Marvin, 2021).

### *District Six Through Space and Time*

In the following images, the yellow boundary borders the site limits of District Six, while the ellipses in Figures 5, 6, and 7 illustrate the changes over time. Figure 4 shows the site's satellite image in 1953 before enforcing the Group Areas Act. In 1953, the neighbourhood was fully built and became a fully functional residential and business district.



*Figure 4: District Six in 1953*

Figure 5 shows an image of the neighbourhood in 1968 when the removals started. Ellipse A is the site of the first demolitions. It is significant as this would later become the site of some of the buildings of the Cape Technikon, a Whites-only university. In ellipse B, the N2 highway was being constructed over the locations of the homes there, marking the start of the change in the road network.



Figure 5: District Six in 1968

Figure 6 shows District 6 in 1983. There is a stark difference in the layout of the streets between 1968 and 1983. As observed, more buildings had been demolished.



Figure 6: District Six in 1983

The ellipse in Figure 6 shows a row of houses not affected by the demolitions as they belonged to White residents of District Six. Most houses were demolished by 1983, leaving some schools, mosques, and churches (Pistorius et al., 2002).

Figure 7 is from 1986, and the ellipse shows the newly constructed Cape Technikon. This is the area where the first evictions and demolitions occurred in 1968.



*Figure 7: District Six in 1986*

Today, the Cape Technikon is called the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). It covers a significant part of District Six and is located over several important sites, such as the Seven Steps (shown by the blue point). The Seven Steps was considered the heart of District Six (Breytenbach, 2016).

## 2.2 Die Vlakte

Die Vlakte was a small but vibrant neighbourhood established in the late 1800s in Stellenbosch. It was primarily composed of Coloured residents, with minorities of Indian, African, and White populations (Grundlingh, n.d.). Much like District Six, albeit on a smaller scale, the community was cohesive and diverse, with residents of different races co-existing peacefully (Stellenbosch

Heritage Foundation, n.d.; Giliomee, 2007). It comprised a working-class population of merchants, teachers, and other professionals (Grundlingh, n.d).

The neighbourhood was more than just a residential area; it was a thriving community with homes, churches, mosques, schools, and various business establishments. The area's attractiveness to the apartheid government stemmed from its proximity to the town centre, making it desirable for redevelopment. Figure 8 shows the location of Die Vlakte relative to the town centre of Stellenbosch.

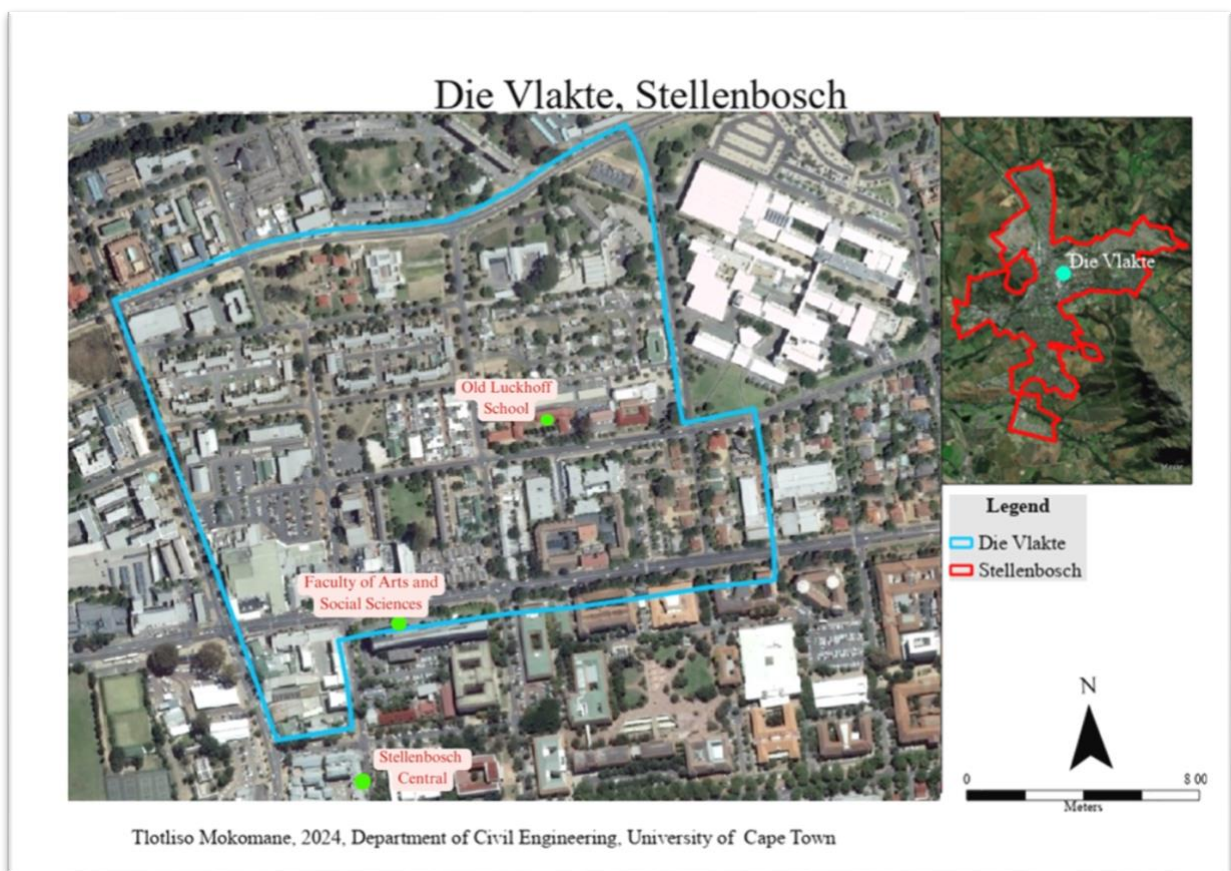


Figure 8: Map of Die Vlakte

Figure 8, adapted from Biscombe (2006) and Stellenbosch University Visual Arts (2015), shows the proximity of Die Vlakte to Stellenbosch Central, highlighting its desirable location. The map also includes key landmarks such as the Old Luckhoff School. Luckhoff School was a school that educated the Coloured residents of Stellenbosch before the evictions. The building is now part of the university. The Arts and Social Sciences building, which sits on the south border of what was once Die Vlakte, hosts a mural detailing the history of forced removals at the entrance.

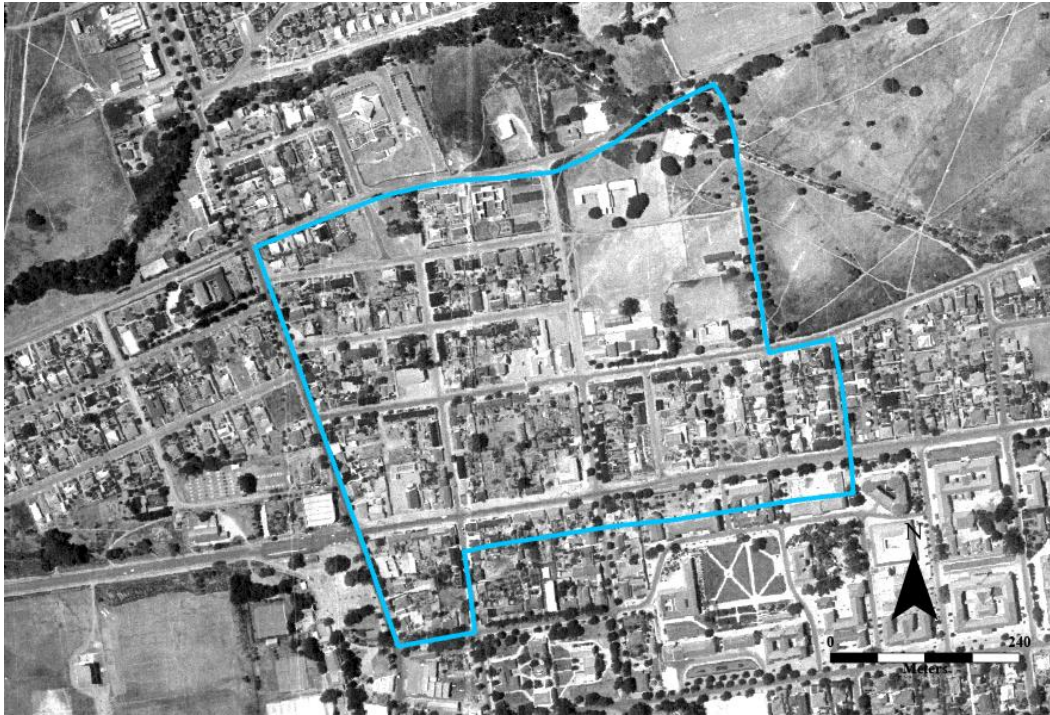
In 1964, Die Vlakte was declared a White Group Area, and under the guise that it was a slum, the predominantly Coloured families that were the main occupants of Die Vlakte were forced to leave their homes. This removal affected the lives of approximately 3750 non-White residents (Grundlingh, n.d.). They were relocated to the outskirts of Stellenbosch in the nearby townships of Idas Valley, Cloetesville, and Kayamandi. These townships were vastly underdeveloped, with no community facilities, poor service delivery, and inadequate infrastructure (Grundlingh, n.d.). Giliomee (2007) notes that Die Vlakte was by no means a slum, and thus, the removal of residents from the area was unwarranted.

Luckoff School was notable for being the first Afrikaans School for Coloured students in the area (Stellenbosch Heritage Foundation, n.d.). The school was reputable, had over 1000 pupils, and was called the heart of the community (Stellenbosch University Visual Arts, 2015). However, in 1969, under the Group Areas Act, the school was relocated from Die Vlakte to Cloetesville. This move damaged the school's strong academic presence and social fabric that defined the learners and teachers (Grundlingh, n.d.). Due to the apartheid-era policies which aimed to silence the history of marginalised communities, few official records make references to the rich heritage of the community.

The exact borders of Die Vlakte remain a subject of debate, as some literature and ex-residents claim it extended further than the commonly recognised borders. Figure 8 depicts the possible boundaries of Die Vlakte as outlined in blue and superimposed on a current aerial image of Stellenbosch.

### *Die Vlakte Through Space and Time*

Figure 9 is an aerial image of Die Vlakte in 1960. This was before the forced removals, and the houses and homes of residents had not been demolished. The image captures a functional community with schools, churches, shops, and homes, reflecting the vibrant life of its residents.



*Figure 9: Die Vlakte in 1960*

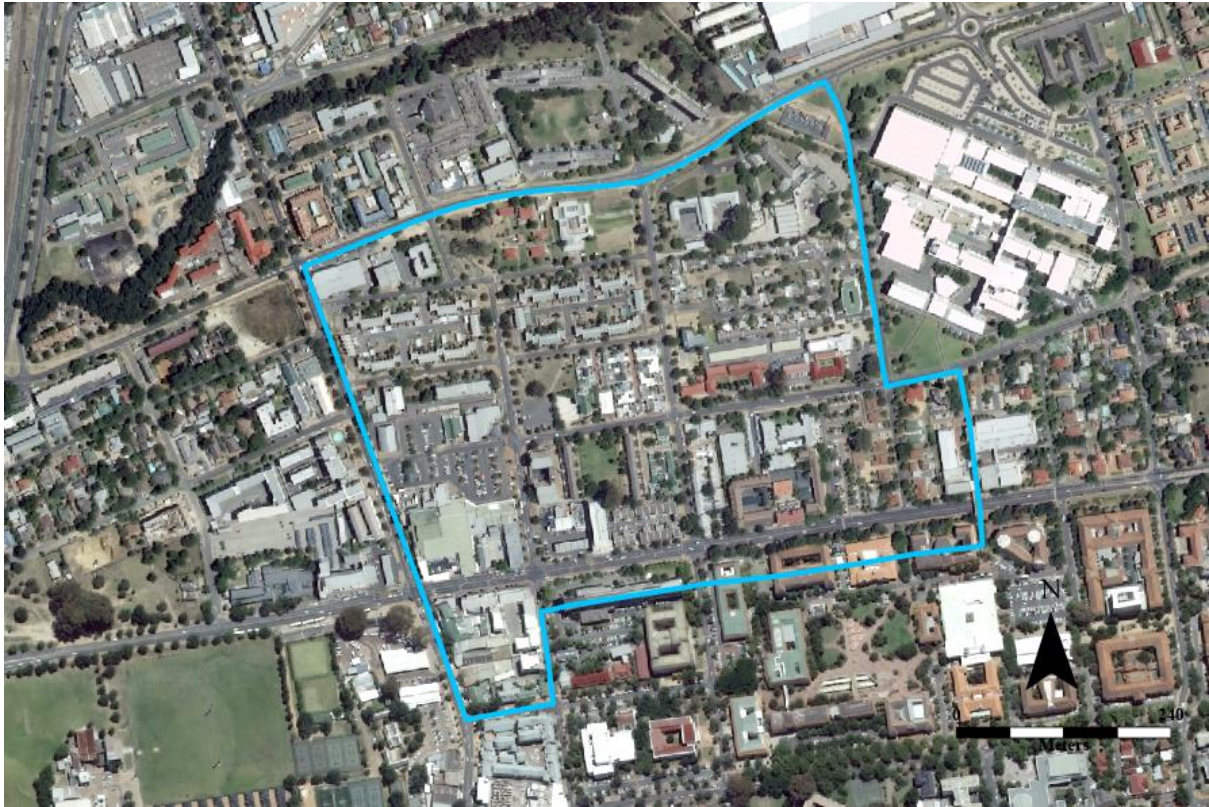
Figure 10 contrasts Figure 9 with the state of Die Vlakte in 1977, following the declaration of the area as a WGA, and thousands of residents had been removed. The image shows empty spaces indicated by the ellipses where homes and buildings once were, indicating the extent of demolition to make way for new developments.



*Figure 10: Die Vlakte in 1977*

The northernmost ellipse highlights the changes in buildings between 1960 and 1977, suggesting significant demolitions and subsequent new constructions. The rest of the ellipses indicate recent demolitions to make way for new buildings.

Figure 11 is the latest aerial image of Stellenbosch, revealing that all visible traces of Die Vlakte had been erased in comparison with the neighbourhood in 1960.



*Figure 11: Die Vlakte in 2014*

The area is now predominantly occupied by Stellenbosch University and commercial buildings, emphasising the complete transformation of the landscape that once held a vibrant and close-knit community.

### **3. Literature Review**

This literature review examines a methodology as research and the evolving methodologies that address historical documentation. It explores various perspectives to interrogate and understand history, focusing on how understanding archiving and hauntology can give new life to commemorating history. These concepts can provide new ways of interacting with the past. GIS is essential for historical preservation in counter-surveying, allowing communities to reconnect with their histories spatially. Diversifying how history is honoured can give a broader perspective on the empowering nature of heritage.

The discussion also assesses the evolving role of mapping practices beyond the traditional confines of constructing infrastructure (Motala and Bozalek, 2022), instead using them to study the destruction of a community and its social fabric. Surveying entails measuring and mapping environments to determine boundaries, land features, and spatial relationships (Jiang and Zhao, 2023). Therefore, the review explores how science and technology disciplines can be used to convey societal issues by combining spatial data with historical narrative (Motala and Bozalek, 2022) to answer context-specific questions in areas of forced removals.

The review further examines the role of archival practices and the power structures embedded within them. It shows how archives are historically instruments of power, continuing the legacy of marginalisation of certain groups by minimising or completely omitting their side of history (Carter, 2006). As such, the literature highlights archival social justice and justice archiving, whereby archives are used as a tool for resistance and inclusion. As further explained in Chapter 3.4, this idea is linked to the concept of hauntology, which emphasises the lingering impact of past injustices on present-day communities.

While some methodologies have been implemented to record history, current approaches are limited in their lack of integration between spatial analysis, community participation, archival social justice, and hauntology. This literature review identifies a gap in the existing frameworks which often prioritise either technical accuracy or official narratives, overlooking the strength of combining all elements to give a more extensive account of forced removals in an ethically sensitive manner. The final section proposes an extension of the counter-survey methodology as a rounded and ethical approach to document forced removals, with the voice of the ex-residents at the forefront. By integrating GIS, archival science, and hauntology, counter-surveying becomes a multi-dimensional framework for preserving history.

### 3.1 What is a Methodology?

A methodology is a structured set of procedures designed to provide a comprehensive and systematic understanding of a concept (Viergever, 2019). In contrast to a method, which focuses on specific steps, techniques, and tools used in research, a methodology refers to the broader framework that guides the entire investigation (Bryman, 2008; Viergever, 2019). Chapter 4 explains how a methodology addresses the rationale behind designing research, offering a logical approach to ensure consistency from inception to completion of the study.

Replicability is crucial for a research methodology as it ensures the approach can be consistently applied in different settings. For example, Homan et al. (2021) designed a methodology for gathering and analysing open-source data to establish an efficient response strategy to military medical emergencies. The research focuses on Germany and France as case studies but can also be applied in other countries with similar contexts by following Homan et al.'s (2021) steps. The counter-surveying methodology builds upon Homan et al.'s (2021) definition of the steps approach; these are phases divided into recruiting, preliminary phase, fieldwork, map study, and reflections. The steps provide a guideline for conducting the methodology in different areas of forced removals and are broken down in Chapter 4 of this study.

However, specific criteria must be met for a methodology to be successful. In developing a methodology for sustainable appraisal of historic environments, Stubbs (2004) uses the National Trust's environmental principles to assess whether an environment can undergo appraisal. The National Trust is an organisation dedicated to preserving and protecting places of natural beauty in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland (Stubbs, 2004). The criteria include sustainability, biodiversity, climate change mitigation, and awareness. If these criteria are unmet, an area cannot be assessed for sustainability (Stubbs, 2004). In the case of counter-survey, forced removals serve as the primary criteria for its application, alongside accessibility of sites and ex-residents' willingness to participate. This ensures that the methodology remains relevant to the context of its application (Stubbs, 2004) and can be applied in other areas where forced removals have occurred.

Flexibility in a methodology is also essential to mediate any unforeseen challenges or unexpected questions that may arise (Stubbs, 2004; Homan et al., 2021). The flexibility and adaptability of the study are tested in the two study areas with variable contexts and data. District Six has empty sites in place of the ex-residents' homes as the land remains vacant,

while the land in Die Vlakte underwent construction following the evictions. While District Six is rich with archival and spatial data, Die Vlakte faces the challenge of limited spatial and archival data. The methodology's ability to accommodate these differences will highlight the flexibility in capturing diverse experiences.

Although an effective methodology can be easily reproduced, it is important to acknowledge that there may be hindrances to replication. Obstacles such as researcher skills, lack of resources, and factors related to the context may influence the research undertaking. These challenges are addressed through research design, which will be discussed in Chapter 4. For a study to qualify as a methodology, certain criteria must be met in conjunction with the definition of the concept. It must be replicable and have steps or procedures to guide its execution. The development of counter-surveying as a methodology seeks to meet these criteria, offering a systematic, replicable, adaptable, and flexible approach to documenting forced removals.

### 3.2 GIS in Historical Preservation

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) is a hardware and software system designed to create, manage, store, and analyse any information relating to location and space (Esri, 2019). GIS emerges as a tool to preserve history, allowing it to recreate, spatially analyse and derive meaning from historical landscapes. This study seeks to employ it as a cartographic tool to visually represent the social, spatial, and temporal dynamics of District Six and Die Vlakte.

