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Between the (In)formal and the (Il)legal:

The 'Permanent Temporariness' of Waiting for a House

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A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of

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Supervisor: Associate Professor Sophie Oldfield

Faculty of the Humanities

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Plagiarism Declaration

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature:_____ Date:_____

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Abstract

Between the (In)formal and the (Il)legal: The 'Permanent Temporariness' of Waiting for a House

In Cape Town, 400 000 households are waiting for housing from the state. This thesis explores the everyday lived realities that waiting for housing entails: what waiting means to housing applicants, what living in temporary accommodation solutions for the long-term entails, and how these effects of waiting shape citizens' perceptions and encounters with the state. This research, conducted through open-ended, qualitative interviews provides a detailed and in-depth understanding of not only the everyday material and social experiences of waiting for housing and life in temporary accommodation, but also the types of encounters that citizens have with the state in relation to housing given the circumstances in which they wait. These narratives of waiting provide a detailed and nuanced understanding of the 'permanent temporariness' (Yiftachel, 2009a; 2009b) that waiting entails given the often difficult circumstances in which people live while waiting for housing, in overcrowded council houses, backyard shacks and informal settlements. Situated in the 'gray spaces' (Yiftachel, 2009a; 2009b) that exist between legal and illegal and formal and informal, housing applicants live in a state of 'betweenness' (Perramond, 2001) materially, socially, emotionally and politically. This 'betweenness', the core of the relationship between citizens and the state, produces a particular encounter with the state in relation to housing. This 'gray' encounter encompasses the varied ways housing applicants choose to interact with, and against, the state to access housing.

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Introduction

Between the (In)Formal and the (Il)Legal: the 'Permanent Temporariness' of Waiting for a House

Introduction

In Cape Town, 400 000 households are registered on the integrated housing database (City of Cape Town, 2010: 11), the formal channel through which low-income citizens can access housing from the state. However, while the statistics, such as 400 000 households waiting for housing in Cape Town, with a delivery of around 8500 units annually (City of Cape Town, 2010: 12), point to the crisis, they do not illuminate precisely what the housing shortage entails and means for those who are waiting to access housing from the state. According to the state, waiting is a technical process of application, fulfilling the requirements (such as not earning over R3500 a month) and then waiting for a housing opportunity to become available. For the applicants, however, waiting for housing is far more complicated and important than the technical notion that the state assumes it to be. Waiting has far-reaching effects that underscore everyday life as well as larger processes that cannot be put on hold while formal housing is waited for.

For the vast majority of the urban poor in South Africa, registration on a housing database is the norm. This fact is unremarkable – it even prompted bemused looks when I asked housing applicants about their waiting experiences. The seeming mundanity of waiting for housing comes from the fact that so many people are waiting for housing for long, undefined periods (up to 25 years in my research, though I heard of people who have waited for housing for longer that this); it is a completely normal state of being. In some senses, waiting has become natural, as many generations wait to access housing from the state, and is an assumed aspect of being the poor and marginalised in South Africa. Yet, despite the humdrum everydayness that waiting encapsulates, waiting is an instrumental aspect in accessing housing. Waiting is an essential facet in accessing housing legally from the state; it is logical to have to wait for such an asset and yet the processes of waiting are highly contested. It is in these contradictions of waiting that there exists a 'grayness'; an area that is muddy and unclear where waiting for housing is the legal channel for accessing housing, and yet perhaps because of its normative nature, is a largely unexplored area of research, to the extent that the notion of waiting is largely invisible to those who are waiting for housing, as well as to academics and bureaucrats.

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Despite the fact that waiting to access housing is normal, the sheer scale of the housing need in South Africa has been deemed a 'crisis' (Huchzermeyer, 2003; Oldfield and Boulton, 2005; among others), with many poor residents living in situations that are insecure and uncertain, including in informal settlements, backyard shacks and in contexts of overcrowding, all of which have serious ramifications for the everyday life of residents; the contexts in which families wait. These dire living conditions, largely a consequence of the draconian separate development policies of the apartheid regime, have spurred rigorous debate and critique within all spheres of society, focussing particularly on housing policy in the post-apartheid context, and the many challenges that this policy has needed to address, most notably the need to deliver decent houses quickly, and the trade-offs that have been made. The most vociferous critiques here relate predominantly to the peripheral locations of new housing developments and the poor size and quality of building projects, which in effect perpetuate segregation, if not technically according to race, then effectively through financial limitations (Mackay, 1999; Tomlinson, 2006; Charlton and Kihato, 2006; among others). For those living and waiting in these challenging, 'raw' situations, negotiations of seemingly mundane tasks underpin everyday life and take various forms, shaping residents explicitly and implicitly, affecting various spheres of life (Ross, 2005; 2010).

For some residents, waiting to access housing through the legal channels takes too long, and as a result, desperate situations act as catalysts, spurring many people to take matters into their own hands and find savvy ways to access housing that are not always legal, circumventing the state's procedures to obtain housing (Oldfield, 2000; 2004; Oldfield and Boulton, 2005; Lemanski and Oldfield, 2009). Those citizens who choose to access housing legally, however, have to negotiate the murky paradox that is waiting, a phenomenon that is both procedural, normal, logical and yet also unclear and opaque. Despite being the legal route to accessing housing, the processes of waiting for housing are complicated and opaque: the systems have been restructured over time, the criteria to be on the housing database have changed, and how the database is managed has shifted. In consequence, for most people on the housing database, waiting occurs in the 'dark', unable to calculate their position on the list or when they might get a house. I reflect on the opaque context in this thesis; exploring how people live while waiting; how waiting affects everyday life materially and emotionally, and how waiting and the associated lack of clarity regarding the database shapes the ways the state is encountered by citizens in this particular context.

The Material and Emotional Effects of Waiting

Waiting has very real and far-reaching consequences for those living in overcrowded and informal contexts, affecting residents physically and emotionally. Because of the long waiting periods

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associated with waiting to access housing through the legal channels through the state, it can be argued that waiting places housing applicants in a state of 'permanent temporariness' (Yiftachel, 2009b: 244), as a result of the physical and emotional spaces in which people are forced to wait. Termed by Yiftachel (2009b: 243) as 'gray spaces', these are "developments, enclaves, populations and transactions positioned between the 'lightness' of legality/approval/safety and the 'darkness' of eviction/destruction/death". While the murky experiences of waiting do not perhaps match the drama of these, for those waiting for housing, living in a state of 'permanent temporariness' demands daily negotiations that take place in this 'gray' political zone that is situated within – or between - the 'poles' of formal and informal and legal and illegal. In spite of the legitimacy of applicants' need for better housing options, the various ways and long periods in which people wait for housing, in overcrowded homes, backyard shacks, and informal settlements, places people in a state of 'betweenness', stuck in a difficult present while hoping for a better future (Perramond, 2001). In this 'permanent temporariness' (Yiftachel, 2009a; 2009b), uncertainty is a given. I argue in this thesis that this inability to be able to estimate where you are on the list or when you might receive housing places applicants in a kind of conceptual and practical 'betweenness' (Perramond, 2001). Although Perramond uses the term 'betweenness' differently, in the context of arriving in the middle of places and contexts and stories, and thus the middle of truths, which are always partial and come from a certain perspective, the term seems appropriate to express the everyday sense of waiting that exists for those who are hopeful to receive housing from the state. Here, 'betweenness' relates to being in the middle, of waiting and the resultant feelings of confusion that stem from not being able to calculate where you are placed on the housing database or how long it might take to access a house. In addition to this, it also encompasses the notion that those waiting for housing are often situated in positions that straddle the divides between formal and informal, legal and illegal. Sometimes, when one's place in society is questioned, this 'betweenness' embodied in waiting becomes too much to bear, and residents find other ways to access housing.