The combination of GIS and historical data presents many potential benefits. GIS provides the capability to preserve and reconstruct old, damaged, or lost maps (Moscicka, 2017; Borodkin, 2019). Historical data can be visualised in a contemporary format using GIS to reveal new perspectives on factors that shaped historical spaces and human behaviour (da Silveira, 2014). The ability to overlay multiple layers of spatial and historical data enhances the understanding of historical events, making the information understandable even without specialised knowledge. For instance, in the case of District Six, GIS has been employed to map baptism records of ex-residents of St. Mark's church members to their addresses before the removals (Pinfold and Mokhele, 2019). This is powerful as it preserves history by attaching ex-residents to where their homes were, even though said homes no longer exist.

Additionally, GIS helps analyse how historical decisions or events have shaped physical spaces or urban planning. Borodkin (2019) describes how GIS can be used to reconstruct historical

landscapes of significant cities by incorporating elements such as archives, maps, cadastral data, and historical city plans. This approach contributes to visualising the past and enriches historical narratives by embedding them in their spatial contexts. Using different sources of information in cooperation with spatial data makes it possible to recreate rich models of historical landscapes, which can be a compelling way to gain insight into the spatial dynamics of history (Moscicka, 2017).

While GIS is a powerful tool for preserving historical landscapes, it has limitations. A major challenge is its inaccessibility to certain communities that do not have the expertise and literacy required to use the tools. Although it provides detailed spatial analysis, it may exclude people who do not have the training to use it (Borodkin, 2019). This issue can be mitigated by participatory GIS, where the community takes part in collecting and analysing spatial data (Musungu, Motala and Smit, 2011; Lefulebe, Musungu and Motala, 2015). This ensures that history is preserved by experts and those who lived through it (Pinfold and Mokhele, 2019).

Using GIS in historical preservation provides technological advantages and facilitates engagement with the past. Integrating a spatial element in historical records creates a multidimensional and enhanced understanding of history. As we delve into the role of historical records and archives, it is important to consider how power structures shape how history is told. The following section explores Archival Practices and Power Structures, highlighting the authority over preservation and omission of information and how this influences documented and remembered narratives.

### 3.3 Archival Practices

Much like GIS, archival practices play a significant role in preserving history. However, archives are not unbiased repositories of information as they are shaped by power structures that influence the narrative (Wallace et al., 2020). This bias is reflected in the absence or underrepresentation of archival material related to the marginalised (Carter, 2006). In this context, archives can be a tool of oppression or a potential mechanism towards social justice. This section examines how the archiving process reflects the hierarchy in society, revealing who has control over the historical narrative and the implication of said control over marginalised histories (Harris, 2020; Wallace et al., 2020). It also investigates the potential for counter-archival methods like counter-surveying to challenge these paradigms.

Traditionally, archives represent the group in power and give life to a perspective tailored to sustain their authority. Carter (2006) argues that the institutional bias in record-keeping is evident in factors such as the absence or underrepresentation of archival material related to subjugated groups, which makes their histories inaccessible and invisible. Such practices reinforce existing power structures as they silence other narratives, thus erasing the experiences of those who have been oppressed (Carter, 2006; Wallace et al., 2020).

On the other hand, archiving can be a tool for social justice. Wallace et al. (2020) introduce archival social justice as the recreation and documentation of records using existing archives to address inequalities, advance social justice, and promote inclusion. This approach holds institutions accountable for past injustices (Wallace et al., 2020). Additionally, it empowers communities by involving them in the archival process to give them ownership of their narrative (Wallace et al., 2020). In this way, archiving becomes an act of reclaiming power as it allows the marginalised to document their experiences and perspectives.

One method of implementing this shift is through activist archiving, a model proposed by Wallace et al. (2020) that focuses on marginalised communities' perspectives in the archiving process. The authors also suggest prioritising histories that have been traditionally overlooked and forgotten to challenge the biased nature of institutions of power. Furthermore, marginalised communities are more likely to have control over history when they take part in archiving their narratives rather than remaining passive, thus correcting the historical imbalance in the documentation of events (Carter, 2006; Wallace et al., 2020).

The transition toward more inclusive archival practices emphasises the importance of challenging traditional power structures that have shaped historical preservation. The next section further explores how theoretical perspectives such as hauntology provide insights into the relationship between memory and space in historical preservation.

### 3.4 Hauntology

Hauntology is a concept proposed by Jacques Derrida, and it provides a powerful framework for understanding the lingering effects of historical trauma (Bozalek et al., 2021). Harris (2020) explains that elements of the past do not simply disappear but remain present, subtly influencing both the present and the future. In the context of South Africa, Harris (2020) explores how this notion is especially pertinent in the aftermath of apartheid and forced removals, where the trauma is embedded in the lives and landscapes of those affected.

Hauntology challenges understanding time as linear by positioning historical events as echoing across generations (Harris, 2020).

For District Six and Die Vlakte ex-residents, hauntology manifests in the social, economic, and physical spheres (Adams and Hermione, 1988), reflecting the enduring impact of apartheid-era policies. The trauma of displacement continues to haunt their lives, with physical remnants such as rubble-filled land parcels and new buildings serving as tangible symbols of their loss (Motala and Bozalek, 2022). Additionally, the built environment and infrastructure of the townships they were moved to are daily reminders of forced removals' economic and physical impacts. These remnants are not merely architectural; they evoke emotional and psychological scars, acting as reminders of the systemic violence inflicted on these communities.

Hauntology also offers a critical lens through which to understand the role of archives as stewards of memory and power (Harris, 2015). The absence of certain voices reinforces the notion that the perpetual echoes of forced removals and power imbalances haunt archives. Addressing the ongoing hauntings of forced removals requires an engagement with archives through the recognition of 'ghosts' of the past (Harris, 2020; Bozalek et al., 2021). The role of counter-surveying in this context is to confront official records and emphasise the silenced narratives. By collecting testimonies of ex-residents and documenting their lived experiences, this research aims to reveal the hidden histories that have shaped the post-removal landscape.

By revealing the ongoing hauntings of forced removals, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of how the past continues to shape the present while offering a framework for future efforts to address historical injustice. The involvement of ex-residents in the archival process in the methodology fills the gap left by traditional archival practices, which usually reflect the narratives of dominant groups. This examination of hauntology and its application to counter-surveying sets the stage for the next section, which explores the interactions between trauma and counter-surveying.

### 3.5 Addressing Trauma

Addressing trauma as a path to healing has gained prominence in research (Kannemeyer, 2010; Van Der Kolk, 2016; Herman, 2020). Drawing on the principles of hauntology discussed earlier, this seeks to position counter-surveying as a method not only for documentation but also the hope for confronting and reconciling emotional and psychological scars. It focuses on the potential for the methodology to capture the echoes of historical trauma left by apartheid's

forced removals. Traditional mapping and surveying techniques have focused on spatial documentation yet neglected the emotional trauma experienced by those displaced.

The traditional approach of evoking trauma as a method of healing represents a shift in the understanding and treatment of individuals who have experienced profound historical injustices. Scholars such as Herman (2020) and Van Der Kolk (2016) emphasise engaging with traumatic experiences, arguing that it is a crucial step toward collective and individual healing. By creating a space for expressing and validating emotions tied to traumatic events (Van Der Kolk, 2016), the counter-surveying approach seeks to empower individuals by giving them a platform to confront and integrate their experiences into research and documentation, offering the possibility of a sense of closure.

However, Tuck (2009) challenges conventional trauma-centred approaches, calling for a suspension of what is described as “damage-centred” research. Tuck (2009) argues that although documenting trauma and damage plays a role in holding oppressors accountable, it potentially perpetuates the view of marginalised communities as victims, defective or depleted. According to Tuck (2009), this is a limited perspective that takes attention away from healing by focusing on the pain and suffering of these communities rather than their resilience, wisdom, and fortitude. The author suggests employing “desire-based” research, which focuses on documenting pain, hope, resilience and the capacity for healing.

This shift from damage to desire is significant in the context of counter-surveying. While acknowledging the trauma experienced by ex-residents is important, the sole focus on the suffering they endured fuels the narrative that they are victims. Therefore, in addition to documenting the personal narratives of forced removals, the methodology can be framed as a process that celebrates the strength and resilience of those who survived the displacement. By involving the ex-residents in the documentation, counter-surveying becomes a space of empowerment, allowing them to reclaim their narratives on their terms by highlighting both pain and the capacity to heal.

Preserving history through counter-surveying serves a broader purpose in the potential for collective healing. As Harris (2020) and Bozalek et al. (2021) suggest, remembering and commemorating the past is essential to processing trauma. Walking through the spaces where forced removals took place allows ex-residents to confront their memories and re-engage with their history. The connection between hauntology and trauma is evident in the physical reminders of past injustices, such as the ruins of homes in District Six, which serve as symbols

of loss and potential reconciliation. This process allows individuals and communities to revisit the past tangibly, acknowledge their trauma, and, through that, take steps toward reconciling with their past

It is important to recognise that the methodology does not claim to be a solution to address trauma or healing. While it offers a method of engaging with the past, it is time and resource-intensive, requiring significant time and training to implement effectively. Furthermore, revisiting the sites or recounting traumatic events may not suit or be beneficial for all individuals, as for some, such re-engagement may bring an emotional toll too heavy to bear. The methodology must, therefore, be applied with care and ethical considerations, ensuring that the participants are coached and supported through the process.

Counter-surveying does not only focus on spatial documentation but is a methodology that also engages the community emotionally, acknowledging the deep trauma of forced removals. The following section discusses Propositions for Counter-surveying, synthesising the literature discussed thus far to propose a methodology that integrates GIS with the theoretical insights of hauntology and archival social justice into a cohesive framework. This framework offers the guidelines for implementing the methodology, balancing its capacity for historic preservation with the potential to foster empowerment.

### 3.6 Propositions for Counter-Surveying

As proposed by Motala and Bozalek (2022), counter-surveying draws from the concept of counter-mapping to offer a methodology aimed at documenting and preserving the histories of people marginalised by forced removals. The term “counter” is derived from how it uses the technical tools of map-making, traditionally employed in disciplines such as civil engineering, often for profit-driven purposes, for social justice initiatives designed to reclaim lost narratives instead (Dalton and Stallmann, 2018; Motala and Bozalek, 2022). The essence of the methodology lies in its multi-disciplinary nature to formulate a comprehensive framework for spatial mapping of narratives of ex-residents.

Counter-mapping uses participatory methods to create maps that question institutions of power through the expertise of marginalised communities (O’Dwyer, 2018). O’Dwyer (2018) illustrates that counter-mapping enables communities to reclaim their narratives by participating in mapping. For example, Mexican immigrants mapped their journey to the USA, including locations undocumented by traditional mapmakers, such as kidnapping hot spots and safe havens (Campos-Delgado, 2018). This practice provides a sense of place for communities

by giving them control over their spatial representations, an essential component of counter-surveying. Similarly, by allowing ex-residents to participate in mapping, counter-surveying facilitates a tangible connection with the past, allowing them to claim the space.

Counter-surveying, as a methodological innovation, aligns with the evolving discourse on trauma and healing, addressing the complexity of individual experiences within a traumatic event experienced by a collective. Research by Onyx and Small (2001) shows that a single story often oversimplifies history, paying no mind to subtleties and variations within the community or group. Counter-surveying incorporates a participatory element to combat this, giving ex-residents a platform to recount their narrative, even though it may not capture every voice due to logistical constraints. This act of inclusion symbolises the importance of documenting individual histories. It acknowledges the ongoing influence of biased record-keeping and seeks to reconstruct a more empathetic understanding of past injustices while aligning with Tuck's (2009) call for desire-based research.

Propositions for counter-surveying summarise the integration of GIS, hauntology and archival practices as a framework for ethical documentation of communities affected by injustice. Ultimately, counter-surveying offers a holistic and ethically grounded methodology for preserving the histories of those affected by forced removals. The multidisciplinary nature of the methodology ensures a rounded understanding and empathetic exploration of past injustices, ultimately leading to a more in-depth understanding of trauma experienced by a collective. Not only does the methodology give voice to the marginalised, but it also ensures that their histories and resilience are respected and honoured.

This research fills a critical gap by developing a methodology that not only addresses the spatial and archival effects of forced removals but is also cognisant of the emotional trauma experienced by displaced communities. Combining GIS, hauntology, archival practices, and community participation, counter-surveying offers a replicable and adaptable framework uniquely positioned to address forced removals' complex spatial, historical, and emotional dimensions.

## 4. Development of the Counter-Surveying Methodology

This chapter discusses the research design and data collection methods. It begins by explaining why the study uses a case study as a design method. It then delves into the type of research conducted, the materials used, and the process of collecting data during the research. The study draws inspiration from previous work by Motala and Bozalek (2022). This methodology combines archival research, cartography, surveying, and storytelling.

### 4.1 Case Study

This study employed the case study methodology, drawing from *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (Yin, 2003) and *The Case Study as a Research Method* (Gagnon, 2009). Yin (2003) suggests that case studies are suitable for investigating complex phenomena with real-world contexts, especially when the researcher has limited control over the events under investigation, both of which apply to the context of this research. Thus, this study sought to adhere to Yin's framework.

#### 4.1.1 Designing a Case Study

Yin's framework emphasizes the importance of a well-designed case study as this bridges the gap between research questions and data collection. This design entails using multiple case studies that align with the phenomena being studied to enhance the reliability of the results. In line with the flexibility of a methodology, as discussed in the literature review (see Section 3.1), the design is flexible enough to adapt to variations in the case studies.

This study used District Six and Die Vlakte as case studies because they share a common history of forced removals. Additionally, two study areas were investigated in District Six. The research sought to replicate findings by exploring common themes in both study areas. By following Yin's frameworks, this study incorporated a structured design by defining the research questions, data collection protocol, phases of the research, and the criteria for interpreting findings.

#### 4.1.2 Components of a Research Design

According to Yin (2003), a case study's effectiveness depends on well-defined research questions (see [section 1.4](#)), aims, and data analysis methods. The study incorporates the "what" questions (Yin, 2003) to explore the nature of forced removals and their representation through counter-surveying. The objective focuses on examining counter-surveying as a multi-disciplinary method for documenting historical trauma, although through the lens of desire-based research as explained in [Section 3.6](#) of the literature review. Additionally, the data

collection process which entails interviews, archival material and spatial data, aligns with Yin’s guide on using multiple data sources to construct validity and develop a chain of evidence.

#### 4.1.3 Testing the Quality of Research Design

To ensure that a case study design is robust, Yin (2003) recommends some key tests:

- **Construct validity:** ensures that the procedures used represent the concepts under investigation. This study uses various sources such as archival studies (maps, social media, books, articles, District Six museum, photos) literature reviews and interviews to ensure accurate representation. The methodology is also documented in phases to provide a traceable record of data collection.
- **External validity:** This test evaluates whether the findings can be generalised or applied in other cases. The study examines how the methodology can be applied to other sites of forced removals by using more than one case study, thus, broadening its applicability.
- **Reliability (Replicability):** Yin stresses the importance of replicating research procedures to enhance reliability. Documenting the methodology ensures that other researchers can apply counter-surveying in other areas of forced removals.

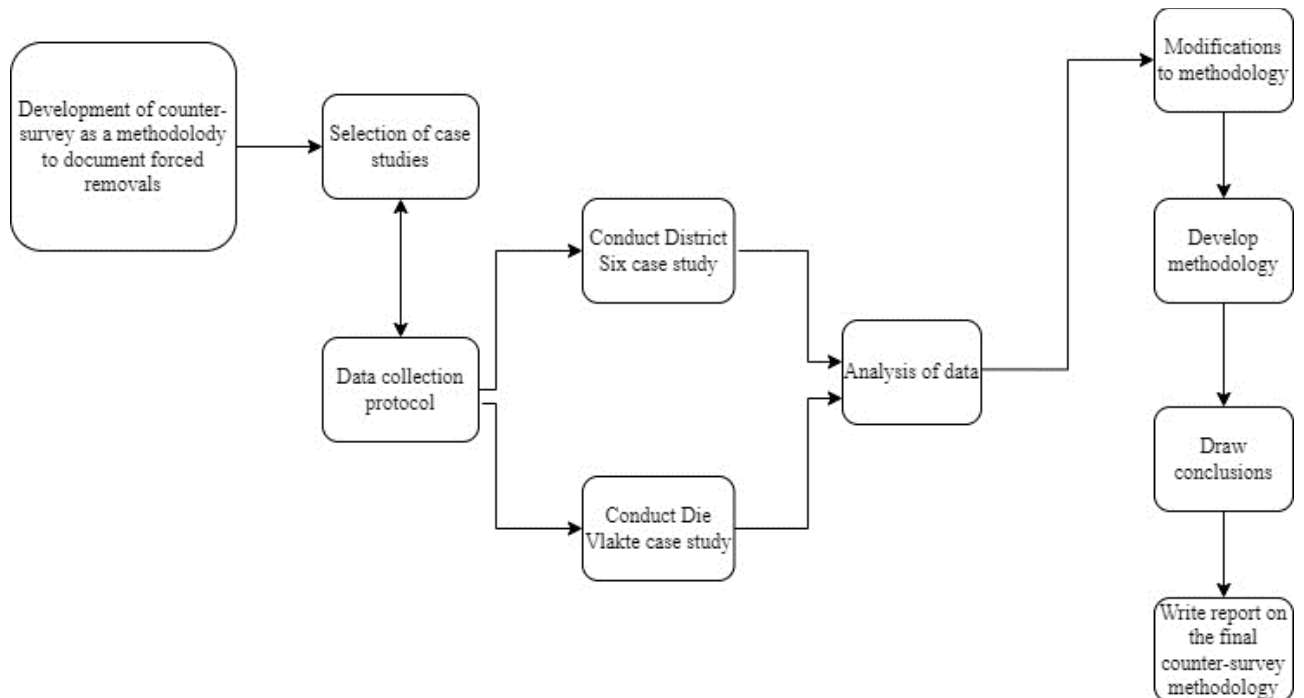


Figure 12: Designing a case study (Modified from Yin)

Figure 12 illustrates the multiple case study replication approach used in this study, adapted from Yin’s design principles. It begins with the development of a study or topic, followed by

a selection of case studies and the establishment of a data collection protocol. Die Vlakte's and District Six's case studies were analysed as individual cases to identify converging evidence from these distinct yet related cases. This replication logic strengthens the study by highlighting parallels and differences across similar contexts.

The data collection protocol focuses on qualitative methods which include interviews with ex-residents and archival research as well as spatial analysis as a quantitative method. As Yin (2003) explains, there may be a bidirectional relationship between the study area and the data collection methods as new findings may prompt adjustments to the research design, maintaining flexibility. This is shown by the bidirectional arrows in Figure 12. If new evidence or patterns are identified, the data collection protocol may require adaptation to maintain the integrity of the study and prevent misinterpretation of the results.

The case studies were then analysed using the proposed methodology undertaken. The final report will reflect the replicability of the methodology across both study areas and offer insights into the processes and outcomes observed. In addition to strengthening the validity of the findings, replication explores whether predicted outcomes are consistent with the research questions.

## 4.2 Procedure

### 4.2.1 Sampling Procedures

Ethics approval was obtained before engaging with the participants. Participants were recruited through community engagement and referrals by the District Six Museum and Vlakte Community Forum. The museum and forum are custodians of the memories of forced removals in District Six and Die Vlakte. All the participants were self-selected and told to invite family members or any former residents who may be interested in the study.

### 4.2.2 Participants

The participants in this study were former residents of District Six and Die Vlakte aged between 51 and 78, and had lived through the evictions. Although District Six was reportedly racially diverse, the population of Die Vlakte was predominantly inhabited by Coloured communities. Consequently, all the participants in this study identified as Coloured. Four participants were fluent in English, while two alternated between English and Afrikaans, often requiring translation support.

Mark Jacobs was the main participant in the counter-survey on 6 Eckard Street in District Six, accompanied by his sister Isobel Jacobs and a friend, Nadiemah, also an ex-resident. Mr Jacobs

was born in 1959 and was 63 years old at the time of the counter-survey. He holds a PhD in Mathematics Education and is a senior lecturer at a university. He was 7 years old when his family was forcibly removed.

The participants from Clifton Street in District Six chose to withdraw from the study following the Map study phase (See [section 5.2.3](#)). However, they consented to the use of their data if they remained anonymous. As a result, the street number has been removed from the study while the names of all four participants have been changed to maintain anonymity. Under pseudonyms, Samuel and Jackie Jones, two siblings aged 57 and 66, and Karen and David Smith, also siblings aged 61 and 51, respectively, participated in the counter-survey. Samuel and Karen are academics, David is an engineer, and Jackie is a homemaker and housewife. All four were between 7 and 10 years old when removed from District Six. The two pairs of siblings were cousins who occupied the same house, though at different times.

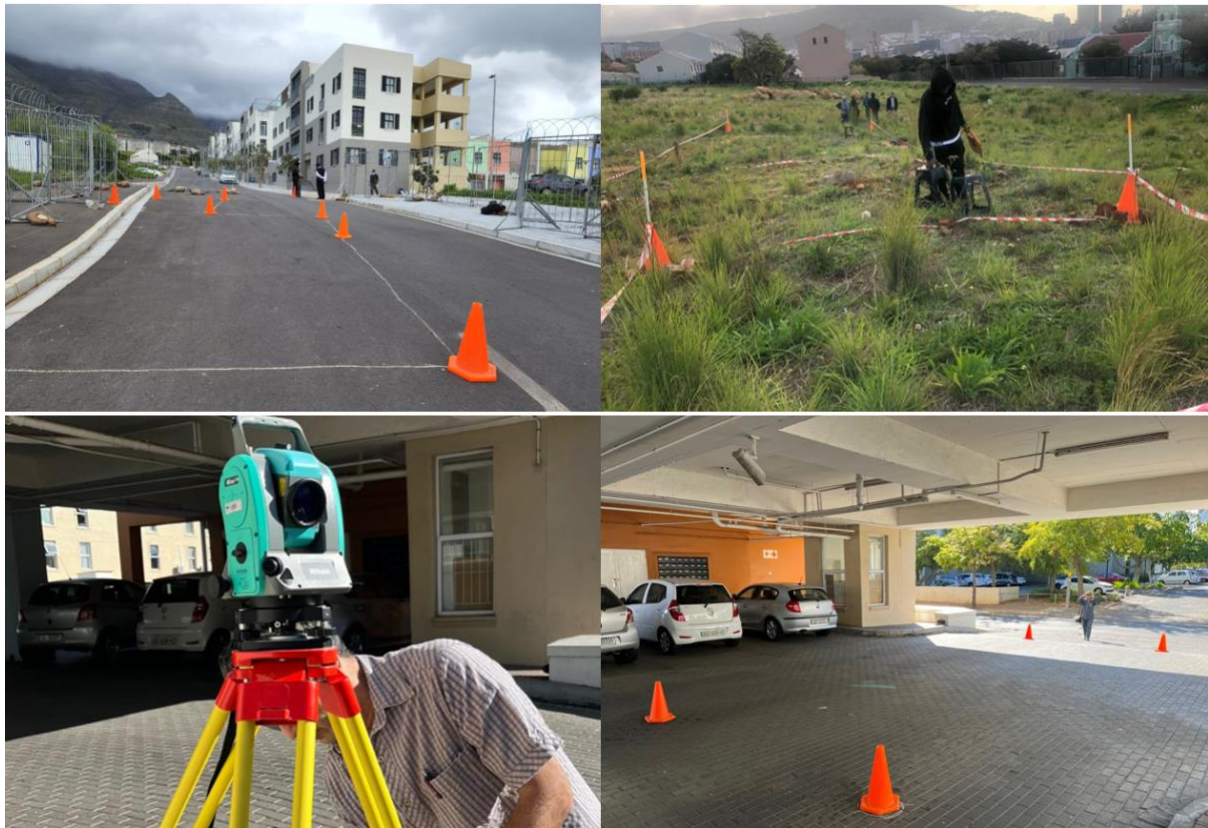
The counter-survey phases with Mr Ras were conducted in the presence of two representatives from the Vlakte Community Forum, Joseph Jacobs and Mr October, who offered valuable insight into how Die Vlakte residents' lives were affected during and after the forced removals. Mr Jacobs is the forum's General Secretary, and his parents are ex-residents of Die Vlakte while Mr October is the Vice Chairman and an ex-resident. Mr Ras was born in 1946 and was 78 years old at the time of the counter-survey. He lived at 107 Andringa Street from birth until his family was forced to evacuate in 1958 when he was 11 years old.

#### 4.2.3 Materials

Meetings were conducted over a Zoom call, email thread, or in person for the preliminary phase consultations to acquaint ourselves with the participants. ArcGIS Pro GIS software (versions 3.0, 3.1, and 3.2) was used to process and analyse spatial data before and after site visits. The software was employed to locate and determine the dimensions of the demolished homes, providing precise geospatial information essential for counter-surveying. This facilitated the accurate reconstruction of the original locations and structures for further analysis and study.

Site visits followed the initial consultations and spatial mapping. Various tools were used, including cones, poles, measuring tape, barrier tape, chairs, and a spade to assist in demarcating the study areas. For more accurate positioning, advanced survey equipment in the form of a total station was employed in Die Vlakte. A Canon EOS and mobile phone cameras were used to document the site visits, while a voice recorder captured the participant interviews. These methods served to ensure spatial accuracy and comprehensive documentation of the process.

The images in Figure 13 show the site survey and some of the equipment used at 6 Eckard Street, Clifton Street, and 107 Andringa Street in Die Vlakte.



*Figure 13: Site visits and materials used*

The map table exercise was conducted using either a map table or a computer screen. The map table is a large interactive touchscreen monitor (Clevertouch Impact 65" touch table) and was connected to GIS software via a personal computer to offer an interactive interface. This setup allowed participants to navigate the maps, and the large monitor facilitated memory work and enhanced engagement during the map study phase. When participants could not visit the UCT premises for the map table, a computer screen was used. Figure 14 shows one of the participants using a map table to identify locations.



*Figure 14: A participant using a map table with the help of a researcher*

#### 4.2.4 Types of Data

The study uses both qualitative and quantitative data. In this study, qualitative data is in the form of interviews, personal observations of the participants by the researcher, photographs, historical maps, old videos from the museum, newspaper articles, legal frameworks and published work on the study areas. Quantitative data entailed cadastral maps, orthophotos, topographic maps, historical maps and legal frameworks such as the Group Areas Act which was used to define the boundaries of District Six.

#### 4.2.5 Data Collection

There is also an integration of primary and secondary data sources. The researcher collected the primary sources which entail interviews and site surveys. The secondary sources are existing data sources, including archives, shapefiles (GIS layer), municipal maps, literature, academic papers, images, and newspapers.

## 4.3 Data Collection Protocol

### 4.3.1 Recruitment

This process entailed using community engagement to find ex-residents and asking them to participate in the study. Dr Motala was introduced to Mark Jacobs and Samuel Jones through the work that he had been doing with the District Six Museum. Mr Jones then introduced the research team to the Vlakte Community Forum, where we met Mr Ras.

### 4.3.2 Preliminary Phase

The preliminary phase comprised collecting, analysing, and manipulating data before the site visits. This was mainly to aid in finding and verifying the locations of the demolished homes of the participants. As previously explained, the site visits are preceded by correspondence with participants. Some conversations are detailed email exchanges and transcriptions (see transcriptions in Appendix D, [Email Exchanges](#)). The purpose of these initial meetings was to obtain data on the location of the former home with a set of questions detailed in Appendix D, [Pre-mapping Consultation Questions](#).

A pre-mapping consultation with Mr Jacobs took place via Zoom on the 12<sup>th</sup> of August, 2022. Before the Zoom call, he had provided his address as 6 Eckard Street. This information helped to find the house's location using historical municipal street and land use shapefiles. Figure 15 illustrates the use of the 'swipe' feature on ArcGIS to dynamically show the old municipal footprints of the house relative to the current landscape so that the participant may verify if this was the location of their home. During the Zoom call, the GIS map was also manipulated to better understand the layout of the house and living conditions. The results of this are detailed in the results section (see Figure 25 in [section 5.2.1](#))

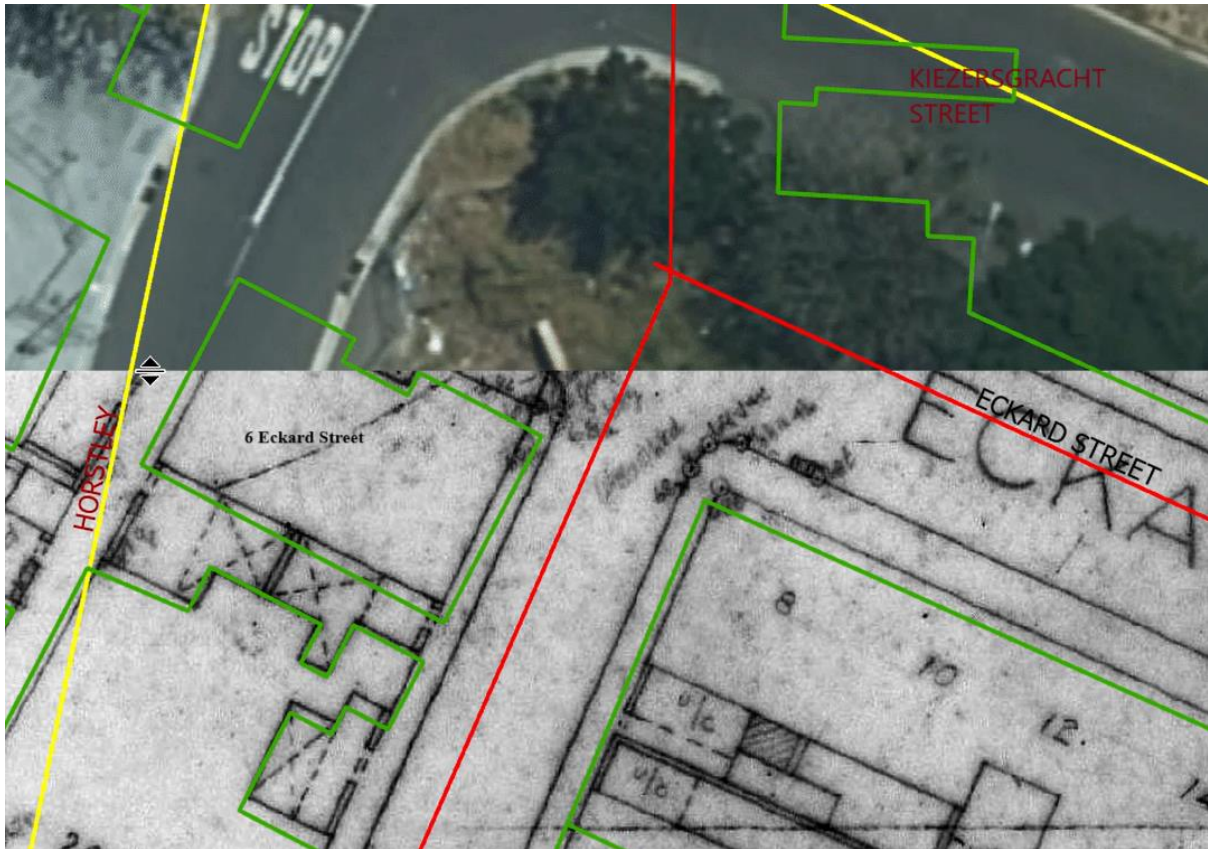


Figure 15: Using the swipe feature to compare the past to the present day

The green polygons in Figure 15 are the municipal footprints of buildings before the demolitions. The bottom half of the figure is a georeferenced municipal historical map of the area and corresponds to the location of the building footprints, providing a check on the locational accuracy of both layers. The red lines represent the old street network, and the yellow lines show the current street network. All the pre-demolition mapping serves to help jog the memory of the participants. Figure 15 shows that what was 6 Eckard Street is now near the intersection of Horstley and Keizersgracht Streets. The same process was conducted in the preliminary consultations of the two other locations.

Archival research was undertaken to help the researcher understand the content of the case studies. Figures 16, 17 and 18 show some archival data collected during the preliminary phase. Figure 16 shows the house on 6 Eckard Street, Clifton Street and 107 Andringa Street before the forced removals and consequent demolition. Participants were asked to validate the house through the pictures. Figure 17 shows an old map of 6 Eckard Street. Figure 18 shows an old map of Andringa Street, with 107 Andringa circled in red.

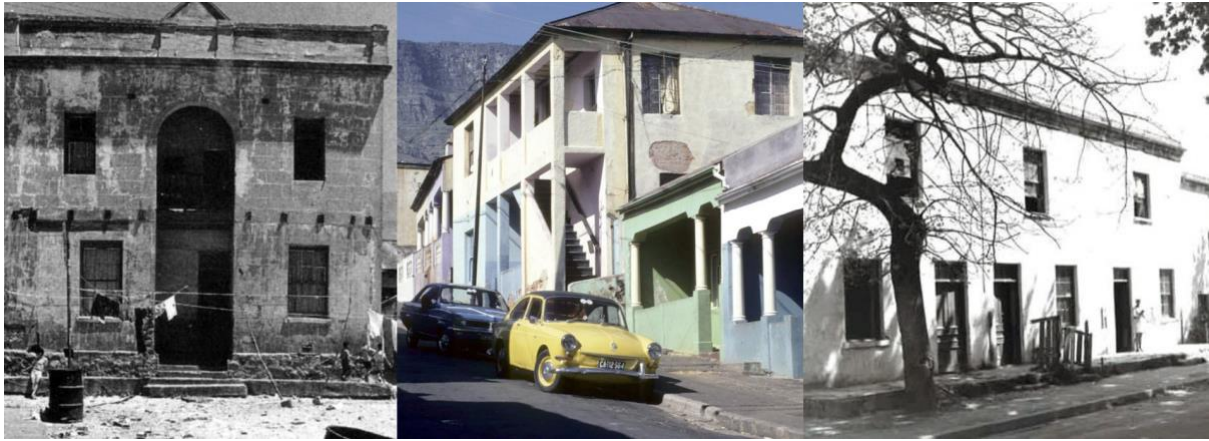


Figure 16: Archival Images of the study sites (Modified from Greshoff and District Six Museum, 1996: District Six, nd: Vlakte Community Forum, n.d.)



Figure 17: Archival map showing Eckard Street (Modified from Digital Historical Atlas of Cape Town, 1862)

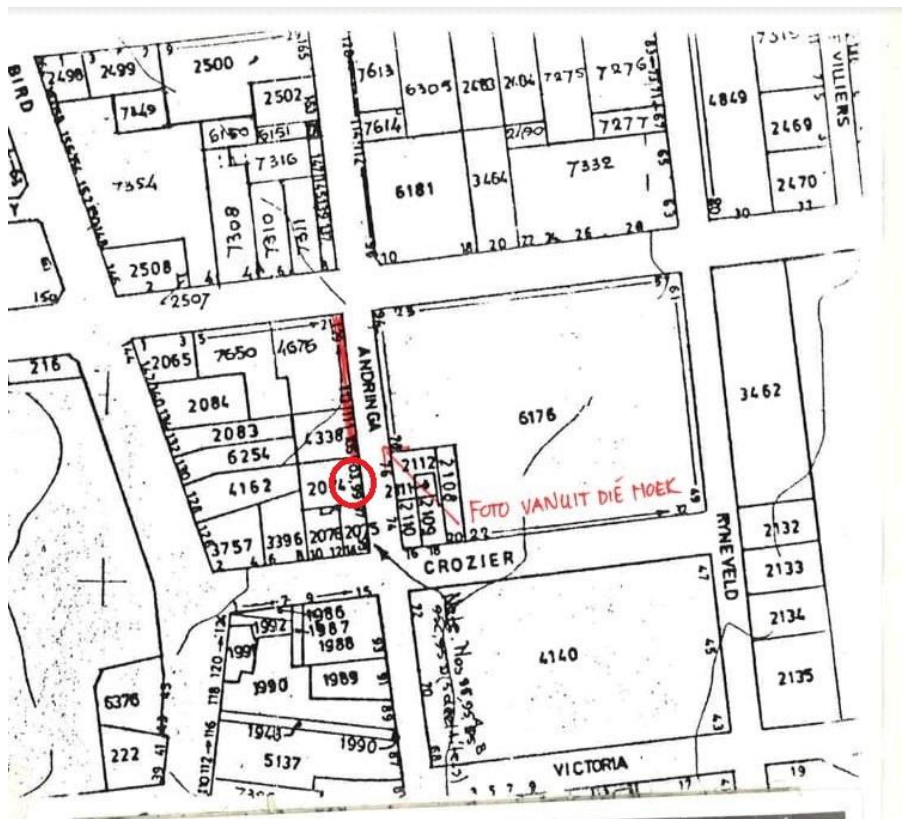


Figure 18: Archival map showing Andringa Street (Modified from Vlakte Community Forum, n.d)

The District Six site is rich in data available online, from the museum, and in a vast collection of literature. Historical and current spatial data was collected in the early stages of the project from Dr Motala and the City of Cape Town (COCT) Open Data Portal. These were mainly shapefiles, aerial photographs, cadastral data and georeferenced maps of District Six and Cape Town over the last 9 decades. The variation in time is important to this research as it shows the changes in land use in the study area before and post-forced removals. The shapefiles included the streets, land use footprints, historical land parcels, and the boundary defining the area of District Six. Additionally, the UCT library contains several books about the history of District Six.

Archival and spatial data from Die Vlakte were comparatively scarce. There was conflicting literature on the boundary of Die Vlakte, which complicated efforts to define the area's borders (Stellenbosch Heritage Foundation, n.d.; Biscoombe, 2006; Stellenbosch University Visual Arts, 2015). Some available literature and publications were in Afrikaans and required translation. Historical shapefiles and spatial data from Stellenbosch University Archives and the Stellenbosch Municipality were unavailable. The data was subsequently received from

National Geospatial Information (NGI) as historical aerial imagery. Cadastral data was obtained from the Chief Surveyor-General's open portal.

Participants were asked to engage in memory work through a list of questions about their time before the evictions to prepare for the site visits (see Appendix D, [Pre-mapping Consultation Questions](#)). These questions are tailored to help prompt recollections of life before the evictions.

#### 4.3.3 Fieldwork

Site visits followed, during which the footprint of the former building is outlined, as illustrated in Figure 19. If the original foundation remained intact, as in the case of Clifton Street, triangulation is not mandatory as the house is easily identifiable. Cones were placed at the corners of the remaining foundation, with poles for support to maintain the correct distances between walls. A barrier tape was tied between the poles to outline the house, creating a 'ghost' structure to help the participants visualise the former home. This is shown in Figure 19 below.