In this dissertation, I argue that waiting for housing, despite being the legal route to accessing housing from the state, places housing applicants in a state of 'betweenness' (Perramond, 2001) or 'permanent temporariness' (Yiftachel, 2009a; 2009b) as a result of the 'gray spaces' (Yiftachel, 2009a; 2009b) in which they live. This 'betweenness' manifests in various ways. One form of 'gray space' is temporal, in that waiting for houses means that residents live in dire conditions in the present while waiting for imagined better times in the future. For some, waiting for housing takes too long and other strategies to access accommodation are sought. These strategies, often community-led, include drastic and illegal methods, such as invading land. Here, I draw on Oldfield (2000; 2004; Oldfield and Boulton, 2005; Lemanski and Oldfield, 2009, among others) to illustrate

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how agency is employed to fight for what is considered to be right. Less drastic measures of accessing land, including 'inheriting' housing, 'marrying up' and civic organisation 'placements', where families are placed in houses that are not fully occupied or have become vacant, are practices discussed here. Moreover, this 'betweenness' persists because residents are unable to calculate where on the list they are and when they might obtain housing. Emotionally, waiting and its incalculability for such extended periods of time shapes everyday life and its instabilities, and leads people to question the state, its transparency and their relationship with it. The 'grayness' that comes from waiting shapes the way citizens encounter the state. Feeling stuck in the middle of processes that are not made clear or obvious, living in constant uncertainty, and in a perceived state of 'permanent temporariness' has caused many housing applicants to feel anger and frustration at the state. In some instances, people take matters into their own hands, finding means to access housing for themselves, often in ways that challenge the state. The opacity of housing allocation leads some citizens to question the legitimacy of all allocations, and prompts those who feel that they have waited too long to 'take matters into their own hands' to find other ways to access housing. The 'betweenness' that exists in the ways accommodation is accessed by the poor, often living informally (and illegally) while waiting to access housing through formal means, results in a citizen-state encounter that is envisioned and enacted in different ways for different purposes.

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Waiting for Housing: A 'Normal Crisis' in Valhalla Park

This research project aims to explore a theoretical gap: that of accessing housing legally through the integrated housing database. Illuminating that daily plight for many Capetonians and South Africans who haven't got the financial means to afford to buy out of the housing 'contract' with the state, this thesis investigates the everyday material and social challenges that arise as a result of waiting for housing. As a result of the confusion, opacity and many ambiguities that exist with regards to the state's housing delivery practices, 'gray spaces' exist in the political zones in which people are forced to live while waiting for housing. These 'gray spaces' result in housing applicants living in a state of 'betweenness' or 'permanent temporariness', where physically, temporally, socially, emotionally, and politically, people live in uncertainty and insecurity. When waiting takes too long and the precariousness of everyday life and feelings of frustration and exasperation at the state exceed the desire to wait to access housing formally, people find other ways to access housing. Not always legal, these accommodation solutions provoke a different kind of relationship with the state. Although the state continues to be important in the lives of the urban poor, even in relation to housing, popular rhetoric denounces the state as distanced, uninterested and lacking in impetus to provide housing for the many that need it. Most residents are critical of the state and its agents, and yet continue to believe that the state will deliver, and is simply taking too long to do so. In forcing their hand and

finding other ways to access better accommodation solutions, people find themselves having gray encounters with the state, where confusion and ambiguities exist as a constant in these citizen-state interactions[1].

Valhalla Park, a neighbourhood in Cape Town formerly segregated as coloured[2] during the apartheid era, provides the case study site for this dissertation. Valhalla Park presents an interesting opportunity to explore the daily lived realities of a multitude of housing experiences because of the nature of the housing situation in this neighbourhood. Built as a new neighbourhood for those affected by forced removals from areas demarcated 'white' as a result of the Group Areas Act during the late 1970s and early 1980s, council houses were offered to those who were evicted from their homes. Since then, there has been no state-led development in the area, despite a growing need for houses given the growth in population of the neighbourhood. To this end, almost all council houses in Valhalla Park are overcrowded, with multiple generations living under one roof. To alleviate some of the stresses of overcrowded living, backyard shacks have proliferated, providing a much-needed accommodation solution for family members as well as paying sub-tenants. In addition to this, there are two informal settlements in Valhalla Park, one of which was the subject of a lengthy court case which ultimately resulted in the development of a new housing project, aimed at housing all of the registered residents of one informal settlement, as well as other people registered on the housing database who meet other criteria. There is thus a variety of different contexts of waiting for housing within Valhalla Park, many experiences of which are situated in the 'gray spaces' between formal and informal and legal and illegal, with some examples of successful waiting, and others with ambiguities.

This research was conducted qualitatively, with in-depth semi-structured interviews with members of the community living in various housing options, in various states of legal and illegal, and formal and informal occupation. All residents interviewed have been registered on the housing database and are either still waiting to access housing, or have managed to secure housing. In working with the local civic organisation I was able to conduct interviews with people who might not have been willing to talk to a stranger given the precarious nature of living situations in Valhalla Park. Interviews typically focused on Valhalla Park as a neighbourhood and community, as well as past and

[1] This is strictly in relation to housing. In other areas of social welfare, the state is very much present and plays an important role in the lives of many poor citizens, particularly in the provision of social grants, which are heavily relied upon in the context of high unemployment.

[2] I use the racial terms of white, black and coloured in this thesis with reference particularly to the apartheid racial classifications and their implementation in planning legacies. Most Valhalla Park residents refer to themselves as 'coloured', and associate themselves with the coloured cultural identity. I do not use these terms pejoratively, but merely as a way to reflect the past policies and the ways these align with current spatial trends.

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current accommodation and the challenges that residents face in living in overcrowded, informal circumstances. In addition, hopes for the future and perceptions of the state in relation to housing delivery specifically were discussed. All of these facets of discussion led to rich and personal narratives about living and waiting, and what waiting means materially, emotionally and socially. Through these discussions, it became evident that uncertainty and insecurity are constants in the indefinite and complex situations that waiting for housing encompasses. The argument that 'betweenness' and 'permanent temporariness' are situated at the core of the relationship between citizens and the state arose as a result these ambiguities, and came to fruition as a product of the confusion and opacity that exists for those waiting to access housing from the state, as well as from my struggles to grasp the multiple layers of complexity that surround the integrated housing database, as well as those of the stories of waiting that I heard whilst interviewing in Valhalla Park.

Structure of Thesis

The first chapter of this research project is the literature review. Here, the key debates that frame this research project are explored. Housing policy in South Africa and the effects that these policies have had are examined, with an emphasis placed on the ways in which these policies have translated into the lived experiences of the urban poor, many of whom live in 'gray spaces' where uncertainty is rife and 'permanent temporariness' is a daily reality. How the state is then perceived by citizens living in these challenging circumstances forms a key conceptual and empirical part of this thesis. This literature review also investigates the prevailing debates on citizen-state interactions and how these shape future relationships between society and the state. These literatures are used to illustrate the conceptual gap into which this research places itself.