*Figure 19: Site survey where the foundation of the house still exists*

In cases where the foundation had been completely erased, the key reference points used in the trilateration process were used to assist with measurements. This is explained further in the results. These are then applied using a tape measure and cones to mark the original corners. This is illustrated in Figure 20.



*Figure 20: Site Survey where the foundation of the house has been removed*

Participants took part in a memory walk by walking around the demarcated area, retracing what used to be their homes and recalling life before the forced removals. During this process, they were interviewed about their experiences before and after the removals. The interview remained informal to ensure comfort when discussing such a sensitive topic. However, specific questions addressing the study's research objectives were asked and are listed in Appendix E (see [Interview Schedule](#)).

The interviews focus on the participants as individuals when addressing trauma faced by a collective. 60, 000 people were removed from District Six and over 3, 700 were removed from Die Vlakte. Stories like these are often remembered and talked about collectively (Onyx and Small, 2001). The interview process of the counter-survey thus focuses on a house, and therefore a home and a family, to humanize the narrative of forced removals and serve as a reminder that in each of the thousands of individuals is a distinctive interaction with the experience of forced removals. The themes observed in the interviews are detailed in the [Results](#) section of this research.

#### 4.3.4 Map Study

The participants were invited to contribute to a participatory mapping exercise that draws from counter-mapping described in the literature review (see [Chapter 3.7](#)) to build a spatial database of the study areas before forced removals. Here, they were tasked with recalling places and people who once lived nearby. A pre-removal map was loaded from ArcGIS onto a map table or computer screen, allowing the participants to interact directly by identifying locations they remembered. As they pointed out the sites, the researcher plotted points and filled in the

attribute tables, documenting spatial and non-spatial data such as names and stories. This method provided qualitative and quantitative data to recreate a historical landscape.

#### 4.3.5 Reflections

A few weeks or months after the map table exercise, a follow-up interview, conducted either in person or virtually, was arranged with the ex-residents. This allowed them a considerable amount of time to reflect upon their involvement in the counter-survey and how it influenced their connection with their past. The follow-up sought to capture their emotional responses to the process. It offered insight into how the counter-surveying experience impacted their memories, sense of place and interaction with their former home.

#### 4.4 Ethics

Authorisation to conduct the research, interact with participants and access the study areas was obtained from the University of Cape Town's Engineering and Built Environment Ethics in Research Committee. This ensures that the highest ethical standards are met in compliance with the Ethics in Research Handbook (EBE EiRC, 2018). The ethics statement and other ethical considerations are shown in [Appendix C](#).

## 5. Results

This chapter presents the results obtained through archival investigations of the study areas, GIS tools, and engagement with ex-residents. It delves into the findings of the processes that comprise the counter-surveying methodology. In addition to reflecting on the human and spatial impact of the removals and how counter-surveying processes led to these findings, this chapter shows the application of the methodology in the case studies to assess outcomes and answer research questions.

The chapter is divided into two sections: Data and Community Engagement. The data section describes what was achieved with Archival and Spatial data. The community engagement section corresponds to the following phases of the counter-surveying methodology: Preliminary Consultations, Fieldwork, Map Study, and Reflections.

### 5.1 Data

#### 5.1.1 Archival Data

The collected archival data in the form of photographs, historical maps, museum collections, legal documents and books was significant in unearthing evidence of forced removals in the study areas. The archives were used as a source of information on the history of the areas of study, providing clarity and accuracy on past events. They were also important as an additional tool to support claims made by the ex-residents which will be discussed later in this chapter. Additionally, archives are a source of data that provide social, economic and political contexts that help explain the current situation.

As illustrated in [Chapter 4.3.2](#), District Six is rich in archival data which entails municipal and national records. A wealth of archival photography shows the demolition of homes and businesses; for example, Figure 21 shows the demolition of Avalon Cinema. Historical spatial data such as the map in Figure 22 provided a reliable source of information as it shows the spatial arrangement before demolitions. Government gazettes such as the Group Areas Act (Republic of South Africa, 1950b) are also used to study legislative changes, contextual analysis and cross-referencing with other sources of data for thorough documentation of the removals and definition of the boundary of District Six (District Six Museum, n.d.; Hart, 1988; Ernsten, 2015).



Figure 21: The demolition of Avalon Cinema in District Six (District Six Facebook page, Alex Lawrence, n.d)

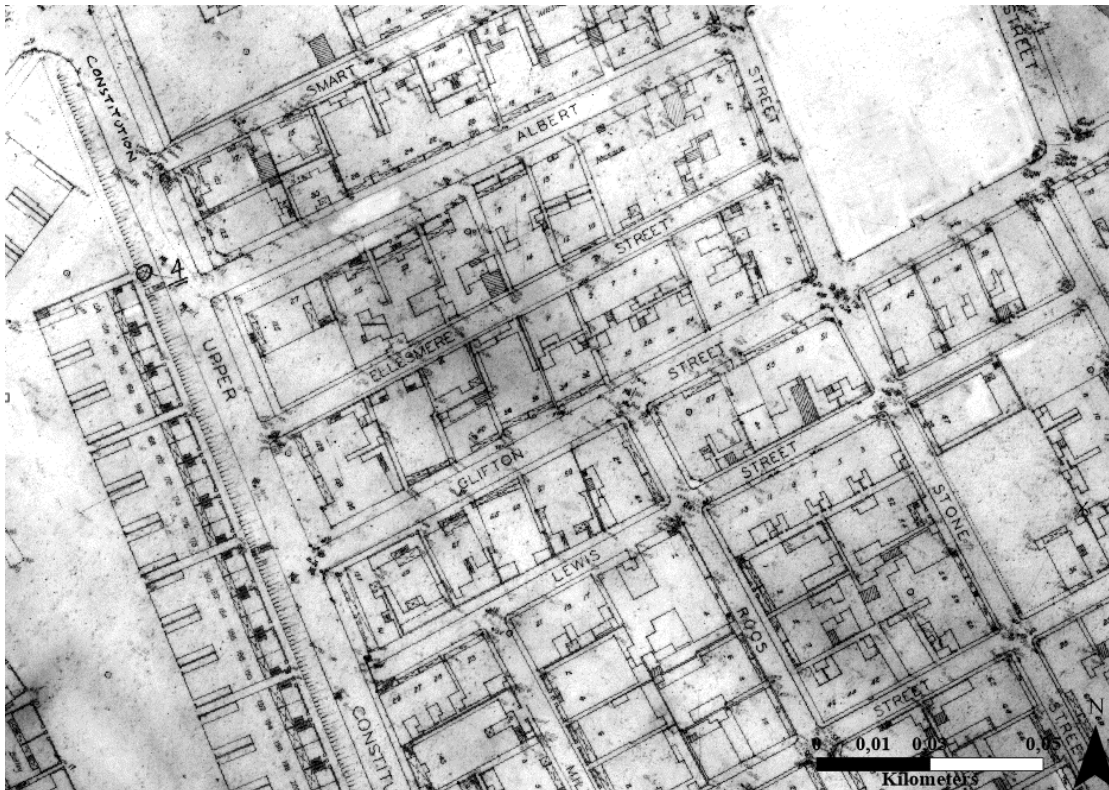


Figure 22: Spatial arrangement of District Six before demolitions

As mentioned in the literature review, historical data is important for future generations and may be incomplete, damaged, or restricted. Additionally, archival records created by the ruling regime may be biased and reflect the perspective of the government in power, which has the potential to distort the reporting and hide the experiences of the oppressed group. Incorporating archival data with personal narratives seeks to mediate archival silencing by filling the gaps in historical records.

### 5.1.2 Spatial Data

#### *Accuracy*

Accuracy of spatial data is critical when the data is employed in spatial planning, including historical preservation, as is the case in this research. The spatial reference and coordinate system parameters must be correctly set to maintain accurate results when using data from different sources. The spatial reference uses a geographic or projected coordinate system to define how geographic data is transformed onto a flat map (National Geospatial Information, 2011).

The South African Coordinate Reference System (SACRS) was used in this research. The geodetic datum used in South Africa is Hartebeeshoek94, based on the World Geodetic System 1984 (WGS84) ellipsoid while the coordinate system is the Transverse Mercator tailored for the southern hemisphere known as the Gauss Conform Coordinate System (National Geospatial Information, 2011). Using a standardised coordinate system like WGS 1984 ensures consistency and compatibility across the various sets of data used. The Transverse Mercator projection preserves shape and minimises distortion in Cape Town. This ensures reliable measurement and analysis critical for research in the region.

#### *Spatial Data Integration*

The variation of time and type of available spatial data was important to this research as it showed the changes in land use in the study area before and after forced removals. Figure 23 portrays part of the wealth of spatial data available in District Six, making it easy to determine the exact dimensions and locations of places of interest.

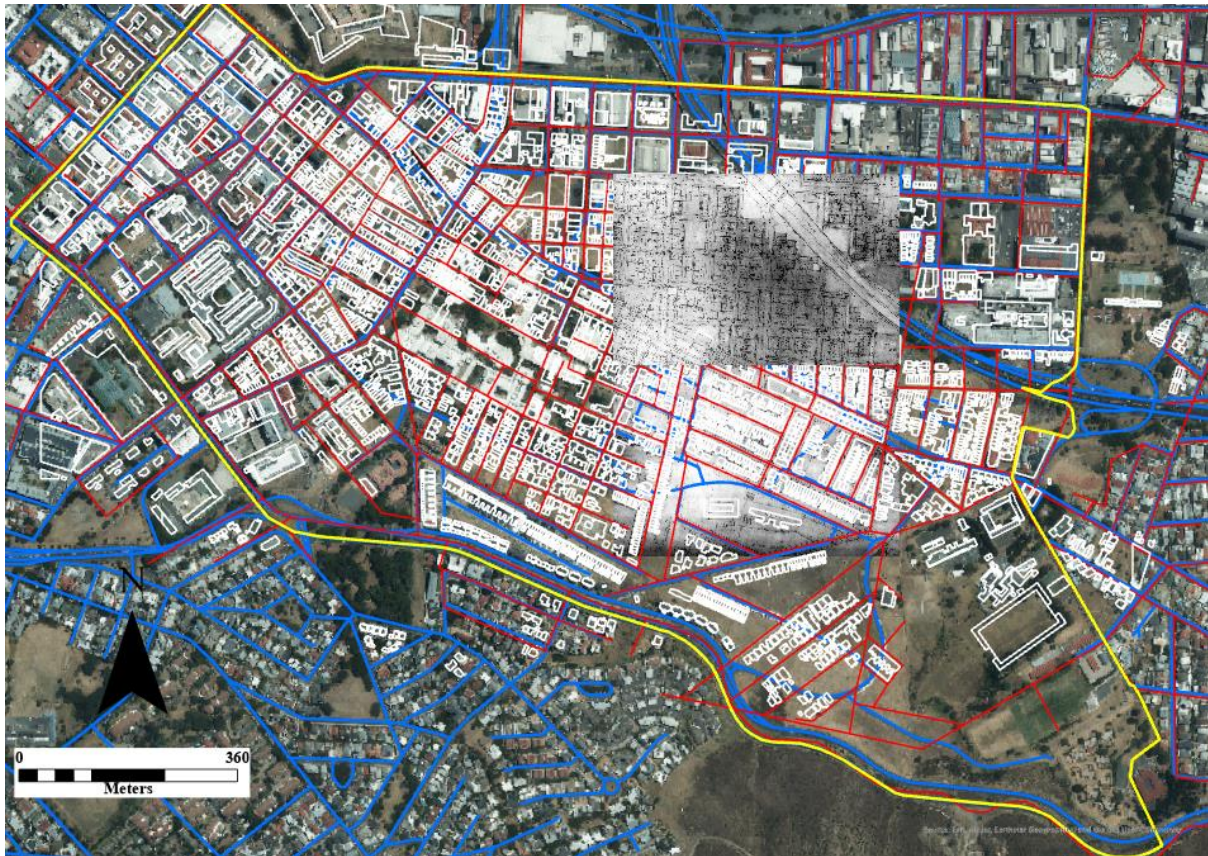


Figure 23: Some of the spatial data in District Six

The yellow polygon in Figure 23 outlines District Six, while the white polygons indicate the building footprints that existed before the area’s demolition. The blue lines represent the old road network, contrasted by the red lines which show the current layout of the streets. A partial black-and-white georeferenced cadastral map overlaying these elements details the pre-demolition buildings' dimensions, layout and internal structure. These various layers are superimposed on a contemporary satellite image. Integrating archival spatial data with modern GIS layers allowed the accurate mapping of precise locations of the demolished buildings.

### *Georeferencing*

Georeferencing aligns images or maps with real-world geographic coordinates (Esri, n.d.) It aligned archival images and maps with the current geographic coordinates to perform spatial analysis accurately. This process helped track the changes in land use and buildings over designated periods such as demolitions and construction. For example, Mr Ras’s house was identified and verified by georeferencing the cadastral sheet, as shown in Figure 24. The Vlakte Community Forum provided the historical cadastral sheet and address of Mr Ras’s house. The image shows the addition of control points distributed over the cadastral sheet to increase the georeferencing accuracy.

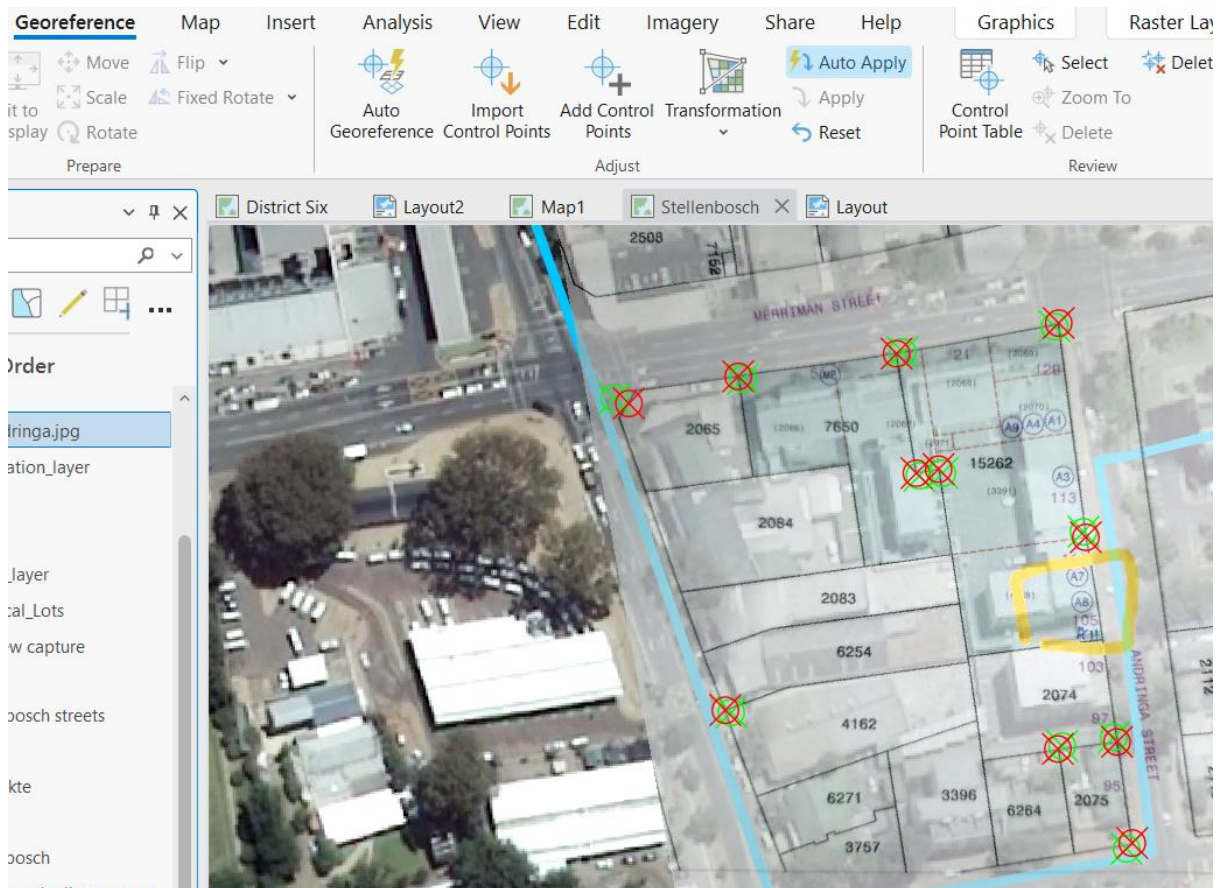


Figure 24: Georeferencing a cadastral sheet on ArcGIS

The yellow polygon on the sheet was marked by the forum to show the location of the block of Mr Ras's flat. This helped to improve the accuracy of finding the location.

## 5.2 Community Engagement

### 5.2.1 Preliminary Consultations

The preliminary consultations were part of the preliminary phase described in [Chapter 4.3.2](#). They were designed to establish trust with the ex-residents, creating a space where they felt comfortable sharing their narratives. The interviews fostered a supportive environment by adopting a humble, friendly, and open-minded approach. As a result, ex-residents provided detailed and meaningful accounts, offering thorough insights that enriched the research.

This initial phase may entail multiple consultations as it also verifies the exact locations of the ex-residents' houses. As described in the Methodology chapter, they are shown pre-demolition and post-demolition aerial images to pinpoint the exact location of their home. Once the location is identified and confirmed, polygons of the houses are created and stored in a shapefile of counter-surveying sites. These polygons are initially rough estimations, with accuracy

improved before the site survey. The following passages outline the findings from the preliminary consultations in each case study.

### *6 Eckard Street, District Six*

From the preliminary consultation, Mr Jacobs recalled that the house was a double storey, and he lived with his family of seven in one half, the western side, of the second storey shown in Figure 25. Another family occupied the other half, and Mr Petkar's shop was on the ground floor. The Jacobs family's part of the house had no living room, just two bedrooms and a kitchen. He also identified the garden, toilet, and entrance from the municipal building footprints. Based on Mr Jacobs' descriptions of the initial structure, a plan was drawn from the interview using GIS software. The interior partitions are roughly estimated.



*Figure 25: House on 6 Eckard Street footprint*

Figure 25 shows the layout of the house's second floor on 6 Eckard Street, where the Jacobs family lived. Their side of the house was partitioned to create bedrooms for all occupants. Upon entrance from the stairs was the kitchen, which also served as a bedroom for his mother and sister, Isobel. The first bedroom was occupied by his aunt, her husband, and their baby while the other was occupied by young Mr Jacobs and his grandmother as labelled above. The toilet was at the back of the house. The layout was sketched over the municipal building footprints

to ensure this was the correct geographic location. It is displayed on the aerial image of District Six to show its exact location today.

From this pre-mapping consultation, it is evident that the maps played a role in memory work, aiding Mr Jacobs to recall the layout of his home. It was a positively emotionally charged session for the participant as he ended the Zoom call with, “*Well, that was quite an experience, amazing!*”. With the available information, GIS helped determine the approximate location and dimensions of the house to perform the survey and mark out the outline (ghost) of the house. This is discussed later in the chapter.

### *Clifton Street, District Six*

Due to the participants from Clifton Street being in different cities and having busy work schedules, the preliminary consultation was conducted through an email thread with Samuel and Karen who represented their siblings. Figure 26 (left) shows that the foundation of the house still exists in the most recent aerial photograph that the participants were shown of the site, and it is substantiated by old municipal maps (right) that show the building footprints. Participants were shown aerial pictures, maps of the site as it is today, and the polygon outlining the house. This allowed them to verify the site.

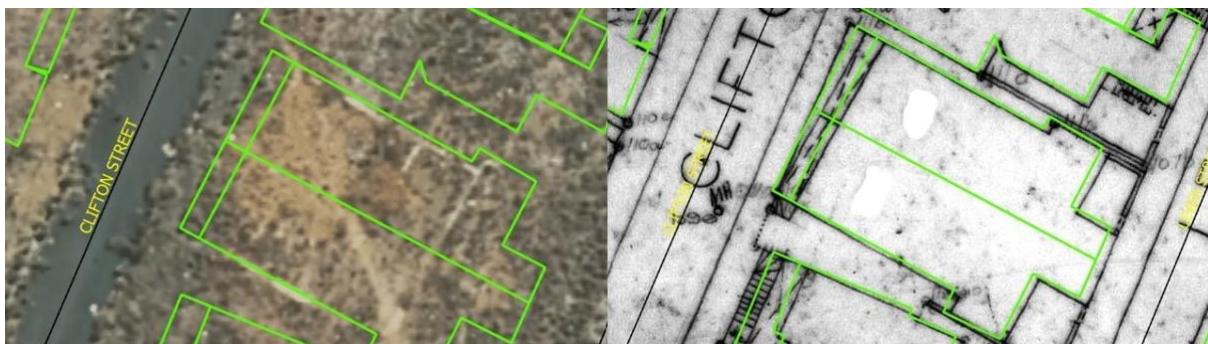


Figure 26: Locating the house on Clifton Street

### *107 Andringa Street, Die Vlakte*

Cadastral noting sheets were used to find the exact location of Mr Ras’s house. During the preliminary meetings, the Vlakte Community Forum provided images and cadastral noting sheets that show lot numbers before evictions in Stellenbosch. They also provided images of Mr Ras’s house as shown below. Figure 27 shows the photograph on the left, where the door is circled green, 107 Andringa Street. The handwritten text in red on the cadastral noting sheet on the right indicates the position from which the photograph was taken.



Figure 27: Archives of 107 Andringa Street

From the picture on the left in Figure 27, two trees are discernible in front of the block of flats. The georeferenced pre-demolition aerial photograph was used to identify the exact location in GIS. However, due to the poor image quality, more evidence was required to verify Mr Ras's house. The georeferenced cadastral sheet in Figure 24, which marks 107 Andringa, overlays the old imagery shown in Figure 28. The green circles highlight two masses presumed to be the trees on either side of 107 Andringa. These are the trees visible on the left in Figure 27, offering a reliable reference for estimating the location of the flat's roof, which is marked by the red square in Figure 28.



Figure 28: Identifying 107 Andringa

To correctly georeference the noting sheet to his house, a database of cadastral data was collected from the Chief Surveyor General (CSG) portal. However, the descriptions on the diagrams show that the data was incomplete as the properties were locally surveyed and had no coordinate system. This compromised the integrity and spatial accuracy of the data. Therefore, the noting sheets were georeferenced using control points with known real-world coordinates. The noting sheet below was used to support the lot numbers provided by the Vlake Community Forum, which were then used for the georeferencing.

**COMPONENTS:**

1. The figure G D E F represents the Remainder of Erf 4338 Stellenbosch  
Vide Diagram No 7365/1969 ; D/T 1969. .20115
2. The figure A B C D G H J represents the Remainder of Erf 4676 Stellenbosch  
Vide Diagram No 4889/1969 ; D/T 1969. .26344

S.G. No.

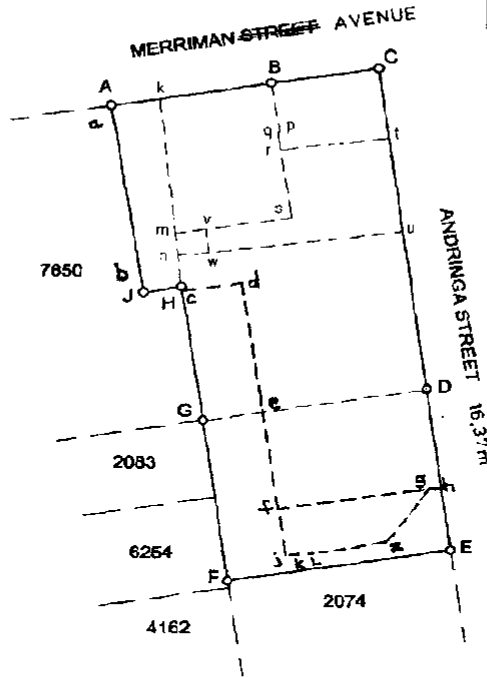
2561/2004

Approved

*G E Blows*

for Surveyor-General

2004-07-26



*Subject to sectional title*

SCALE 1/750

The figure A B C D E F G H J represents 2715 square metres of land, being **ERF 15262 STELLENBOSCH** and comprising 1-2 as quoted above situate in the Stellenbosch Municipality Administrative District Stellenbosch Province Western Cape  
Compiled in May 2004 by me, *G E Blows*  
Professional Land Surveyor No D921

This diagram is annexed to No. T79466/2005 dated i.f.o	The original diagrams are as quoted above	File No. S.2641/31 Compiled Comp. BHSZ-1414 (M2754) LPI C0670022
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FOR ENDORSEMENTS SEE BACK OF DIAGRAM

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ERF 15262 STELLENBOSCH

*Return to Dex - See Sheet 2*

Figure 29: Cadastral information of Andringa Street

During the preliminary consultations, Mr Ras aided by verifying that his house was most likely on or around the red polygon shown in Figure 28. Accuracy would later be improved before the site visit, as detailed in the Fieldwork chapter. He was very helpful in knowing where his

home was, as he saw it developing from his home to the student housing apartment complex it is today.

This pre-mapping interview, conducted in person, unlike the other two, was noticeably more emotionally charged. This is because it gave Mr Ras a platform to share more intimate details about his experiences. Additionally, the area that was Die Vlakte now forms an essential component of the metropolitan area, which serves the ex-residents and is a perpetual painful memory as they now live in nearby townships. Mr Ras spoke in detail about his life before and after the removals. This is further discussed in the interview section.

### 5.2.2 Fieldwork

This section analyses the interviews by observing common themes identified while questioning the participants during the site visits. Three site interviews were conducted: one in District Six by Dr Motala on Eckard Street, and two on Clifton Street and Andringa Street by Dr Motala and me. The discussion of the interviews focuses on the themes identified. It also shows the results of the spatial analysis undertaken at the site.

#### *6 Eckard Street*

The responses are by Mr Jacobs and his sister Isobel. The themes identified are extracted from a video of the counter-survey, as I was not present for the interviews. Throughout the interviews, there was a prevalent theme of a profound loss and yearning for community stemming from the displacement. However, there was also gratitude for visiting the site that used to be home.

#### Forced Removals and Loss

There was a prevailing sense of loss amongst the participants during the interview and when discussing the removals. The ex-residents have lost houses, businesses, communities and homes.

*“When I walked through the streets where we grew up, it was like stepping back in time .... It wasn't just a place; it was a part of who we were”*, Mr Jacobs says as he reflects on the counter-survey process. He repeatedly mentions how revisiting the old site is significant for him and brings up memories of his life with his family.

The deep emotional connection to the site emphasises the importance of District Six to its former residents and how the forced removals are, therefore, a great loss. From the responses, it is evident that the evictions went beyond the physical removal; it extends to the loss of the

pre-removal lives and identities of those evicted. Literature is clear on the unique character of old District Six and its community (Pistorius et al., 2002; Breytenbach, 2016; Soudien, 2021). The loss is manifested as the participants explain that they cannot take their children and grandchildren back to the homes they grew up in as there is nothing but empty lots to show. Thus, there is a missing part of them that they cannot show to their offspring, perpetuating the sense of loss.

### Yearn for Community

The sentiments of injustice brought about by the loss of community are also a recurring theme in the participants' narrative.

*"They did not just take away our homes, they tore apart our community,"* Mr Jacobs reflects. This emphasises that community ties were lost by the dispersal of ex-residents as they were relocated to different neighbourhoods. The participants describe the close-knit nature of the community they grew up in, highlighting how intertwined their lives were. For example, Mr Jacobs recalls how neighbours always helped each other and how much they were like family. They also reminisced about the feelings of unity they experienced during the weekend street parties, where everyone would join in on the festivities. Literature also refers to the love of celebration and festivities as part of the culture of District Six (Breytenbach, 2016).

According to Mr Jacobs, breaking up the community was the cornerstone of the success of apartheid, and they were simply a casualty. Disruption, dismantling, and loss of community are highlighted as Mr Jacobs comments on the strategic socio-political implications of the evictions as a method to divide the communities and, therefore, defeat POC. He asserts,

*"It was all part of a plan to segregate and control us."* This perpetual yearning for the community is just one of the myriad repercussions of apartheid, emphasising how the impact of forced removals stood the test of time.

### Spatial and Physical Environment

The spatial arrangement of the houses and neighbourhood holds deep personal significance for the ex-residents. They vividly recall and describe the layout of their homes and how daily life ensued within these familiar spaces. The siblings reminisce on how the kitchen was the heart of their home where they got to bond with their family after a long day.

*“We got together every single day to have dinner as a family in that kitchen, until we left District Six.”* Mr Jacobs says. They also recall how the streets were lined with trees leading up to a park where they used to play soccer, a space central to their childhood. These memories reveal how a sense of identity can be tied to a location and physical footprints.

During the interview, the participants nodded in agreement as Mr Jacobs further expressed how revisiting the site triggered many memories.

*“It is painful to come here, seeing what we lost, what we can never show to our children,”* he remarked, demonstrating how a space can carry individual and collective histories. There was the shared sentiment that the area seemed much larger when they lived there, highlighting the loss felt by the return. The neighbourhood and their home meant safety, community and freedom. As time passed and they moved away, the physical environment no longer held the same meaning, leaving a sense of loss. This reveals how space can also be a mental construct.

### Resilience and Life after District Six

The Jacobs family was relocated to Hanover Park, one of the townships dedicated to hosting Coloureds following the evictions. Isobel vividly recalls how much she hated the new home, resorting to visiting her cousin’s home on weekends in District Six until they were also removed. She reports that she felt out of place and could not get used to this new place that was meant to be home. This reflects the harm caused by forced removals on the sense of belonging and identity. Hanover Park developed into one of the crime and gangsterism hotspots in Cape Town (Pinnock, 2021; eNCA, 2024), justifying the lack of contentment in the new area. Isobel further emphasises the loss associated with leaving by repeatedly mentioning how unhappy her mother became at their new home.

*“My mother was never happy.....she never got used to it.”* The discontentment was intense, highlighting that the evictions went beyond the physical displacement. Despite the injustice, the ex-residents exhibited elements of acceptance and resilience. They speak about how they slowly rebuilt life and community with their new neighbours while also trying to stay connected with other ex-residents of District Six. Isobel and Mark discuss how rebuilding life in the new township, building new relationships, and living their lives in full experiences were ways of resisting injustice. For them, it was an act of reclaiming and honouring their histories. The focus on acceptance and rebuilding aligns with desire-based research discussed in Chapter 3, as the focus becomes less on loss and more on living (Tuck, 2009).

## Spatial Analysis

GIS was used to identify the sites of interest and determine the exact locations of the participant's homes. Trilateration is the process of determining the location of a point by measuring the distance from said point to two or more points (Mapscaping, 2023). This is achieved by superimposing historical land parcels (predating the demolitions) onto current aerial imagery. Key reference points such as streetlights and road markings were used to determine precise dimensions. Figures 30 illustrate the results of the process on Eckard Street, where the dimensions of the old house overlay onto a contemporary aerial image of the site.



Figure 30: Trilateration of 6 Eckard Street

The process shown in Figure 30 provides the measurement for setting out at the site and delineation to undertake the survey part of the counter-survey as described in [Chapter 4.3.3](#). The measurements obtained from the GIS are used for setting out.

Figure 31 shows the results of the setting out process of 6 Eckard, with cones placed at what would have been the corners of the house. Mr Jacobs and Isobel are standing at the site of where the house was.



Figure 31: Ex-residents standing on the site of their former home

### *Clifton Street*

These are themes gathered from an in-person interview with the ex-residents of the house on Clifton Street, Samuel, Jackie, Karen and David.

#### Forced removals and Loss

Like the ex-residents of 6 Eckard Street, forced removals left the ex-residents of Clifton Street with a deep sense of loss that permeated through their testimonies in the interview. Karen and Jackie remember the last days of their lives in the area as “*empty and cold*” instead of the warm and close-knit community they once knew.

“*It was a ghost town after we moved out, a lot of empty houses,*” Karen recalled. This highlighted the pain of loss brought about by the removals. She recalled how the removals transformed the atmosphere in District Six into an “*eerie*” one, further emphasising the

profound transformation in the area's landscape and the loss of what they knew it to be. These memories and recollections speak to the lingering presence of what District Six once represented to its community and, therefore, to its hauntology (Harris, 2015; Zembylas, Bozalek and Motala, 2021), as some elements of the old District Six continue to haunt the present.

Childhood recollections demonstrate the significant impact this place had on them when they were young, further emphasising the sense of loss that goes beyond losing their homes. Following the walk through the ghost of their former home, there is a shared sentiment among the ex-residents that the house seemed much larger in their childhood memories than what they see today. Jackie describes the evacuation and demolition of District Six's infrastructure as a crime. She further mentions that they used to recall the area through "*very sad stories*" and the increase in crime as people were evacuating. This reflects the painful memories created by the forced removals, leaving emotional scars on the ex-residents.

The interviews show that the day the families were evicted from their homes left a lasting impression on all their memories. All the participants vividly remember their last day in District Six. Jackie mentions that what she remembers most was the truck that came to take their property from their home. Karen vividly recalled the day they had to leave their home by talking of the exchanges of goodbyes between the neighbours with "*tears and sadness and promises of reconnecting*" when they got to their designated neighbourhoods. However, she mentioned that the most painful memory was how District Six became an eerie ghost town, "*particularly when the wind howled*". This highlights the deep sense of loss and nostalgia accompanied by the physical removals.

In closing remarks, David reflected on how he never fully grasped the pain of leaving the place before revisiting it. It is evident from these recollections that the forced removals left sentiments of displacement in those who experienced it. The responses from the interviews give insight into how the changes in the physical landscape transformed the emotional landscape and changed how they view what used to be their home. They also indicate the strong bonds to the space and how this was taken away from them.

### Yearning for Community

Despite the recurring theme of hardship and poverty in District Six that permeated the interviews, a strong sense of community is exhibited. Karen recalls how the house was often full of visitors playing dominoes, cards, laughing, or simply singing. She told a story of a

neighbour's wedding in her home, remembering the exact date despite it being 50 years ago. This shows the lasting impression of the sense of community that was felt. All participants' accounts of how they had relatives living in a windowless basement below their house show that even though there were extremely poor living conditions faced by some residents, they all took care of each other, echoing sentiments of camaraderie and care within the community of District Six (Fortune, 1996). These interrelations strongly emphasised the communal lifestyle which paved the way for a strong sense of community.

Although communal bonds were broken down by placing families in different townships, the social fabric would not be easily torn by the stress of forced removals. Samuel recalls that even though he lost contact with some people from childhood, he knew that he had relations in one township or another. He mentions that meeting new neighbours who experienced the same fate brought solidarity. This illustrates that despite the harshness of the displacement, there was a semblance of social structure and emotional support in their newly found homes in Mitchells Plain and Hanover Park, owing to the struggles they shared and the community they came from.

When questioning the participants on what they miss most about District Six, there appears to be the common theme of yearning for the feelings of community which District Six was known for. Like much of the literature and reports on District Six (Pistorius et al, 2002; Breytenbach, 2016; Soudien, 2021), all participants said that what they remember most about the place is the strong sense of community that was torn apart by the forced removals. Activities such as going to the cinema, concerts, and even sharing what little they had with each other were part of the social fabric that had woven a large but intimate community where everyone cared and watched out for the other. According to the little kids growing up in District Six who are adults today, this was the "*epitome of happiness*".

### Spatial and Physical Environment

The interviews show a vivid image of the changes in the way and quality of life resulting from the forced removals. According to Jackie, District Six was left empty as residents were removed, only to become a deserted, degraded, wind-swept piece of land. This further exemplifies the injustice experienced by the ex-residents because they were removed from their homes for nothing, as major plots in the area remain bare and undeveloped, with rubble as remnants of homes, communities, and a way of life that once existed.

The apartheid government had promised the ex-residents that their streets would be replicated in their new suburbs, ensuring that everyone had the same neighbours. However, the participants reported that this was not always the case, and many networks and connections were lost in the move as they never saw some people from District Six again. Life had changed and was less secure as they no longer had the community they could rely on.

Unlike District Six, near the main city centre, the new townships were on the outskirts of Cape Town. This forced residents to travel longer distances to work and school, spending money on transportation despite their low incomes. Samuel reported that life did not get any better despite the promises made by the apartheid government. As these townships were far away from the metropolitan area and occupied mainly by non-White populations, there was poor service delivery, infrastructure and high rates of unemployment. He observes that crime rates were high in these new townships due to neglect by the state, as confirmed by Manaliyo (2014), who investigated the perceived root cause of crime in Cape Town townships.

Forced removals are a source of historical trauma whose impact permeates present spatial patterns. Spatial injustice continues to be a remnant of apartheid in District Six, where much of the land remains bare. Jackie noted the homeless people who had taken shelter on some of the many empty plots in the vicinity, commenting that even though apartheid is over, the struggle for spatial justice continues since people experiencing homelessness will be the next generation of evictees when the sites are eventually redeveloped.

These changes are evidence of a loss beyond the demolished buildings but also a testimony to a loss of a way of life. The testimonies from the interviews reflect how relocation from a familiar space severed the sense of place rooted in being a resident of the vibrant community of District Six, further highlighting the loss, displacement, and injustice.

### Resilience and Life After District Six

Despite the strife and loss, stories of much resilience and success exist. District Six has produced some notable names and characters such as the rugby legend David Barends and prominent ballet dancer Johaar Mosaval. The participants also did very well for themselves in their fields of work as university lecturers, civil engineers, and housewives. When questioned about what they attribute their success to, despite the hardships they experienced, Samuel says that he owes it to perseverance because of the trauma they experienced in their early life.

The accounts of success are evidence of the resilience of the ex-residents. Although they were displaced and neglected by the government, they achieved success and rebuilt their lives to ones of dignity. It is important to document the success in alignment with desire-based (Tuck, 2009) research discussed in the literature review, as it takes the focus away from damage and sheds light on their resilience, wisdom, and fortitude to encourage acceptance and the possibility of healing.

### Spatial Analysis

There were few redevelopments in District Six partly due to the Hands-Off District Six campaign, which aimed to stop redevelopment in the area in the '80s (SA History Online, 2023). There remains rubble and foundation in some areas. This was also the case with the house on Clifton Street; and as a result, there was no need for trilateration as the house's foundation was visible.