The methodology follows the literature review, and describes the research experience and analytical design. Here, I situate this research project in a particular context, and offer a reflexive account of how the research was planned and conducted. I also introduce the case study site of Valhalla Park, and explore the history of the neighbourhood. This method suggests that conducting open-ended, qualitative interviews with people living in different situations, but all waiting for housing, provides a detailed and in-depth understanding of not only the everyday material and social experiences of waiting for housing and life in temporary accommodation, but also illuminates the types of encounters that citizens have with the state in relation to housing.

Chapter three investigates the physical effects of waiting for housing. Different situations that are experienced in Valhalla Park - from living in overcrowded council houses, in backyard shacks or in an informal settlement - are typically difficult and require daily negotiations of the home space to minimise friction between occupants and maintain having a place to call home, even if this is

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temporary. This chapter explores the detailed circumstances of living in temporary accommodation, offering a nuanced understanding of these dire living conditions that for many are a reality and a norm.

Chapter four builds on the theme of the effects of waiting for housing, in this case looking more at the emotional effects that waiting has on housing applicants. Here, frank discussions about what waiting for housing means to people forms an elaboration of the material consequences of waiting discussed in the previous chapter. This chapter suggests that waiting is more profound than perhaps previously thought, and that waiting for housing places applicants in a state of conceptual and actual 'betweenness' (Perramond, 2001), a circumstance that affects life on a day to day basis.

The fifth chapter explores the ways in which waiting for houses shapes how residents perceive and encounter the state. This chapter suggests that the state is not considered to be a monolithic structure, but rather one with various agents that are seen to be the face of government. These agents, from local ward councillors to housing officials, play a large role in how the state is perceived by residents of Valhalla Park. In relation to housing, the opacity of the waiting list system and procedures colours the way the state is viewed, resulting in claims of corruption and inefficiency. This chapter shows that residents of Valhalla Park are in no way static, and have agency to effect changes in their situations. This is illustrated through the lengths people go to access housing when waiting takes too long, for example. This chapter argues that the state is important in the lives of the poor, and yet in relation to housing, is considered to be complacent and disinterested in the difficult circumstances in which people are forced to wait for housing.

Chapter six draws together all of these empirical threads to explore the broad themes that emerge from this research project, and links these to the literature, arguing that waiting for housing affects the poor in many ways, some of them mundane, but many profound. Most significantly, waiting for housing places housing applicants in a 'permanent temporariness' as a result of the long waiting periods and the ways in which waiting for housing happens, usually in difficult circumstances. Situated in the 'gray spaces' that exist between legal and illegal and formal and informal, housing applicants live in a state of 'betweenness' materially, socially, emotionally and politically. This 'betweenness', the core of the relationship between citizens and the state, produces a particular relationship with the state in relation to housing. I term this relationship a 'gray' encounter.

Finally, the conclusion briefly discusses the significance of this project, in terms of how we think about housing and policy, as well as how this research builds on and adds to the existing academic literature. Exploring the tensions that arise from the 'gray spaces' in which people waiting for

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housing live adds to a more nuanced understanding about the ways in which people challenge that middle-ground that exists between legal and illegal and formal and informal.

Chapter 1

Exploring the Housing Terrain in South Africa

Introduction

The shortage of formal low-cost housing in South Africa and the difficult living conditions in which many poor South Africans live have prompted a broad and vigorous debate about South Africa's housing crisis. This literature review explores some of this housing literature, including the housing policy and critiques thereof, as well as the lived experience of those living in difficult circumstances while waiting to access housing from the state. In addition to this, this literature review also investigates how citizens' perceptions of the state are shaped through the various encounters that they have with the government and its agents. These debates suggest that everyday life for the urban poor is typically challenging, often taking place in contexts that are illegal and informal. For those who live in difficult circumstances, any interactions with the state and its officials have an effect on how these citizens perceive and interact with the state. For some, living for long periods of time in uncertainty, engaging with the state is not realistic, and so the state is circumvented in order to access better housing solutions independently. For those who choose to wait to access housing formally, however, this is done with varying types of engagement with and against the state. This thesis aims to add to parts of these debates, in particular, how waiting for housing affects housing applicants in both mundane and profound ways. These material and emotional effects of waiting in turn shape how applicants perceive and interact with the state.

This chapter begins with an overview of the history of South Africa's housing policies, from the repressive apartheid government's policies of segregation and separate development, to understanding how the post-apartheid South African government has attempted to redress the inequalities of the past by providing houses for the previously disadvantaged. The second section of this chapter investigates the lived experiences of those persisting in difficult circumstances, negotiating challenging material conditions and struggling to build decent, 'respectable' lives. When waiting for housing from the state takes too long, some applicants find other ways to access housing, explored in the third section. Finally, this chapter presents the conceptual tools that shape the dissertation to analyse waiting for housing and the ways in which this experience shapes citizen-state encounters.

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South African Housing Policy: From the Past to the Present

This section briefly explores housing policy in South Africa in order to better understand the current housing situation in the country and how it arose. Past policies of racial segregation are investigated to reflect on the challenges of housing policy in the post-apartheid context, which has had to delivery housing to many South Africans quickly, while attempting to redress spatial and economic inequalities.

During the Apartheid Regime: A Policy of Entrenched Segregation

The many regulations that dominated how the majority of South Africans lived, worked and socialised during the apartheid regime are well documented, and although these are not the primary focus of this dissertation, it is important to understand these laws and the many ways in which they impacted the spatial configuration of South African cities and their social divisions. Wilkinson (1998) provides a detailed analysis of the development of housing policy in South Africa from the 1920s, and shows how these policies have shaped South African cities into the still predominantly segregated spaces that they are at present. He argues that "housing policy was implicated in the state's efforts to establish and maintain a particular social order", and fought to "segregate the African urban population into discrete residential areas, 'townships' excised administratively as well as geographically from the social and spatial fabric of the 'white' cities and towns" (Wilkinson, 1998: 217).

This legally entrenched segregation resulted in the forceful clearing of urban areas[3] occupied by black and coloured populations over a period of years, although the destruction of property was by no means the only method used to prevent non-whites from residing in cities and other white areas. Wilkinson (1998: 220) writes that

> In the increasingly tight restrictions placed on trading activity by Africans, in the progressive withdrawal of the partial exemptions from the strictures of the 'pass laws' accorded Africans in some occupational categories, and in the severe constraints placed on the provision of secondary and tertiary educational facilities in the new townships, it is possible to discern the outlines of a coherent and systematic strategy of 'class levelling'.

Williams (2000) explains the practical implementation of this plan, including the use of tactics such as each city having a single corresponding black township, open buffer spaces around townships and the removal of 'wrongly situated' areas (Verwoerd, in Williams, 2000: 167). For the coloured race,

[3] Rural areas were not exempt from the separate development agenda, and 'Bantustans' or 'homelands' were created in areas of South Africa, offering a so-called independence from the rest the country. In reality, the occupants of these homelands became the workforce of the white areas, reinforcing the apartheid ideals.

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segregation was also part of the apartheid agenda, although somewhat less restrictive in comparison to the black population. In Cape Town, the Coloured Labour Preference policy meant that coloured citizens were allowed to reside within the greater city area, providing a work force for the city. This policy resulted in a further hierarchy between black, coloured and white citizens in Cape Town particularly, and provided the coloured population with benefits that were not extended to the black population. Despite this, segregation between coloured and white citizens was enforced through a series of laws, and occurred in all spheres of everyday life, "such as residence, education, transport, amenities and politics" (Salo, 2004: 72). Not exempt from spatial segregation, coloured communities were also affected by the Group Areas Act, which forced residents to move from better located suburbs close to the city centre to the city's margins, creating a spatial organisation, based on race, which persists today.

By the 1970s, many disadvantaged people mobilised against this order and its injustices[4]. The revolts were met with some reforms by the white government, for instance the formation of 'Black Local Authorities' amongst other initiatives[5].The advent of Black Local Authorities provided a separate platform of neighbourhood representation at local government level for areas of the city segregated 'African'. The state "withdrew its attempts to drive a wedge between African 'insiders' and 'outsiders'" and adopted a policy of 'orderly urbanisation' (Wilkinson, 1998: 223). In this period of reform, housing became a focus, with the development of the Urban Foundation and the Independent Development Trust[6], heralding a contested but new era in housing policy in South Africa[7].

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[4] The roots of the township revolt "were deep and complex and it would be absurd to try to reduce them to some amorphous dissatisfaction with the 'quality of life' in townships" (Wilkinson, 1998: 221), though these were part of the uprising, as well as heightened political expectations from the black consciousness movement, the level of unemployment and the path of separate development and exclusion from urban areas (Wilkinson, 1998).

[5] For instance, the establishment of the Urban Foundation, "a non-profit and avowedly non-political organisation intended to 'promote improvement of the quality of life in urban (and primarily African urban) communities' (Urban Foundation, n.d.: 3)" (Wilkinson, 1998: 222). The foundation was involved explicitly with housing, reinstating leasehold rights for 'qualified' urban Africans (Wilkinson, 1998: 222). Wilkinson notes, however, that the success of the Urban Foundation was limited and that "the new policy had failed to bring the supply of housing into line with the level of demand in the rapidly growing African urban population" (Wilkinson, 1998: 222).

[6] These parastatals included the Independent Development Trust, which played a major role in the development of the new Housing Policy after the end of the old regime, and the South African Housing Trust.

[7] The new methods of housing provision were based on the outcomes of the de Loor Commission and later, the National Housing Forum (Wilkinson, 1998: 223; Mackay, 1999: 389)

Housing Policy Post-Apartheid: Mass Roll Out and Desegregation?

The ways these agencies conceived of housing for the many poor residents of cities found their way into the new government's housing policy[8]. One of the key objectives of the post-apartheid government was desegregation, particularly spatial desegregation. In cities, this required formally desegregating neighbourhoods and providing services, infrastructure and houses to those without. The restructuring of metropolitan government was critical to urban transformation, not only in terms of how metros operated, but also with regards to their boundaries, reconfigured so that previously advantaged and disadvantaged territories were combined, and so that services were distributed more equally over cities (Williams, 2000: 176). These changes aimed to maximise the successes that the new policies were envisioned to bring about, yet had various other effects on administration and bureaucracy, affecting those waiting for housing quite significantly.

The Housing Act of 1997 attempted to provide a legal and institutional framework for the mass-delivery of housing. Yet, as highlighted in well-developed academic literature, the mass-roll out of houses did not always fit the bill in terms of families' needs, nor did their location on cheap, peripheral land help to integrate cities and promote mixed land uses (see Mackay, 1999).

Huchzermeyer (2001) notes that the Housing Act of 1997 was based on the fundamental understanding that housing is a basic need, as enshrined in the Bill of Rights (1996), and as a result, all South Africans are entitled to "have access to adequate housing" (Republic of South Africa, in Huchzermeyer, 2001: 305). The housing product that was delivered to previously disadvantaged South African citizens, however, was linked to the once-off capital subsidy, which typically resulted in uniformly small houses, located in peripheral areas, rather than a variety of housing options suited to the family it was understood to cater for. In sum this form of housing development fell "far short of the dignified house with 'reasonable living space and privacy' defined as the norm in the RDP [Reconstruction and Development Programme]" (Huchzermeyer, 2001: 306). Often described as 'matchboxes' by residents, these houses have done little to integrate the urban poor closer to work opportunities or helped to create communities with assets other than just housing. With the emphasis placed firmly on delivering great quantities, which unwittingly resulted in many poorly built houses, the need for integrated human settlements and the provision of the underpinning facets of such communities were overlooked in the first post-apartheid housing policy. While formal housing and secure tenure is a critical achievement of the South African state, (Zack and Charlton,

[8] The evolution of the 1994 Housing White Paper and the Housing Act of 1997 are beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, for a detailed discussion on this topic, please see Huchzermeyer (2001).

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2003, in Tomlinson, 2006: 95), this policy perpetuated the spatial form of the apartheid city through new developments[9].

Other debates regarding the policy have been the focus of research. These have analysed the capital housing subsidy and its efficiency and fairness (see Huchzermeyer, 2003), as well as the refusal of policy makers to learn from other countries in similar positions, as well as international institutions, an oversight that affected the beneficiaries (Gilbert, 2002; 2004). Research has also focussed on the social compact that was devised as a way of devolving power from developers to the community (see Miraftab, 2003; Mafukidze and Hoosen, 2009; Lizzaralde and Massyn, 2008; Jenkins, 1999). The lived realities of these critiques are thus challenging, and exploring these is the focus of another body of work.

The Breaking New Ground policy, introduced in 2004, aimed to resolve some of the issues set out in the critiques above, particularly with reference to the proliferation of 'dormitory towns' with few economic opportunities and community resources such as community centres, schools and playgrounds, for example; in effect attempting to move towards creating integrated cities that are not divided along racial lines, with decent houses and sustainable settlements (Breaking New Ground, 2004: 7). The emphasis on sustainable human settlements, as opposed to housing, is key to this policy, and are defined as "well-managed entities in which economic growth and social development are in balance with the carrying capacity of the natural systems on which they depend for their existence and result in sustainable development, wealth creation, poverty alleviation and equity" (Breaking New Ground, 2004: 11).

This policy thus heralded the move from 'quantity' to 'quality' and from 'housing' to 'integrated human settlements', although it has also been critiqued for its ability to make these substantial theoretical changes. Focuses of research here include the realisation that the subsidy could not afford to provide a full housing product, and thus has conceptually shifted from providing houses to "placing households on the first rung of the 'housing ladder'" (Tomlinson, 2006: 89). In addition to this, Charlton and Kihato (2006: 259) argue that despite the policy's rhetoric around integrated, sustainable human settlements, "in its fundamental elements, the plan does not seem to have essentially departed from the original housing policy". Huchzermeyer (2009: 64) agrees, suggesting that some of the accompanying components of the policy "explicitly call for a 'paradigm shift'".

[9] Part of the problem lay in the way the housing subsidy was comprised and constituted. The housing subsidy was devised as a method for providing previously disadvantaged people with a way in which to access formal housing. See Huchzermeyer (2003) for more detailed information, as well as a critique thereof, as well as Jones and Datta (2000), and Mills (2007) for further discussion on household financing for housing projects.

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More worrisome, however, is what Pithouse (2009: 11) calls the inherent contradiction within the Breaking New Ground policy, where it calls for a "focus on a holistic and consultative process based on the development of housing as a form of support for communities" while at the same time employing a rhetoric around slum eradication. As he argues, "perhaps the most disturbing policy consequence of the language of slum elimination is that it makes shacks, which are nothing more than the self built housing solution of the poor, appear as a threat to society" (Pithouse, 2009: 11). As it becomes clear in later chapters, these settlements often "emerge out of benign responses to ever-deepening housing need or 'intolerable conditions'" (Huchzermeyer, 2010: 131).