According to the ex-residents, the house was a single-storey with a basement that hosted another family of seven. Figure 32 shows the house's layout, obtained by combining Samuel and Karen's descriptions with the cadastral data and municipal map. As seen in the figure, there was a veranda outside, an entryway, and a long passage with a lounge to the left. The lounge was adjacent to two bedrooms on the left. The long passage had a large kitchen at the end. The kitchen had a door leading to a small yard at the back of the house and in this yard was a toilet.



Figure 32: House on Clifton Street footprint

Georeferenced cadastral sheets and municipal land use shapefiles informed the placement of the veranda and toilet. The shapefile and the cadastral sheet also demarcate a small rectangle to the front of the house, which is assumed to be the veranda described by the ex-residents. By combining the information provided by ex-residents and archival maps, it was possible to locate the site and recreate a footprint of the house on Clifton Street.

### *107 Andringa Street*

The interview provided a comprehensive yet personal description of Mr Ras's life during and shortly after evictions from Die Vlakte.

### Forced Removals and Loss

The theme of loss permeated through Mr Ras's memories of life on Andringa Street. Like the previous testimonies, there was a deep sense of nostalgia associated with the area. Throughout the interview, Mr Ras vividly recounted stories of his childhood, such as how he was a mischievous child, regularly getting into accidents, like when he fell off a tree, leaving a large scar on his leg that he showed us. Over 6 decades have passed since the accident and his time in Die Vlakte, yet he still remembers the details of his childhood and community.

His family was relocated to Cloetesville, a township for Coloureds of lower class relative to Idas Valley, which was dedicated to the working class. Thus, not only did they lose their home, but their dignity and sense of place because the new neighbourhoods divided them into social classes, as opposed to Die Vlakte, where they all lived in harmony despite race, colour, or class. This demonstrates the apartheid government's 'divide and conquer' ethos, which was written about by Breytenbach (2016).

### Yearning for Community

The Die Vlakte community was once characterised by a close relationship destroyed by evictions, creating a division among the ex-residents. According to Mr Ras, there was a sense of unity among the kids as they all played together despite their race or class. However, this was short-lived as their relationships with the White community and other people of colour were destroyed by the distribution to different townships.

According to Mr Ras, the once strong community bonds were replaced by resentment and contention as the working class and more affluent communities of colour, such as teachers, policemen, and business owners, were moved to Idas Valley, a township with better infrastructure, housing and standard of living in general. This contrasted with the townships of Cloetesville and Kayamandi, which were worse off because they became new homes to lower class Coloureds and Black people, respectively. In addition to increasing inequality and encouraging resentment, this caused a rift in a once-harmonious community.

### Spatial and Physical Environment

The removals were a source of major changes in the spatial and physical environment. Mr Ras explained that the infrastructure in the townships was substandard relative to Die Vlakte. There were dilapidated roads, no electricity or running water as well as underfunded schools. Ida Valley was a dangerous place with high crime rates, establishing the immediate realities of the relocation. Additionally, the differences in the infrastructure between the townships were also notable, as Idas Valley was better equipped than Cloetesville and Kayamandi.

There is erasure of history as the site of his home in Die Vlakte is now a driveway into student housing apartments. Not only did the relocations disrupt people's lives, but they also erased the tangible evidence that a community once thrived there. This highlights the erasure of history and personal identities through space. Mr Ras notes that despite the end of apartheid over 30

years ago, there are hauntological effects. Cloetesville's unemployment is still high, there is poor housing and infrastructure, and it remains a notoriously dangerous township.

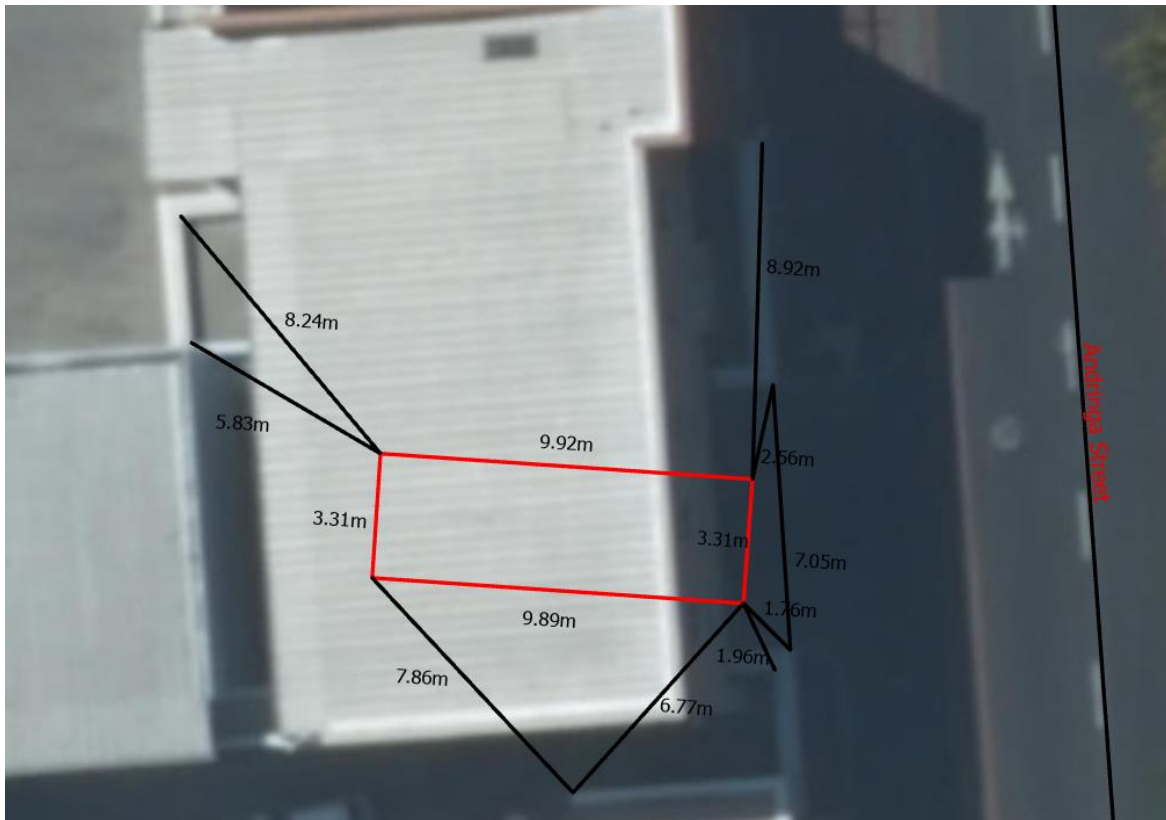
### Resilience and Life After Die Vlakte

In the face of adversity, the community's perseverance is depicted in Mr Ras's testimony. He introduces the Vlakte Community Forum, an initiative that aims to keep the history of forced removals from Stellenbosch alive. This is done by documenting ex-resident's names and where they lived, archiving historical maps and liaising with Stellenbosch University to ensure that history is remembered while seeking acknowledgement for families affected by the removals. This is an indication that the community is steadfast in the endeavour to ensure that their past is not forgotten. They are persistent and dedicated to upholding their legacy.

Being forcefully evacuated had social and economic consequences for the ex-residents. Due to township placement based on the type of jobs people had, class tensions rose as socioeconomics determined where one lived. Due to a lack of services and high unemployment rates, the infrastructure has remained the same, despite the increase in population. This highlights the lasting impact of apartheid and how it can trap people of colour in a perpetual cycle of poverty through forced removals.

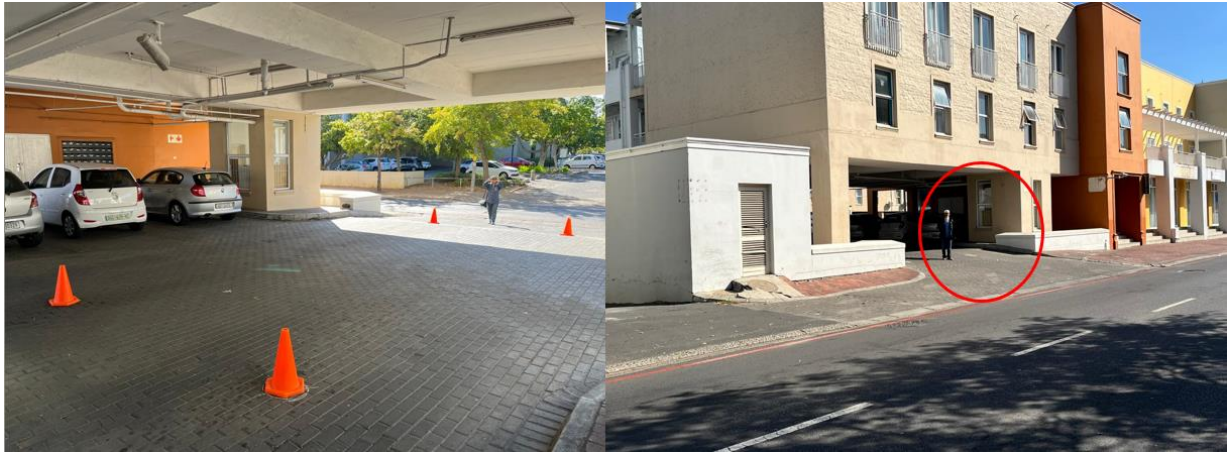
## Spatial Analysis

Figure 33 shows the trilateration of 107 Andringa Street, as described in the methodology chapter, to determine the exact location and dimensions of the house. A total station was used to measure angles at the points on the ground and compute correct distances to improve accuracy.



*Figure 33: Trilateration of 107 Andringa Street*

In Figure 33, multiple structures around the building were used as reference points as they are used above. The distances between the corners of the polygon, representing Mr Ras's old house, and the reference points were carefully measured and recorded in GIS. Upon arrival at the site, the recorded distances were used to physically measure and mark the dimensions of the house. These were then delineated on the ground with cones as shown on the left in Figure 34.



*Figure 34: Andringa Street site visit*

The image on the right in Figure 34 shows Mr Ras, circled in red, standing in the front of his house, now the driveway to a parking lot of a student accommodation.

### 5.2.3 Map Study

The participants were invited to participate in a map study two to six weeks following the site visit, depending on their availability. A comprehensive spatial database of the pre-removal neighbourhoods was successfully created using shapefiles, which preceded map creation and presentation of the results. In District Six, archival records include land use data showing building footprints, as seen in Figure 23. The spatial database captures locations as points and polygons. On the other hand, Die Vlakte lacks historical building footprints and only has cadastral lot data available; therefore, the spatial database is plotted as points.

### *6 Eckard Street*

The map study took place at the University of Cape Town. An interactive map table (a large touch screen) was set up, showing the maps of District Six. The participants interacted with the map and interviewers in a process that helped to identify and describe key sites around their neighbourhood. Mark, Isobel, and Nadiemah were present for the exercise. A pre-demolition aerial image of District Six was displayed on the map along with the building footprints to help the ex-residents identify the demolished buildings. At the end of the exercise, the points of interest captured are shown in Figure 35 as yellow points.

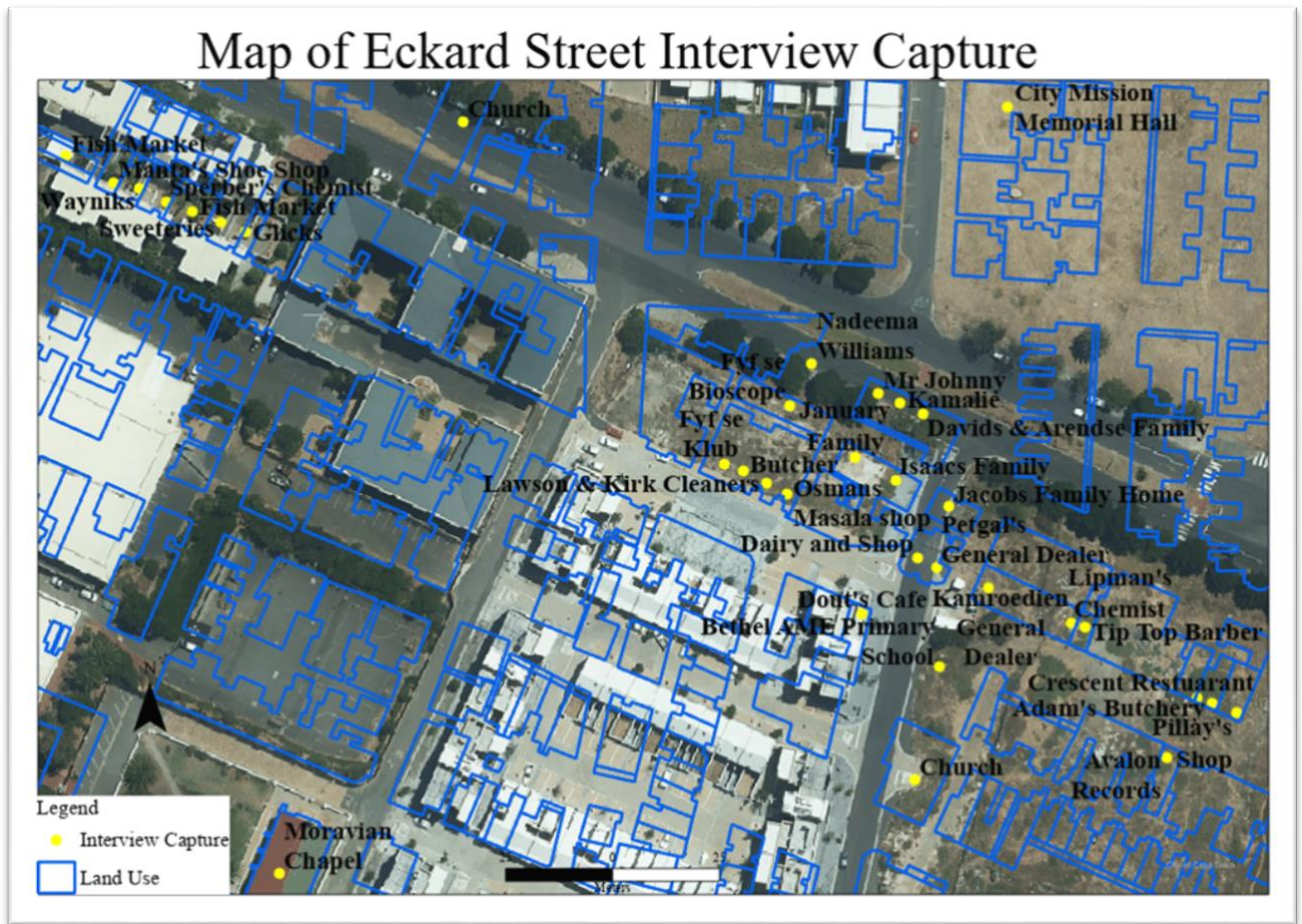


Figure 35: Interview capture of Eckard Street

Overlain on the aerial image of 2023 are the polygons of the building footprints (in blue) before evictions and demolitions. This is to show the contrast between the old and present-day District Six. The ex-residents could identify places around their home on Eckard Street and beyond, as shown by the yellow points. They could recognise their former neighbours and other places, such as the fish market on the northeast, Crescent Restaurant in the southeast, and a church towards the northeast.

#### *Clifton Street*

The map study with participants of Clifton Street also took place at UCT, where all participants, Samuel, Jakie, Karen, and David, were present.

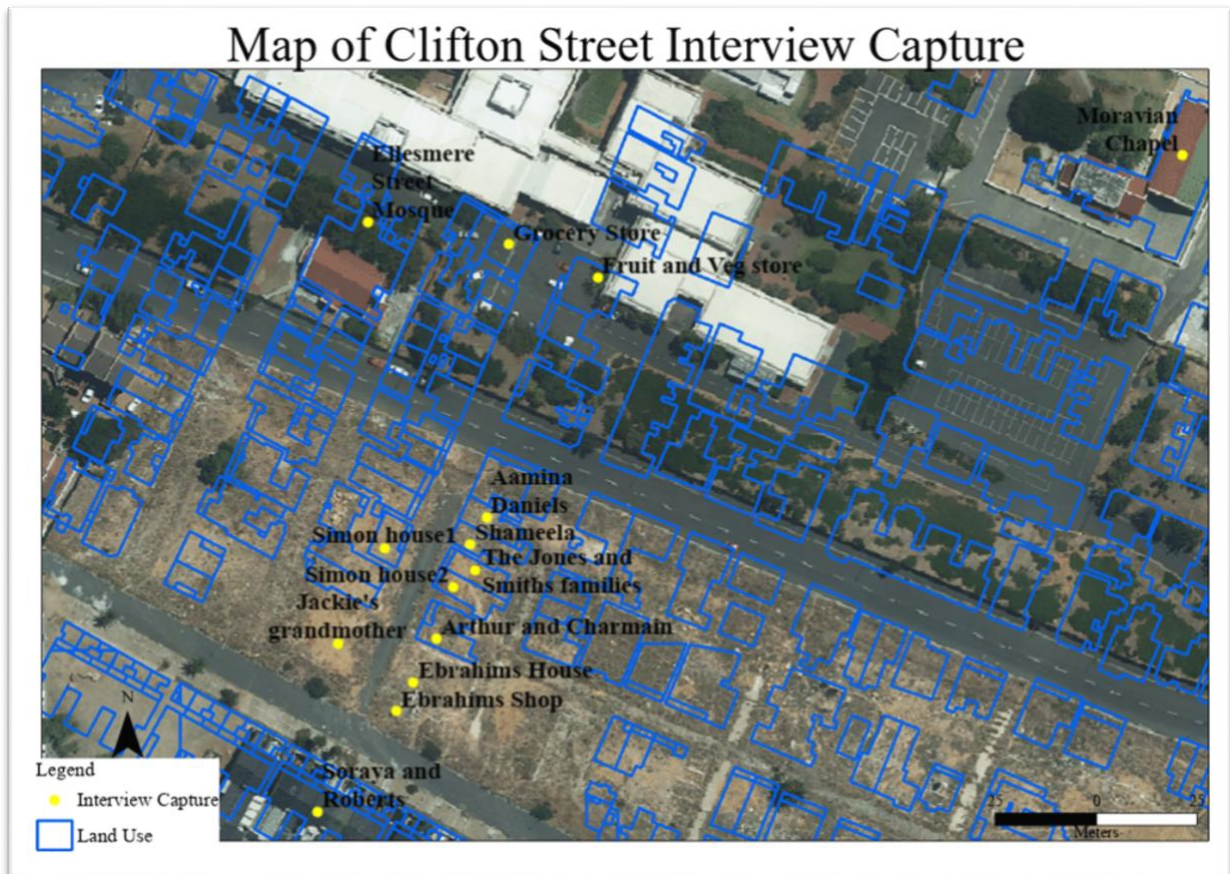


Figure 36: Interview capture of Clifton Street

They recalled their neighbours, who lived close by and those who lived further, such as friends of Karen, Soraya, and Roberts on the south-west of the map in Figure 36. They also recalled Ebrahim and Arthur’s households lived harmoniously despite their religious differences. They mentioned Mr Simon’s two wives, who lived across the street from each other, and the fruit and vegetable store, which often sold spoiled produce.

During the map study, Samuel discovered that his place of birth was at the corner of Cannon and Adam Street and is now in the parking lot of his wife’s place of employment. The GIS swipe feature compared the 1968 aerial image with the present one. This is shown in Figure 37, where the green oval indicates his wife’s workplace.