This section has explored the South African housing policy that has influenced the living conditions of the urban poor. Understanding the political situation in which policy came to be formed and introduced is important as it elucidates how and why certain factors were put into place. It is clear from the discussion above that rapidly changing the face of South African cities and accommodating the poor immediately post-apartheid was one of the reasons for pursuing a breadth over depth or quantity over quality product during the initial Housing Policy of 1997. The shift towards creating integrated human settlements in the Breaking New Ground housing policy of 2004 came after protest and unhappiness about the housing product, as well as the need to better integrate cities, although this policy has also been criticised for not producing the ideals as set out theoretically. The articles and discussion above have focussed primarily on quantitative information about the housing policy and its implementation from 'above', using practitioners, analysts and government officials' takes on the process. I turn now to a discussion about the lived experience of housing in South Africa investigated from a more 'bottom up' perspective, exploring how people who are potential and actual beneficiaries of the housing subsidy experience housing in South Africa.

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Lived Experiences of Housing: Waiting, Finding and Making Homes

For many South Africans, formal housing is spoken of as a dream, a vision of the future mired in the realities of waiting and the struggle to access shelter in 'the meanwhile'. How people live with this uncertainty of tenure and often without access to services and infrastructure is an interesting and relevant body of work to explore for this thesis. Lived daily realities of insecure housing conditions grounds the policy discussed above, and pegs it to people's everyday experiences, putting a human face on the consequences of what policy prescribes, what it enables and what it fails to do. A broad array of research reflects on South African citizens' struggles to access formal housing and their living conditions whilst waiting. Some of these articles include discussions around what housing options exist, how and why people choose to access housing illegally, and how this is sometimes

challenged, at times with precedent-setting success in courts of law. Other articles look at more social factors regarding how people find ways to accept themselves and their situation, living in ways that are sometimes considered to be undignified or 'improper'. This body of work is explored in the following section.

*The Quest for '*Ordentlikheid*': Living Respectably in Intolerable Circumstances*

Housing plays a much larger role than simply providing shelter from the elements, or being an asset that allows the owner to borrow money and access credit. A home is a private space, it is a symbol of citizenship and belonging, and as Ross (2005: 633) points out, it has ties to the family. For most people in South Africa, a house is all of these things and more; it is often used to generate an income, and is symbolic of one's legitimacy to live in a city and partake in what the city has to offer. Ross (2005: 631) writes that much research focuses on the post-apartheid city, yet "seldom considers the ways in which people affected by policies grapple over time with opportunities to live in accordance with their own ideals". She explores this in an informal settlement, and later, in a new housing development, reflecting on "a gap between their actual and ideal worlds" (Ross, 2005: 638). In order to attempt to overcome this gap, residents mediate their behaviour so that they can live respectable lives according to their own ideals.

Ross's (2005; 2010) term of *'ordentlikheid'*[10] refers to decency and respectability, embodied and enacted in having a clean and tidy appearance, looking after one's home, having good manners, and pleasant demeanour and being considerate and friendly towards others. As she points out however, *ordentlikheid* is not always only a positive attribute. *Ordentlikheid* can be prescriptive and upholding *ordentlik* standards can be challenging, and is sometimes punishable through physical and/or verbal abuse. *Ordentlikheid*, though mostly innate, is often considered to be eroded by the living conditions in an informal, slum environment, and thus the need to find ways of upholding respectability whilst living informally is manifested through the altering of behaviour (Ross, 2005: 642). Living in informal housing is not seen to be respectable, and yet by mirroring ways of 'respectability', residents of informal settlements can still live dignified lives, although accessing formal housing is seen to "restore some dignity to daily lives too often undermined by poverty, violence, mobility and everyday humiliations, allowing them to become *ordentlike mense* [respectable people]" (Ross, 2005: 633). She adds that "where life is punctuated by loss, disruption, violence [and] abjection...people must put much effort into developing and maintaining relationships and ordinary rhythms of everyday life" (Ross, 2010: 5). Finding these rhythms and instilling them with *ordentlik*

[10] For a more detailed description of *ordentlikheid*, see pages 38-45 in Ross (2010) as well as Salo (2003; 2004).

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practices makes for a more respectable life while waiting for housing. Ross's article (2005) and book (2010) draw on how respectability is harnessed in everyday interactions with neighbours and family and other community members to actualise ideals and exude dignity and pride, so that "people are not equated with their circumstances" (Ross, 2010: 21).

Ordentlikheid finds its way into many areas of life. For some, as in Lee (2005), it comes to the fore when dividing up living spaces and creating private and separate spaces. Lee (2005) investigates how women who accessed housing during the apartheid era in Cape Town chose to make improvements to their houses, even though they struggled to get recognition not only because of their skin colour, but also because of their gender and at times, marital status. Although not discussed in terms of *ordentlikheid* in this article, agency and how people, women in particular, exercised their desires to make changes that fitted their houses to their needs, fits in to how *ordentlikheid* is present in every household, and in different spheres of life. For the women in Ndinda's (2007; 2009) articles, agency is a primary factor in accessing housing and building homes that suited their needs best. Empowerment that arose through the decision-making process and construction of houses resulted in "security from political violence, the space to think and be creative and an improved quality of life" (Ndinda, 2009: 328). From this, it is clear that housing has a social function, and is not merely a place of shelter or an asset. In the context of South African cities where housing is in short supply and its allocation contested, it's critical to explore residents' agency to find alternative ways to access homes.

Accessing Housing Illegally: The Importance of Community Organisations

For many South Africans, waiting for housing from state housing databases is a long-term prospect, and for many, this wait takes too long. Housing delivery is slow and living in uncertain conditions while waiting can be tough. The options for housing and shelter while waiting include living in overcrowded conditions with family members in rented accommodation; living in a backyard shack of a rented house, sometimes with family or friends, but often with a previously unknown landlord, paying a rental fee for the space where the shack is erected and sharing bathroom facilities with the household; erecting shelter on an informal settlement, either legal or illegal, which may or may not have some services and infrastructure in place. These solutions to finding shelter are rarely short-term, and thus living in these difficult circumstances while waiting to access housing from the state is fraught with problems. These challenges, for example overcrowding, high rental payments, lack of access to decent basic services such as water and sanitation, as well as problems relating to aspects of safety and security, as well as the potential for health problems arising from these conditions,

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force people to sometimes find ways of accessing housing that not only ameliorates some of these problems, but also helps families to live according to, or at least closer to their ideals and ideas of respectability (Ross, 2005; 2010). These trade-offs and the consequences they have on citizens and their everyday lives are discussed in this section.

Oldfield has written extensively on social mobilisation by communities to access basic services and infrastructure in their neighbourhoods, and how this mobilisation has led to new shared identities across different races and different neighbourhoods over time (2004; Oldfield and Boulton, 2005; Lemanski and Oldfield, 2009; Oldfield and Zweig, 2010). She explores how communities challenge the state to access these different services and how they use savvy but sometimes illegal techniques to be heard and have their needs and requirements conveyed to state officials when formal channels fail to work. This mobilisation occurs around water and sanitation, but more relevant to this project, around evictions, access to well-located land and housing. For instance in Delft, an area where the state has developed new housing via the subsidy, a movement of "Door Kickers" developed (Oldfield 2000; 2004) a way of accessing housing by families who had lost faith in the housing allocation process. Here, approximately 1800 families claimed already built and allocated state houses after protracted negotiations with the local housing office around the housing waiting lists. Common objectives and an ability to mobilise and use their capacity as a group meant that after a legal battle, the door kickers won the right to remain in the houses legally.