Figure 37: Use of the swipe feature to make comparisons through time

This discovery highlights the juxtaposition between the past and present and embodies deeper findings in this research. While it shows the erasure of a community and history for urban development, it also shows the poetic irony that exists within the ex-resident’s experiences in how Samuel’s wife would work so close to his birthplace. Just like how much of District Six is still left uninhabited, the conversion of Samuel’s birthplace into a parking lot speaks to the injustice of the removals.

#### *107 Andringa Street*

The map study for 107 Andringa was conducted on-site at Stellenbosch University and facilitated by the Vlakte Community Forum. Given the considerable distance between UCT premises and Stellenbosch, and considering Mr Ras’s advanced age, it was impractical to request that he travel a long distance for the session. Instead of the map table, a computer screen was used to plot the points under the guidance of Mr Ras.

Figure 38 represents the points gathered from the interview capture. Mr Ras and the Vlakte Community Forum have the names of most of the ex-residents who were forcefully removed, and this can be plotted on the GIS map.

## Map of Die Vlakte Interview Capture

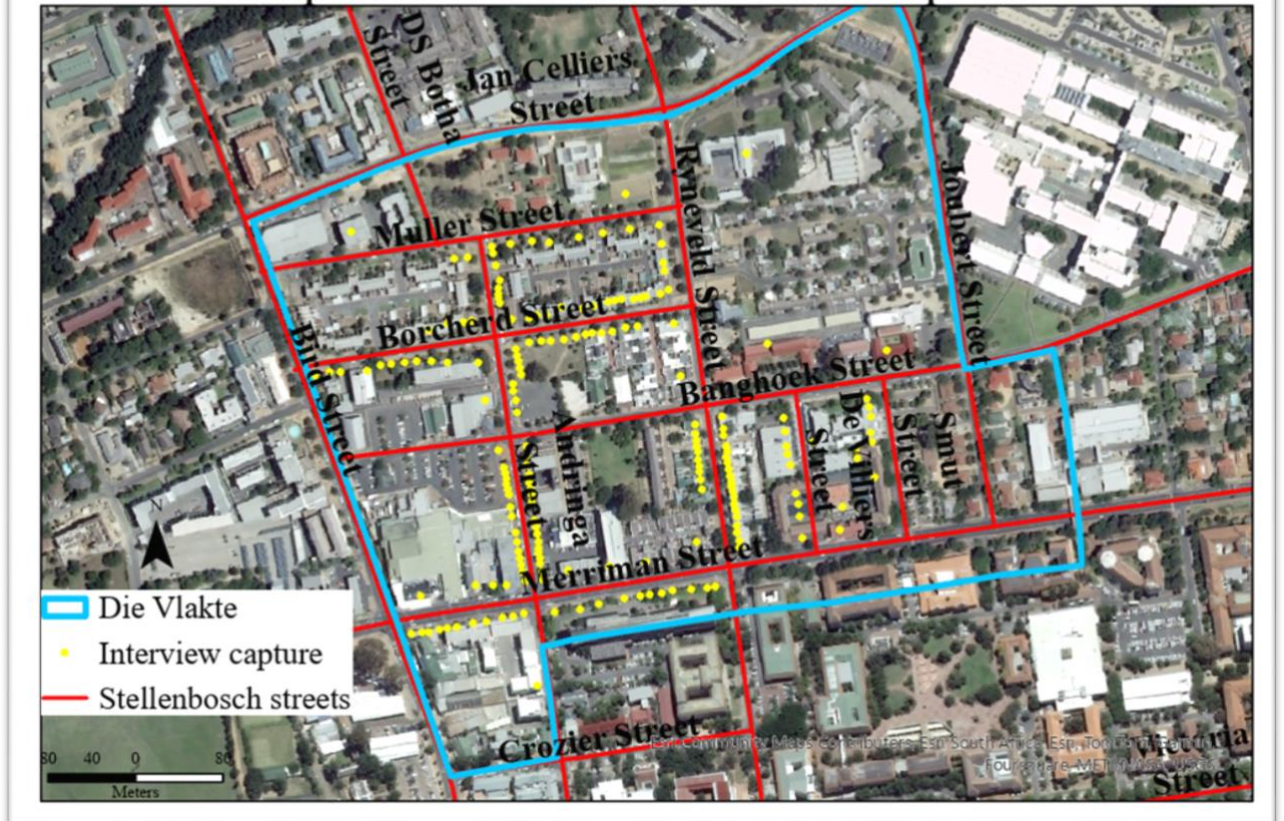


Figure 38: Die Vlakte interview capture

The names and descriptions of the families were recorded on the attribute table of the point shapefile to document each house and family. Figure 39 shows a closer look into some of the evicted families along with Mr Ras's home, which is circled in red.



Figure 39: A section of the Die Vlakte ex-resident spatial database

The map study effectively analysed historical and contemporary aerial images using GIS technology in the documentation of forced removals. The process was helpful in unearthing memories that provide historical spatial information to document and preserve them. Researchers can reconstruct the past through archives, GIS and personal experiences of ex-residents. Ex-residents' stories were captured on a spreadsheet and can be linked to each point.

The map study resonates with the activist archiving discussed in [Chapter 3.4](#). Just as archival social justice seeks to address imbalances in historical record-keeping, counter-surveying focuses on the perspective of the ex-residents from District Six and Die Vlakte. By empowering communities to take part in documenting their histories, archival practices can become a tool for resistance, healing, and justice. Therefore, counter-surveying contributes to the ongoing dialogue on using archives to resist institutions of power, ensuring that marginalised voices are not lost.

### 5.2.4 Reflections

The reflections on the participants' accounts following their visit to the site of their former home and the map table exercise are explored here. The ex-residents reflect on the entire process's impact on them, including visiting the sites of their homes and being shown maps

created during the map study. The reflections were often emotionally charged and highlighted the importance of collective memory work.

### *6 Eckard Street*

The reflection occurred over a Zoom call with Mark Jacobs, who described the return to District Six as a deeply emotional visit for him and his sister. The anticipation and anxiety leading up to the visit were stressful, and Mark said that having his sister there was important for emotional support. According to him, the practice of walking around the site and standing on what was the front door provided a deep sense of loss and nostalgia. This illustrates how the visit to 6 Eckard Street was more than a physical return, but a return to significant memories and emotions.

The visit to the site with others (Isobel and Nadiema) foregrounded the significance of the community in District Six. Mark explained that he was nervous about being recorded, but seeing the familiar faces of Isobel and Nadiema helped him remember why this was important to do. Additionally, the other participants were aided by collective memory and shared experiences. He explained that they arrived early and immediately immersed themselves in conversations about life on Eckard Street, highlighting the endurance of the community despite physical displacement.

Mark reflected on how seeing the changes to the landscape evoked feelings of anger and resentment. The contrast between pre-demolition District Six and the present-day site underscores the deep injustice of forced removals. Mark stressed how “*wrong*” it felt that his home was replaced by a road leading to new developments for returnees who had also been forcefully removed. This juxtaposition highlights the lasting impact of urban renewal on ex-residents, who remain attached to the past through these altered spaces.

Overall, Mr Jacobs reflected on the importance of projects that preserve the memory of District Six. He expressed gratitude to the research team for creating such a platform for him, his sister, and other ex-residents of District Six to reconnect with their history while keeping the memories alive. His reflections captured the connection between ex-residents and the powerful role of shared memory in documenting history, demonstrating that the collective recollection of former residents is important in preserving the legacy of District Six.

### *Clifton Street – Interpreting the Withdrawal*

As previously mentioned, the participants from Clifton Street chose to withdraw from the study soon after the map study. While it is true that the reflections cannot be analysed due to their

withdrawal, their absence itself speaks volumes about the gravity of the topic. The decision to no longer participate can be linked to unresolved trauma suffered during and after the removals were enforced. During the site visit, the participants noted that they had never returned to Clifton Street since the eviction, which suggests that the revisit may have triggered unexpected and overwhelming emotions.

Their withdrawal highlights the profound emotional weight that being a forcibly removed ex-resident can carry despite the passage of time. It shows the depth and pain of the memories associated with forced removals and how this is likely the case for many individuals. This points to the complexity of researching traumatic historical events where human participation is vital for the study. It points to the fact that the emotional burden may be too heavy for some, even in an ethically designed study.

It is important to note that the withdrawal of the participants does not invalidate or skew the research results. However, it highlights the role of ethical considerations in designing a study, as discussed in [Chapter 4.4](#), Ethics. The choice to withdraw should be seen as a reminder of the importance of prioritising the well-being of the participants over data collection. It reiterates the need for sensitivity and care when dealing with subjects of trauma, as the emotional impact of the participants must always be at the forefront. Therefore, this occurrence illustrates how withdrawal can be an important outcome, showing the lingering effects of displacement and the significance of creating research that acknowledges and respects the emotional boundaries of those involved.

### *107 Andringa Street*

Mr Ras's reflection occurred in person at Stellenbosch University premises, at the old Luckhoff school he attended as a child. His insights into the process reveal a deep connection between the counter-surveying process and his personal experiences of displacement. He reflected that the process was more than an academic exercise as it played a role in reconnecting him with his past and reclaiming his history in a tangible manner. He emphasised the emotional significance of revisiting the exact location of his former home and how important it was for him to see the mapped representations of his neighbourhood. He reported that the mapping exercise stood out to him, as it allowed him to visualise the physical spaces and the memories held by those spaces.

According to Mr Ras, identifying the sites he vividly remembers, such as his home and specific landmarks, enabled him to navigate the past. For him, counter-surveying is a means of

preserving the historical landscapes, for younger generations who may not have direct experiences, and holding responsible institutions such as Stellenbosch University accountable. In his reflection, Mr Ras described the emotional turmoil of revisiting his former home, which has been transformed. His home being replaced by a driveway triggered sentiments of injustice, a stark reminder of the ongoing impact of apartheid's spatial policies.

Despite these changes, he expressed gratitude for the opportunity to participate in a project that allowed him to revisit his history and provide a space for ex-residents to document their history. He shared that his involvement in counter-surveying played a role in addressing historical wrongs and reclaiming community spaces and stories from development that had largely erased who they were. His reflections on the process emphasise the importance of the methodology as both a personal and collective exercise in preserving memory and steps towards historical redress.

## 6. The Counter-Surveying Methodology

Based on the empirical evidence gathered over the three case study sites and reported on in the previous chapters, a final methodology was developed and is represented in Figure 2. The figure is repeated here, in Figure 40, for ease of reading.

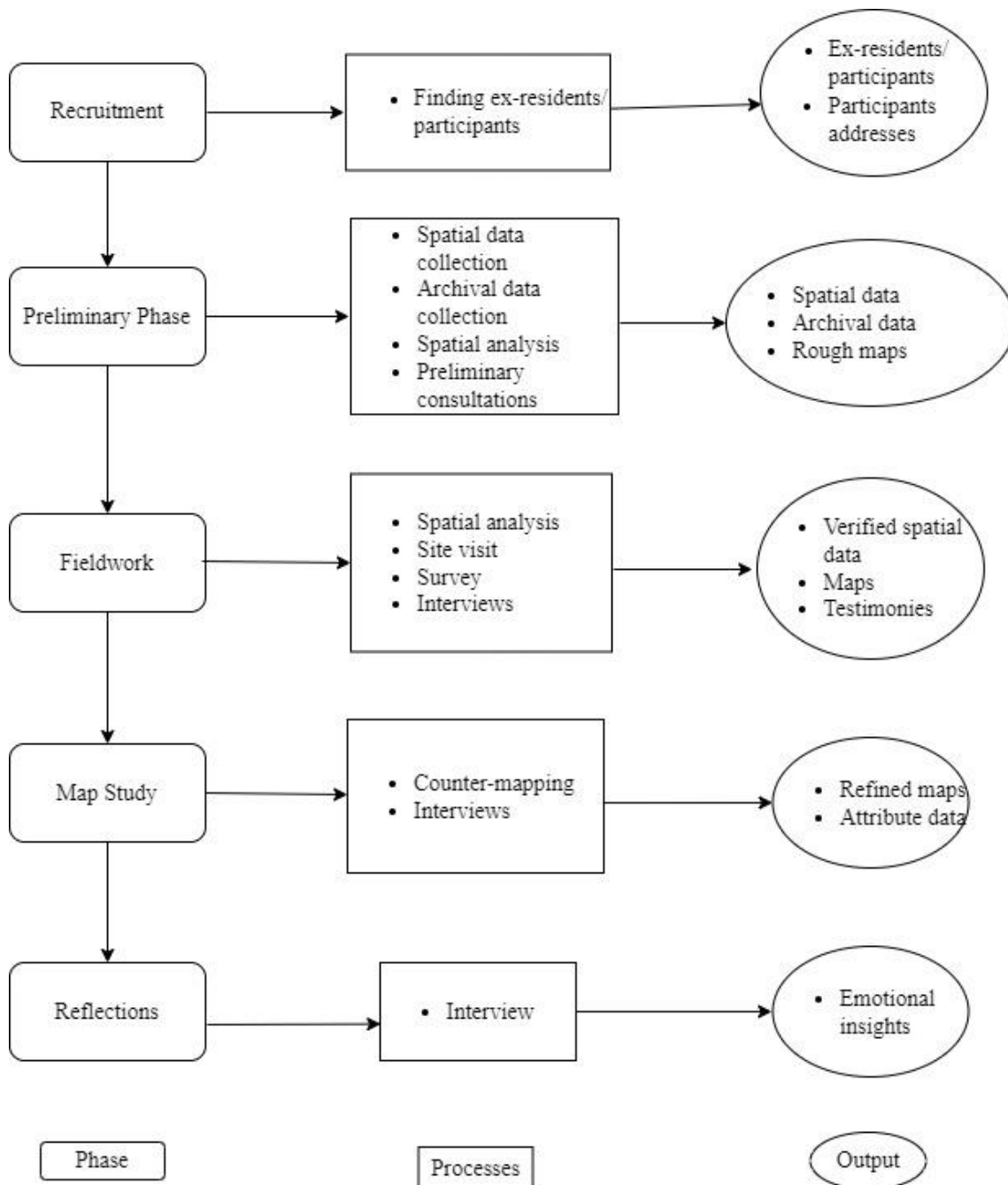


Figure 40: The Counter-Surveying Methodology

This chapter breaks down the methodology and explains how it builds on the existing research by Motala and Bozalek, as previously described. The methodology follows a workflow divided

into five distinct phases; the rounded rectangles show the phases of the research, the rectangles show the processes that take place, and the ellipses show the output of each process.

### 6.1 Recruitment Phase

The first phase is the recruitment process, in which researchers find ex-residents to participate. As explained early in the study, ex-resident participants are acquired through community engagement. The potential participants are then given a summary of the study, with desired outcomes explained, and then invited to participate. Upon agreeing, the participants are asked to provide their former addresses and any additional relevant information. They are also encouraged to bring any ex-residents, friends or family members.

### 6.2 Preliminary Phase

Following the recruitment of participants, archival and spatial data research is conducted to gather historical records, photographs, and spatial data related to the participants' former homes. This part of the phase is essential for understanding the physical changes after the removals. It also helps to support tracing demolished buildings and changes in the street networks to compare past and present spatial arrangements. This step addresses the research question of what data inputs can be used to trace forced removals. It engages with hauntology by acknowledging that the past can haunt present landscapes through spatial arrangements while building on Motala and Bozalek's (2022) focus on the importance of archival material in reconstructing erased histories.

The preliminary consultations are arranged after the collection of spatial data, archives, and recreating maps and layouts of the participants' former homes. These verify the spatial reconstructions and allow participants to confirm the locations of their former homes. These consultations, conducted over one or more meetings, are designed to build trust and create an environment where the participants feel comfortable enough to share their narratives. Given the nature of the topic, approaching the participants with sensitivity and emotional support is important.

### 6.3 Fieldwork

This phase involves returning to the site with ex-residents. The site of forced removals is revisited for a survey after maps have been created from verified spatial data. It is marked out using material described in the methodology chapter. Participants engage in memory work by walking through the site and explaining life as they remember it in their former home. They verify building footprints and street layouts to contribute to the accuracy of spatial

reconstruction. By interviewing and recording ex-residents, this phase ensures that the reconstruction of the site is community-driven, in alignment with counter-mapping. Incorporating collective memory with GIS answers how data can be integrated to create a cohesive documentation of forced removals.

#### 6.4 Map Study

The participants are invited to partake in further counter-mapping where they are shown old maps of their previous neighbourhoods and asked to pinpoint locations of landmarks, buildings and homes as they remember them. From this, points/polygons and attribute data are collected on each location and plotted to create a spatial database. In recounting and recording their histories, participants also help to analyse how the space has changed over time, presenting these findings in the context of historical loss.

The maps created from this process also show how GIS and community engagement can be employed to document erased narratives. While Motala and Bozalek (2022) highlight the embodied experience of walking the site, this modified approach expands the archival component by recording spatial data and narratives. This approach combines the principles of archival social justice and counter-mapping, where the voices of the marginalised communities are foregrounded, recorded, and activated through participatory mapping.

#### 6.5 Reflection

This research phase gathers the participants' reflections and can be conducted in person or via Zoom. The participants are asked to reflect on the counter-survey process, particularly how the site revisit, and map study impacted them emotionally and what it meant to them. Participants are also shown maps created from their site visits and map studies to demonstrate the importance of their decision to participate in the documentation.

This reflection allows the researchers to review the successes or failures of the methodology. It is in line with hauntology (Tuck, 2009) and desire-based research (Tuck, 2009), exploring how memory interacts with space and the resilience of those who have experienced trauma. The key role of this phase is to interrogate the ethical sensitivity of the study and ensure that the research does not harm participants.

## 7. Conclusion and Recommendations

The research demonstrates that counter-surveying offers a powerful methodology for reconstructing memories of forced removal sites, both physically and emotionally, as demonstrated in chapters [5.2.3](#) and [5.2.4](#). By integrating GIS, archival material, and participant testimonies, the study documents spatial transformations and reclaims histories erased by colonial and apartheid regimes. This research modifies and enhances Motala and Bozalek's (2022) work by explicitly incorporating an archival component. Archives from multiple sources are activated to supplement the recording of ex-resident's stories. Ex-residents further engage through annotating maps from their neighbourhood. In combination, this documentation enriches and deepens knowledge about forced removals.

There has been an integration of multidisciplinary data sources such as archival material, spatial data and personal narratives in the process, as well as techniques to develop this methodology. This helps to provide an in-depth study into forced removals. This aligns with the general objective to refine counter-surveying practices through multi-disciplinary inquiry. Identifying the need for various data inputs has shed light on the value of combining qualitative and quantitative data in producing a well-rounded representation of historical events. The emphasis on community involvement underscores the importance of giving voice to ex-residents and their experiences, fulfilling the community engagement objective. The new methodology is anarchival in the sense that new archives are available for mobilisation and can inspire

Additionally, mapping has been integral to preserving spatial histories by plotting demolished sites, meeting the objective of safeguarding historical narratives and spatial data. This approach helped recreate historical landscapes and underscore the impact of forced removals on the structure of communities, enhancing understanding through maps. Finally, integrating spatial data in the form of points and polygons led to a cohesive and visual representation of forced removals, achieving the aim of data analysis and integration.

Although this thesis attempts to build on Motala and Bozalek's (2022) counter-surveying inquiry, it is done from a different philosophical position. The case studies enabled a detailed examination of historical landscapes, lived experiences and archival records, resulting in a framework that incorporates diverse sources of data. Thus, this approach allowed for the documentation and analysis of counter-surveying within a specific historical and geographic context as opposed to approaching it as an open-ended deconstructive investigation typical of post-qualitative research.