Land invasions represent a similar challenge to the state for well-located land for housing for the urban poor, closer to employment opportunities and other resources such as schools, hospitals and shops, and as "a response to unbearable living conditions, the expenses of renting, and insecure tenure in friends and families homes" (Lemanksi and Oldfield, 2009: 7; see also Huchzermeyer, 2003). Technically illegal[11], land invasions have occurred in many parts of cities with varying degrees of resistance from the state. For Valhalla Park residents who occupied land in what is now known as Sewende Laan in a bid to prompt the City to develop housing in the area, eviction was attempted by the state through a court interdict, which was counter-claimed by the community with legal assistance, and was taken to court to oppose the evictions (Oldfield and Stokke, 2004: 16). Through community organisation and mobilisation, the invaders were successful in winning the right to remain on the land and be accommodated in a future housing project in the area. When another informal settlement was erected nearby Sewende Laan, there was, curiously, no resistance from the

[11] To understand the level to which land invasions are considered illegal, unsightly and unorganised, see Huchzermeyer (2009: 61) for a brief analysis on the words used to describe land invasions.

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state, though the residents of this settlement are not necessarily entitled to a position in the new housing development.

Community ties are thus vitally important in accessing housing. This sentiment is echoed in Ndinda (2007), where residents fought the apartheid state to resist eviction using various strategies to win access to land, such as mobilisation through prayer meetings, demonstrations and consumer boycotts, all sanctioned by the community organisation (Ndinda, 2007: 669). Here, a gendered perspective of how women participated in the mobilisation process and afterwards, when housing development was imminent shows how women used their agency to build the houses that suited their needs best, in situations where their new roles as house-constructors and committee members abutted their other roles as mothers, employees, caregivers and breadwinners.

Building a generational and gendered analysis of access to housing in a neighbourhood in Cape Town, Oldfield and Boulton (2005: 239) highlight young people's strategies to access homes, where there is "little possibility of accessing formal independent housing in New Crossroads in the contemporary period through formal or informal community- or state-driven processes". This has meant finding other ways of accessing a home, including waiting for housing while living at home with parents and/or grandparents, a strategy employed mostly by young men, or alternatively attempting to outsmart the housing waiting database by choosing to reside in other informal areas that are likely to get housing sooner than the New Crossroads area will, and thereby effectively "jump[ing] the queue" for housing (Oldfield and Boulton, 2005: 252).

Having clever strategies that work both with the system and against it in order to improve the odds of getting a house is part of the everyday negotiations that people balance in accessing housing. These means of accessing housing, as well as "corruption and favours might actually constitute a 'space of hope' for resident's awaiting access to state benefits, in a context of slow service delivery, ever-lasting waiting lists, and the opacity and blockage of administrative mechanisms to access basic resources" (Bénit-Gbaffou and Oldfield, 2011). Organising and mobilising to surmount differences to fight for a common goal and the constitutional right to basic services and decent shelter are not unique to South Africa, as a lack of adequate access to housing as well as employing social mobilisation to contest the lack of housing can be found in many cities around the world[12]. These

[12] While there are few articles that discuss how housing databases function in other countries (except for Borges, 2006, see below), there are articles about what housing options are available for the urban poor and what it entails to access these housing options, as well as those that detail housing policies and interventions operating in other countries. Many articles discuss various government and other institution-led initiatives to

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practices shape the particular ways the state is engaged, circumvented, and challenged in relation to housing, prompting a particular kind of citizen-state relationship, a theme explored in a rich body of literature discussed in the following section.

Waiting: A Site of Citizen-State Encounters

The state plays a pivotal role in providing housing for the urban poor, but it is present in many more interactions and exchanges than housing alone. The state is not only visible through forms of rule and regulation, but in smaller details of everyday life for all citizens, including, if not to a greater extent, the urban poor. A relatively recent body of work investigates how citizens view, access and interact with the state, and the effects these interactions have on the citizen-state encounters.

Unravelling 'the State': Interacting with Different 'Human Technologies of Government'

Corbridge et al. argue that "states are best thought of as bundles of everyday institutions and forms of rule", rather than "discrete or singular entities" (Corbridge et al., 2005: 5). Fuller and Harriss (2001: 14) agree, and suggest that "the state is not a discrete, monolithic entity 'acting' impersonally above or outside society". Rather, there are many layers to the state, it "appears on many levels and in many centres and its lower echelons are always staffed by people with whom some kind of social relationship can or could exist; the 'faceless bureaucrats' actually do have faces" (Fuller and Harriss, 2001: 15). These are the "human technologies of government" that Corbridge et al. (2005) refer to. Some of these layers to the state include the three spheres of government in South Africa, national, provincial and local, each with different functions and powers, as well as different departments of government and hierarchies within these different spheres. These levels of the state are not bounded; rather, the layers of government "are fluid and negotiable" (Fuller and Harriss, 2001: 15). So while it can be argued that poor citizens in South Africa will primarily interact mainly with local government and its agents, local government is influenced in many ways by provincial and national

upgrade these settlements. See Riley, Fiori and Ramirez (2001), who discuss the Favelo Bairro upgrade programme for *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro; the various public housing rental accommodation systems adopted for the poor in Seoul as documented by Ha (2002); some reactive rather than proactive government approaches to providing assistance in Thailand, with a land-sharing initiative from non-governmental organisations and low-cost houses built by the private sector, as well as government supported savings groups which proved to be more successful (Yap and De Wandeler, 2010); also Sengupta (2010), who describes the housing challenge in Kolkata, and argues that the government has struggled to provide housing for the urban poor owing largely to a lack of resources as well as lack of cheap land; as well as Gilbert (2004), who relates the cases of housing subsidies in Chile, Colombia and South Africa. While these articles detail mainly the various housing policies and strategies adopted in other countries, it is clear that housing is a contested resource in many locations around the world.

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government. Human technologies of government, then, "can be understood 'as an assemblage of forms of practical knowledge, with modes of perception, practices of calculation, vocabulary, types of authority, forms of judgement, architectural forms, human capacities, non-human objects and devices, inscriptions techniques and so forth...'" (Rose, in Corbridge et al., 2005: 50). Not all human technologies of government have the same levels of influence, and many of the lower level government officials are obliged to do what they are asked to by higher ranking government officials and bodies, whether this helps the poor citizens with whom they interact daily or not.

Citizen perceptions of the state are formed through interactions with these government officials as well as accounts of those who are higher ranking or have greater political status, as will be seen in later chapters in this dissertation. Perceptions are also shaped by the interactions that are experienced around particular policies and systems that are put into place by the state and implemented by the officials that citizens deal with frequently. In the case of housing, and in this case waiting, these interactions are shaped in the context of an integrated housing database that is largely opaque, where those registered on the housing database are unable to calculate how long it might take to access housing.