This work provides a paradigm that can be applied in other contexts of forced removals, helping restore and recognise voices that have been suppressed. The combination of spatial analysis, archives, and personal narratives provides useful applications for urban planning or heritage conservation projects, where marginalised histories tend to be overlooked. Additionally, the emotional dimension captured in participant reflections underscores the deep connections between memory, geography, and personal identity, making a case for a participatory and sensitive research approach in future spatial studies linked to forced removals.

However, it is also important to acknowledge certain limitations. The emotional toll on participants, for instance, revealed the ethical complexities of engaging with traumatic histories, suggesting the need for a more comprehensive support structure in future counter-surveying projects. Additionally, while the research has successfully traced forced removals in District Six and Die Vlakte, its application may require adjustments in other areas of forced removals. For example, displaced communities in urban areas that experienced ‘urban renewal’ in the USA (e.g. Detroit) may benefit from such a methodology.

Documenting oral histories of the former residents resulted in acquiring a rich and layered history, although the participant group was relatively small. Expanding the methodology to allow more participants to come together and share their past experiences could enhance the anarchival nature of Motala and Bozalek’s (2022) approach to further illuminate how the past continues to shape the present. However, Tuck (2009) cautions against an exclusive focus on trauma risks reinforcing a victim-based view of marginalised communities, framing them as casualties rather than agents of resistance, resistance and continuity. This can be countered by a more expansive approach to the methodology that also centres on the narratives of strength, community ties and resistance.

The impact of the developed counter-surveying methodology on ex-residents has been significant in providing a platform for their stories while contributing to the historical record. In meeting these objectives, this study presents a robust counter-surveying methodology that captures the spatial and human dimensions of dispossession. Therefore, the study highlights the potential for counter-surveying as a transformative tool for documenting erased histories. It contributes to the ongoing discourse on reclaiming marginalised spaces, providing a new path forward in academic research and real-world applications of justice, heritage and memory preservation.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A: Abbreviations**

AR: Augmented Reality

COCT: City of Cape Town

GIS: Geographic Information Systems

POC: People of Colour- people classified as any race other than White/Caucasian.

VR: Virtual Reality

## Appendix B: Information Sheet and Consent Form

Study title: THE DEVELOPMENT OF COUNTER-SURVEYING AS A METHODOLOGY TO DOCUMENT FORCED REMOVALS: CASE STUDIES OF DISTRICT SIX AND DIE VLAKTE

### Introduction

Hello, my name is Tlotliso Mokomane and I would like to thank you for considering contributing to my Master's thesis project. This study aims to map parcels of land to identify locations of forced removals in District Six and Die Vlakte. It seeks to explore the subject of being forcefully removed from one's home by interviewing people who have had personal experiences.

You are kindly invited, as an ex-resident of District Six/Die Vlakte, to participate in the study. Please read the following information and ask any questions before deciding to partake in the study.

### Procedure

Participation entails virtual discussions of the site prior to the visit to confirm the location. This is followed by visiting and walking around the site that was your home before the forced removal. I would like to interview you and take images, audio and video recordings of the interview and walking around the site. You have the right to decline to share any information if you so choose.

### Confidentiality

Your information is only accessible to the researcher and supervisor and will only be used for the purposes of this study. You have the choice to remain anonymous whereby your real name and photographs will not be used in publishing the research.

### Withdrawal

You have the right to withdraw from participation if you feel like doing so. If there arises a requirement for you to retract recorded and transcribed interviews at any stage, you are allowed to do so.

I, ..... give my full consent to participate in this study.

I consent to the use of my name and any other information (such as photographs and videos) being used for all material contributing to this research.

Signature of participant.....

Date.....

Signature of researcher.....

Date.....

Thank you for participating in this study.

Should any queries arise regarding the study and your participation, do not hesitate to contact:

Researcher: Tlotliso Mokomane

Contact information: [mkmtlo001@myuct.ac.za](mailto:mkmtlo001@myuct.ac.za)

Supervisor: Siddique Motala

Contact Information: [siddique.motala@uct.ac.za](mailto:siddique.motala@uct.ac.za)

## Appendix C: Ethics Statement

### Purpose

The purpose of this study is to develop the counter-survey methodology to record the precise sites of forced removals and interview the people who used to live there. The aim is to map locations of forced removals through the lens of ex-residents and contribute towards acknowledgement and documentation of the injustices experienced by said ex-residents. This ethics statement ensures that the research is undertaken and conducted ethically. It protects the rights and interests of the participants by adhering to the highest standards of ethics with the guarantee to attend to any ethical issues that may arise.

### Permissions

Authorisation to conduct the research, interact with participants and access the study areas was obtained from the University of Cape Town's Engineering and Built Environment Ethics in Research Committee. This ensures that the highest ethical standards are met in compliance with the Ethics in Research Handbook (EBE EiRC, 2018).

### Informed consent

All subjects participating as interviewees were requested to give informed consent to participate in the research. A combined information sheet and consent form were provided to the interviewee before the first consultation. This is to help them make an informed decision about participating in the research. The form outlines the aim, expected outcomes, benefits, and potential risks of participating in the study. The form is shown in Appendix D. It is also important to make sure that the participants are aware of their right to accept or decline participation and permission to withdraw from the study at their will with no adverse effects.

### Procedures

Interviews were carried out with ex-residents. They were carried out in a professional and respectful, yet conversational manner to ease the sensitivity of the topic and allow the participants an atmosphere of safety as they attempt to recall and tell stories that may trigger an array of emotions. Before the interviews, the participants were asked to grant informed consent through signing consent forms. The process was chronicled by photos, audio recordings and videos of the interview with questions tailored to meet some of the objectives outlined in this study. Participants were also requested to walk around the site as a form of

memory work and this process was also recorded by video. Ex-residents had the choice to share archival material (e.g. letters, photographs, etc.) with the interviewer.

#### Potential risks

It is acknowledged that taking part in recorded interviews presents the potential risk of sharing personal information. As such, the participants were informed of their right to decline to share any information outside of their comfort zone. The consent form also places control in the hands of each ex-resident by ensuring that the information provided is only used for research purposes and will not be shared with any third party.

#### Confidentiality

To maintain the confidentiality of the participants, the recorded interviews are only accessible to the researcher team and supervisor. The participants are also made aware that the information they choose to share is only accessible to the research team and will only be employed for academic purposes. Each ex-resident will only be identified if they provide such permission. If an ex-resident chooses to remain confidential, this will be honoured. All recordings will be stored on a shared Google Drive which is only accessible to the research team.

#### Participation and withdrawal

Before engaging in the consultations, participants were informed of their right to withdraw from participation if they felt like doing so. If there arose a requirement for participants to retract recorded and transcribed interviews at any stage, they were allowed to do so.

### Appendix D: Meetings and Consultations

These entail supervisor meetings to discuss the project proceedings as well as communication with the ex-residents before the survey of the site.

#### Supervisor Meetings

Meetings took place on a weekly or bi-weekly basis from February 2023 to October 2024. There were different goals for each meeting, ranging from understanding the topic, preparation for interviews and fieldwork to the structure and results of the final dissertation. This is a summary of the discussion points of the meetings.

Supervision meeting 1	
Date	28/02/2023
Venue	Dr Motala's office
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction to counter-surveying by Motala and Bozalek (2022)</li><li>• Discussion of what the final research seeks to achieve</li><li>• Literature relevant to the history of District Six</li><li>• Spatial data aspect of the project</li><li>• Synthesis of an initial/trial flow chart for counter-surveying</li></ul>
Supervision meeting 2	
Date	01/03/2023
Venue	Dr Motala's office
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conceptualising counter-survey</li><li>• Geomatics and surveying (fieldwork) elements of the research</li><li>• Incorporating archival science and archival social justice</li><li>• Finding interested ex-residents</li><li>• Determining how to identify exact homes of ex-residents</li><li>• Handover of available spatial data</li></ul>

Supervision meeting 3	
Date	17/03/2023
Venue	Teams Call
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussing prospects of counter-survey in Clifton Street</li> <li>• Reflecting on the counter-survey at 6 Eckard (2022)</li> </ul>
Supervision meeting 4	
Date	28/03/2023
Venue	Dr Motala's office
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to Clifton Street ex-resident Samuel Jones</li> <li>• Set up a possible counter-survey date</li> <li>• Marking out location using GIS</li> <li>• Discussing the documentation of counter-survey spatial data through shapefiles</li> </ul>
Supervision meeting 5	
Date	01/04/2023
Venue	Dr Motala's office
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtaining archival data from the District Six Museum</li> <li>• Discussing incorporating mapping exercise into counter-survey workflow</li> </ul>
Supervision meeting 6	
Date	12/04/2023
Venue	Dr Motala's office
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clifton Street counter-survey preparations</li> <li>• Locating the house and creating footprints</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determining the dimensions of the house</li> <li>• Proposal</li> </ul>
Supervision meeting 7	
Date	19/04/2023
Venue	Dr Motala's office
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissertation plan</li> <li>• Relevant literature</li> <li>• Reviewing the literature review of my proposal</li> <li>• Creating a series of steps for counter-surveying</li> <li>• Template of data storage structure</li> </ul>
Supervision meeting 8	
Date	26/04/2023
Venue	Dr Motala's office
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preliminary phase formulation</li> <li>• Preparation for Clifton Street counter-survey</li> <li>• Discussion of Die Vlakte counter-survey</li> </ul>
Supervision meeting 9	
Date	04/05/2023
Venue	Dr Motala's office
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtaining Stellenbosch spatial data from NGI</li> <li>• Reviewing Mark Jacobs's Counter-survey</li> <li>• Discussion of spatial accuracy relevant to the study</li> <li>• Ethical consideration of the study</li> </ul>
Supervision meeting 10	

Date	15/05/2023
Venue	Dr Motala's office
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewing concepts for the literature review</li> <li>• Conceptual framework</li> </ul>
Supervision meeting 11	
Date	26/05/2023
Venue	Dr Motala's office
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maps to support counter-survey</li> <li>• Methods</li> <li>• Processes</li> <li>• Interviews with ex-residents</li> <li>• Anticipated outcomes of counter-survey</li> </ul>
Supervision meeting 12	
Date	09/06/2023
Venue	Dr Motala's office
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Archival social justice</li> <li>• Review of my literature review</li> </ul>
Supervision meeting 13	
Date	25/08/2023
Venue	Dr Motala's office
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of data collected from District Six</li> </ul>
Supervision meeting 14	
Date	01/09/2023
Venue	Teams Call
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Die Vlakte (107 Andringa Street) counter-survey</li> <li>• Data (or lack thereof) availability in Die Vlakte and how to mediate this</li> </ul>
Supervision meeting 15	

Date	16/11/2023
Venue	Teams Call
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of erfs and cadastral data into the data-deficient study site</li> <li>• Cadastral historical investigation of Die Vlakte</li> </ul>
Supervision meeting 16	
Date	30/11/2023
Venue	Teams Call
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation for Preliminary consultations in Die Vlakte</li> </ul>
Supervision meeting 17	
Date	08/02/2024
Venue	Dr Motala's office
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of criteria for selecting ex-residents</li> <li>• Site suitability assessment</li> <li>• Die Vlakte preliminary consultation</li> </ul>
Supervision meeting 18	
Date	19/02/2024
Venue	Teams Call
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introducing hauntology to the study</li> <li>• Literature review</li> </ul>
Supervision meeting 19	
Date	21/03/2024
Venue	Teams Call
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of Die Vlakte upcoming fieldwork</li> <li>• Extraction of themes from District Six interviews and mapping exercise</li> <li>• Spatial archiving</li> </ul>
Supervision meeting 20	

Date	12/04/2024
Venue	Dr Motala's office
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mapping exercise structure</li> <li>• Data from Die Vlakte community forum</li> <li>• Literature relevant to Die Vlakte</li> </ul>
Supervision meeting 21	
Date	22/04/2024
Venue	Teams Call
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extraction of themes from Die Vlakte interview</li> <li>• Discussion of sensory tapping (child-like memory) of all ex-residents</li> <li>• Extracting quotes from interview footage</li> <li>• Spatial analysis of a social phenomenon</li> <li>• How to approach a multi-disciplinary project</li> </ul>
Supervision meeting 22	
Date	15/05/2024
Venue	Teams Call
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of language and removing emotion from the paper</li> <li>• Technology and historical preservation</li> <li>• Digital storytelling</li> <li>• Revision of the literature review</li> <li>• Literature on hauntology</li> </ul>
Supervision meeting 23	
Date	27/06/2024
Venue	Teams Call

Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case studies</li> <li>• Timeline of historical events</li> <li>• Spatial and historical context of study areas</li> <li>• Differential between learnings from ex-residents and literature</li> </ul>
Supervision meeting 24	
Date	15/07/2024
Venue	Teams Call
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refining the introduction</li> <li>• Reworking the headings and sub-heading titles</li> <li>• Leaning towards desire-based research</li> <li>• Change the tone of the methodology</li> <li>• Discuss the margin of error</li> </ul>
Supervision meeting 25	
Date	03/08/2024
Venue	Teams Call
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation for 107 Andringa Street map study and interview capture</li> <li>• Die Vlakte boundary</li> <li>• Maps</li> <li>• Moving past the constraints of apartheid maps</li> </ul>
Supervision meeting 26	
Date	10/09/2023
Venue	Dr Motala's office
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Methodology chapter</li> <li>• Results chapter</li> <li>• The counter-survey chapter</li> <li>• Conclusion</li> </ul>

Supervision meeting 27	
Date	23/10/2024
Venue	Teams Call
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving the structure of the paper</li> <li>• Final edits</li> </ul>

### Email Exchanges (Preliminary Consultations)

This is a summary of the email communication that occurred prior to the fieldwork process of the counter-survey of Clifton Street as there was an attempt to ascertain whether the land parcel identified through the initial site visit and GIS processing was the home of the participants. It is the pre-mapping consultation.

#### *Introduction*

- I was introduced to Samuel Jones by Dr Motala. Samuel made the introduction to Jackie Smith, his cousin who also lived in the house. They both represented their siblings.
- Dr Motala proposed the use of the house on Clifton Street as a case study and asked that Samuel and his family participate.

#### *Getting acquainted with the house*

- The participants were shown maps and aerial images of the house as discussed in section 4.3.1, Preliminary Phase, to determine the accuracy of the location of the house.
- Jackie was pleasantly surprised by the accuracy of the maps. She followed up by a detailed description of her home from the entrance to the interior and rooms in the house.
- It was interesting to learn that the house was more than one level as the siblings revealed that another family lived in the basement.

#### *Layout*

- The house was a single-storey with a large basement underneath, where another family lived.
- It had a veranda in the front and a small yard at the back.
- The house had two bedrooms, a lounge, a kitchen and a toilet at the back of the house.

### *Preparation for the site visit*

- Participants confirmed their availability for a date suitable for all.
- They were also asked for consent to being filmed during the interviews.
- The participants were also sent old images of Clifton Street to determine house number.
- They were asked to provide any images they might have of the house or their time in District six.
- The interview had to be rescheduled due to rainy weather.

### *Memory work*

- The participants were asked a series of questions to jog their memory in preparation for visiting the site.
- The questions were as follows:
  - What did the house look like? Outside and inside?
  - How many rooms, location of the rooms, purpose of the rooms?
  - Vivid memories of events that took place there, and where in the house they occurred?
  - Who lived there, where did they sleep, favourite spots (e.g. Dad used to sit here...)?
  - What was nearby (neighbourhood buildings, shops, people)?
  - Anything else you remember about the place?
- They were asked to provide any photographs of the house as this was important to improve accuracy of the project.
- Pictures were provided, which verified the house, while also providing different angles to help identify the house.
- Both participants provided detailed explanations of the pictures, describing their neighbourhood and confirming various landmarks identified in the photos.

### Pre-mapping Consultation Questions

1. What was your address in District Six/Die Vlakte?
2. Would anyone in your family be interested in joining you in going back to the site where your home was located?
3. What time works best for you? Would you be available on (date) to participate?

4. Do you consent to being filmed or interviewed?
5. Do have any photos of the house and your time in District Six/Die Vlakte that you can share?

In preparation for the visit to the site, can you do some memory work by jogging your memory with these questions?

6. What did the house look like, inside and outside?
7. How many rooms? Location of the rooms? Purpose of the rooms?
8. Do you have any recollection of any events that happened there?
9. Who lived there with you? Where was their bedroom?
10. What do you remember about the surrounding areas? Neighbours, shops, churches, etc.
11. What else do you remember about your time there?
12. What do you hope to get out of this process?

#### Appendix E. Interview Schedule

Topic: AN INVESTIGATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPOSED COUNTER-SURVEYING METHODOLOGY TO TRACE THE LOCATION OF FORCED REMOVALS IN DISTRICT SIX AND DIE VLAKTE

Researcher: Tlotliso Mokomane

#### Interview Schedule

**1. Introduction** 1.1 Greetings and introductions to the participants.

1.2 Introduction to the research, its aims and what it hopes to achieve.

1.3 Introduction to counter-surveying and its significance on the research project

1.4 Hand out information sheet consent forms and explain the purpose.

#### **2. Interview questions**

- Introduce yourself: name, age, occupation (optional).
- Tell us about your life in District Six/Die Vlakte: where did you live? How long did you leave there? When were you displaced from your home? What was life like? Any personal stories or experiences to share?

- Discuss your understanding of the forced removals and how your life changed.
- Discuss the day you packed up to leave your home: what year was it? What was the atmosphere? What happened? Where did you go?
- Do you have any memories to share regarding specific famous landmarks in District Six or Die Vlakte?
- What are your sentiments on this study?

### **3. Ethical considerations**

Addressing any considerations that participants may have regarding their personal information.

### **4. End of interview**

4.1 Thanking the participants for their time and contributions to the study.

4.2 Allowing participants to ask questions or give feedback

## Appendix F: Map Study Schedule

### **Mapping process**

**Date:**

**Attendees:**

- 1. Tea and snacks - light social (15 min)**
  
- 2. Overview of GIS functionality and layers, explain what we are capturing > household stories (10 min)**
  
- 3. Overview of maps and photos (60 min)**
  - 1890
  - 1926
  - 1946
  - 1953
  - 1968
  - 1977
  - 1980 -
  - 1983
  - 1996
  - 2023
  
- 4. Show old photos of the neighbourhood location  
Add to GIS layer**
  
- 5. Details on:**

Home

Neighbour

Shops

Entertainment

Religious institutions

Education (schools)

Special events (ex, weddings, carnival...)

- 4. Counter-survey methodology - map table and CS debrief (15 min)**
  - a. How are you feeling now after this visit, walkthrough, and map table exercise?

- b. What did you think about the use of maps and images?
- c. What glowed for you during and after the experience?
- d. What was positive for you about this experience?
- e. What was difficult for you about this experience?
- f. What are your memories of the demolition of the neighbourhood?
- g. What would you say to other ex-residents who might be considering participating in this exercise?
- h. Anything else you would like to share with us?

### Appendix J. Miscellaneous

Using a spade, light digging was done on what used to be the floor of the house on Clifton Street to discover relics and ruins that were buried during the demolition and preserved over the decades. The purpose was to unearth any materials that may evoke memory of the participants. Materials discovered include a linoleum, wallpaper and a runner. The ex-residents identified the linoleum as that of what used cover the floor of their kitchen over 40years ago.

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