Calculability is an important aspect for those waiting for something as important as a house. Drawing on the narrative of a woman attempting to secure housing in a satellite city outside Brasilia, Borges (2006) explains how Donna Maria negotiates certain eligibility criteria in order to obtain a housing plot, as an example of how people are able to manipulate and 'work' systems in order to obtain what is needed. Similarly, von Schnitzler (2008), in her case in the context of a mobilisation against water usage devices, suggests that notions of calculability become embodied by the urban poor in order to access basic services. Here, state policies shape citizens and the ways in which they utilise basic resources, making them rationalise and economise the ways they use them, shifting the burden and technology of rule from the state to the household.

In the context of waiting for housing focused on here, neither Borges' (2006) nor von Schnitzler's (2008) notions of calculability are applicable. Because the housing database is complicated to understand and largely opaque, allocation mechanisms function behind the scenes. It is challenging, if not impossible, to quantify the waiting period or to manipulate directly the state's criteria for allocating homes. The criteria and their formulation into a prioritization of households for allocation are, for the most part, unknown or vague. Waiting requires negotiating the 'gray' areas between legal and illegal in order to access housing, a strategy that poor citizens employ in order to access much needed resources. Robins, Cornwall and von Lieres (2008: 1079) suggest that "in the scramble for livelihoods and security, poor people tend to adopt plural strategies; they occupy multiple spaces

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and draw on multiple political identities, discourses and social relationships, often simultaneously". For poor residents waiting to access housing from the state, these strategies draw together engaging with the state, as well as sometimes challenging the state when waiting takes too long. Interactions with the state are thus never linear and neat, but are rather messy and complicated.

Yiftachel (2009b: 243) argues that 'gray spaces, where "developments, enclaves, population and transactions [are] positioned between the 'lightness' of legality/approval/safety and the 'darkness' of eviction/destruction/death" produce uncertainty and a type of 'permanent temporariness' for those who occupy this political zone. Waiting for housing is one such type of 'gray space', situated in the formality of a process of application, logical and essential, and yet is a difficult lived reality that is in many ways invisible, ambiguous and contested. For those waiting for housing, despite living in challenging conditions, these 'gray spaces' can become spaces of opportunity, where "[existing] partially out of the gaze of the state authorities" (Yiftachel, 2009a: 89) allows people to find effective ways to access housing that are not necessarily legal, as seen in Oldfield's research, as well as in later empirical chapters of this dissertation.

Living in these 'gray spaces' places housing applicants in a state of 'betweenness' (Perramond, 2001). 'Betweenness' in the context that Perramond (2001: 156) uses it, relates to the misnomer that researchers can obtain a clear and unmuddied picture of reality. Rather, "we geographers also find ourselves stumbling into the very middle of places and spaces, where we may not understand the importance of spatial context and meaning" (Perramond, 2001: 156). This notion of 'betweenness' is useful to describe the experience of waiting that housing applicants describe, finding themselves in the middle of various scenarios: materially, in the tough temporary situations in which they live while waiting for better housing solutions; emotionally, waiting for better days in an unquantifiable future, temporally, living 'in limbo', waiting for the future, but having to get on with life in the mean time, without knowing how long the mean time might last; as well as legally, where residents wait to access housing legally, yet sometimes do this in illegal ways, living in informal settlements or finding ways around the formal processes to access housing. Through this thesis I explore the 'gray spaces' and the 'betweennesses' that arise from waiting for housing from the state, documenting how people deal with waiting for housing and negotiate difficult everyday realities in a context where waiting is the legal route to access housing but is complicated, takes long periods of time and is unquantifiable.

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Lived Experience: Shaping Perceptions of the State

Certainly - and as explored above - the interactions families waiting have with the state shapes their perceptions of it, and inform future interactions[13]. Corbridge et al. (2005: 19) explain that the poor "learn to see the state through their meetings with particular government officers, and with regard for those government conventions and policies with which they gain familiarity". In the case of South Africa, this might include interactions with officials to register as a potential housing beneficiary, or to apply for a rebate on rates, rental or arrears under the indigent policy[14]. Other interactions could include confrontations with law enforcement officials when land is invaded[15], or water is disconnected due to arrears in payment. Listening to accounts from friends and family, as well as media portrayal of the state and its agents, including local politicians and ward councillors all shape the way the state is viewed. Citizens are not complacent, however, and have agency to change the ways they interact with the state, "precisely because the state has defined [them] as [citizens] with rights" (Corbridge et al., 2005: 20), and demands can be made of the state based on the rights that they are afforded through citizenship. Interactions with the state are thus straightforward and complicated, routine and exceptional, mundane and profound, orderly and violent. All of these interactions shape citizens' perceptions of the state.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the dominant literature on housing in South Africa in terms of policy critiques as well as the lived experiences of those living in informal settings and the ways in which living in difficult situations affects everyday life. In addition to this, literature surrounding 'the state' and prevailing arguments about how perceptions of the state are formed through interactions with government agents and bodies has been examined. The first section explored the South African housing policy both prior to the end of apartheid as well as since 1994. How the housing policy of 1997 aimed to redress the inequalities of the past was explored, as well as how the critiques of this policy were used to create the Breaking New Ground Housing policy of 2004. The second section of

[13] Many articles explore how social movements and community organisations work both with and against the state through 'invited' and 'invented' spaces of interaction (Miraftab, 2006). See also Robins, Cornwall and von Lieres (2008) and Appadurai (2002).

[14] A policy that in essence allows tenants of council rental stock to stay in their houses after defaulting on payments, assuming that they earn under a certain amount as a household per month. Typically, being on the indigent policy requires a trade-off, usually in the form of a pre-paid water meter, though in many places in Cape Town, this has been avoided. For more detailed information regarding this policy, see http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/Pages/Indigentpolicy.aspx (Accessed 10 June 2011).

[15] An illustration of the level of violence that this can involve is demonstrated in the press coverage of the recent land invasion in Tafelsig, where backyarders from a nearby neighbourhood invaded a piece of land, erected shacks and refusing removal. See Dolley (2011); Prince (2011) and Gallery: Tafelsig turns into a war zone (2011) for detailed accounts and images of the interaction between police and 'invaders'.

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this chapter looked at the lived experience of these policies, exploring how people who live in dire conditions make their lives bearable. Finding effective ways to access decent accommodation, sometimes working with the state and at other times challenging it for improved living conditions forms a large part of this body of literature. Finally, the chapter considered how perceptions of the state are shaped in relation to interactions with the government, suggesting that policy, lived experience and interactions with government officials and agents shape how the state is perceived by citizens. In cases where the state is considered to be opaque, such as the housing database, the state is sometimes perceived as distant and apathetic to the plight of the poor. In other cases, the lack of transparency in the workings of certain systems implies that there is something being hidden, (Rubin, 2011), with this opacity potentially creating spaces for people to circumvent the state to access housing through channels that are more accessible and transparent. This is the foundation on which the empirical research and its analysis builds, drawing particularly on Yiftachel's (2009a; 2009b) notion of 'permanent temporariness' to describe the material and emotional situations in which housing applicants wait. Living in 'gray spaces' (Yiftachel, 2009a; 2009b) between formal and informal, legal and illegal, waiting for housing prompts a particular type of relationship with the state, one which has this notion of 'betweenness' (Perramond, 2001) and 'permanent temporariness' at its core.

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Chapter 2

'Talking' and 'Doing' Research: A Qualitative Approach

> Fieldwork involves a betweenness of place, an awkward step into communities and environments unknown to us (Perramond, 2001: 156)

Introduction

Research is messy. It is never objective and is fraught with tensions that need to be negotiated by both the researcher and the researched. In some ways, this messiness echoes the ways in which the participants in this research are forced to live whilst waiting for housing from the state. This chapter explores the research that was conducted in Valhalla Park concerning the processes of waiting for housing, through a detailed discussion of the decisions made in terms of how to gather detailed, in-depth data while remaining ethically focussed and respecting the privacy of the interviewees. This included investigating how people live while waiting, the effects of waiting for housing on other aspects of everyday life, as well as how perceptions of government are shaped in light of the typically lengthy waiting process. Entering the field as an outsider, engaging with a civic organisation and the effects that this would have had on the research are discussed in greater detail in this chapter, with particular emphasis given to my positionality as a researcher, as well as the (different, but still relevant) effects of the positionality of my research guide, a Valhalla Park resident who is chairperson of the local civic organisation. Acknowledging that research is partial and situated in specific contexts is a central tenet of good qualitative research, and this chapter attempts to explore the 'betweenness' that is not only research, but also the reality of everyday life for people waiting for housing from the state. How this research on waiting for housing is situated in the social, economic, political and temporal contexts, as well as in relation to the politics surrounding the researcher is considered here.

A Qualitative Lens on Waiting

Quantitative information about housing and housing waiting lists already exists, and gives a good, if general, understanding of the scope of the problem of housing in South Africa. While these statistics present the macro experience of the state of housing in South Africa, I wanted to explore the micro aspects of this issue: how people feel about their housing situations and how they express the

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experience of waiting, as well as how these struggles shape their perceptions of government. Qualitative research allowed me to explore these topics, given that "qualitative techniques emphasize quality, depth, richness and understanding" (Valentine, in Limb and Dwyer, 2001: 43) and look at the nitty-gritty details that I was interested in. Through semi-structured interviews I would try to understand three key issues which would form my research questions: what does waiting mean to residents in Valhalla Park? What does temporary housing mean when it is in reality a long-term solution? And how do these two factors of waiting and living in temporary housing solutions for long periods of time shape Valhalla Park residents' thoughts about local government? As explained by Dwyer and Limb (in Limb and Dwyer, 2001: 1), qualitative methodologies are used "to explore some of the complexities of everyday life in order to gain a deeper insight into the processes shaping our social worlds" and "to understand lived experience and to reflect on and interpret the understandings and shared meanings of people's everyday social worlds and realities" (Dwyer and Limb, in Limb and Dwyer, 2001: 4). The understanding that these social worlds do not exist in a vacuum, but are "dynamic and changing, always being constructed through the intersection of cultural, economic, social and political processes" (Dwyer and Limb, in Limb and Dwyer, 2001: 6) reiterates the point that research is always situated, it is a 'snapshot' of the current forces at play in an area at a particular time, undertaken and understood by a particular person. Qualitative research is not about presenting a "grand- or meta-narrative" (Daya and Lau, 2007: 5) about the plight of a group of people; it is not about presenting "the truth", but rather, a truth, a story of many stories and many truths (Daya and Lau, 2007: 5). The research conducted is thus always partial and nuanced, and rarely can a researcher grasp the whole story, nor the beginning, the middle and the end of the story, as Perramond (2001: 4) explains, suggesting that

> We geographers also find ourselves stumbling into the very middle of places and spaces, where we may not understand the importance of spatial context and meaning. In a very real sense, fieldwork involves a betweenness of place, an awkward step into communities and environments unknown to us (Entrikin 1991; Cronon 1992)

Furthermore, this "betweenness of place" exists not only temporally in terms of where researchers enter the story, but also in the everyday experiences of those being researched: waiting for housing is in itself a 'betweenness', it is mundane, normal and logical in its everyday nature, and yet profound in the numerous ways it influences everyday lives. 'Betweenness' exists also in the fact that applicants live for the future, waiting for indefinite better days. 'Betweenness' is also present in the living situations of waiting list applicants, who often live in tenuous situations which teeter between legal and illegal, despite being legitimate. The concept of 'betweenness' is thus not only particularly prevalent to researchers and their quandaries, but is also a broad theme that encompasses much of the everyday situations of those waiting for housing. In terms of the research

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experience, Jensen and Lauritsen (2005: 69) concur with the notion of research being partial, stating that "good qualitative research must...pay attention to the partiality of the enterprise" and that the "specificity of a situation" must be taken into account. Qualitative research, then, is about distinction and thick description, as Rose (1997: 308) demonstrates:

> In contrast to the god-trick of claiming to see the whole wide world while remaining distanced from it, subjugated and critical knowledges work from their situatedness to produce partial perspectives on the world. They see the world from specific locations, embodied and particular, and never innocent; siting is intimately involved in sighting.

Because I am from Cape Town, I have some understanding of the social, political and economic forces that shape the context of the research and how people live in the city. However, I could never assume to be able to grasp the micro-politics of the area or the ways in which Cape Town's political economy shapes the neighbourhood. The 'betweenness of place' in fieldwork of which Perramond (2001) speaks is relevant to my experience. Understanding some things but not others, being both an insider (only to a certain extent, afforded to me mainly by working closely with a prominent community activist) and an outsider, knowing about the social, economic and political contexts but not really understanding the extent to which they affect the community; all of these aspects explain my positionality as a researcher. Acknowledging this messy part of research suggests that this dissertation presents a situated knowledge of the housing situation in Valhalla Park, one that is bounded by various constraints. How the knowledge that was generated through this project is situated and embedded in a particular context is explored in greater detail in the following section.

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An Introduction to Valhalla Park

Valhalla Park is a working class neighbourhood situated about 15 km from Cape Town city centre (see Figure 1: Map of Cape Town showing Valhalla Park, Central Cape Town and Bellville, below), created as a coloured group area during the apartheid regime. Although the period's spatial segregations are no longer in operation, financial limitations have prevented people from moving out of the areas. Most residents of Valhalla Park were classified as 'coloured' during the apartheid era, and are mostly poor, with 36% of the population unemployed according to the 2001 Census records for Ward 31 (of which Valhalla Park is a part), though this number has surely risen over the last 11 years given the effects of the global economic recession.

Valhalla Park is comprised of two styles of council-built houses, the first are one-bedroom single story houses, and the other, two- and three-bedroom maisonettes. Most of these houses, built in the 1980s, are owned by the council, though some residents of Valhalla Park have been able to buy their houses through the Extended and Enhanced Discount Benefit Scheme (see Butcher and

Oldfield, 2009: 49). Residents who qualify (particularly in terms of financial need) rent these houses from the City of Cape Town, paying a small rental cost, although this is not an insignificant amount[16] for those who are often unemployed. The City of Cape Town as the landlord has the responsibility of maintenance, as well as collecting rental monies monthly. Because there has been no state-led development in Valhalla Park since these council houses were built, the majority of the houses in Valhalla have backyard shacks (also known as bungalows or *hokkies*) which accommodate either extended family members or paying sub-tenants. Aside from backyard shacks and formal houses, there are also two informal settlements in Valhalla Park. Named Sewende Laan (Seventh Avenue) and Agste Laan (Eighth Avenue), they were built as a response to serious overcrowding in the neighbourhood. In this thesis, I focus on Sewende Laan because it is the reason Valhalla Park will soon have a new housing development, though of course, the problems associated with informal settlement living affect those living in both Sewende and Agste Laan.

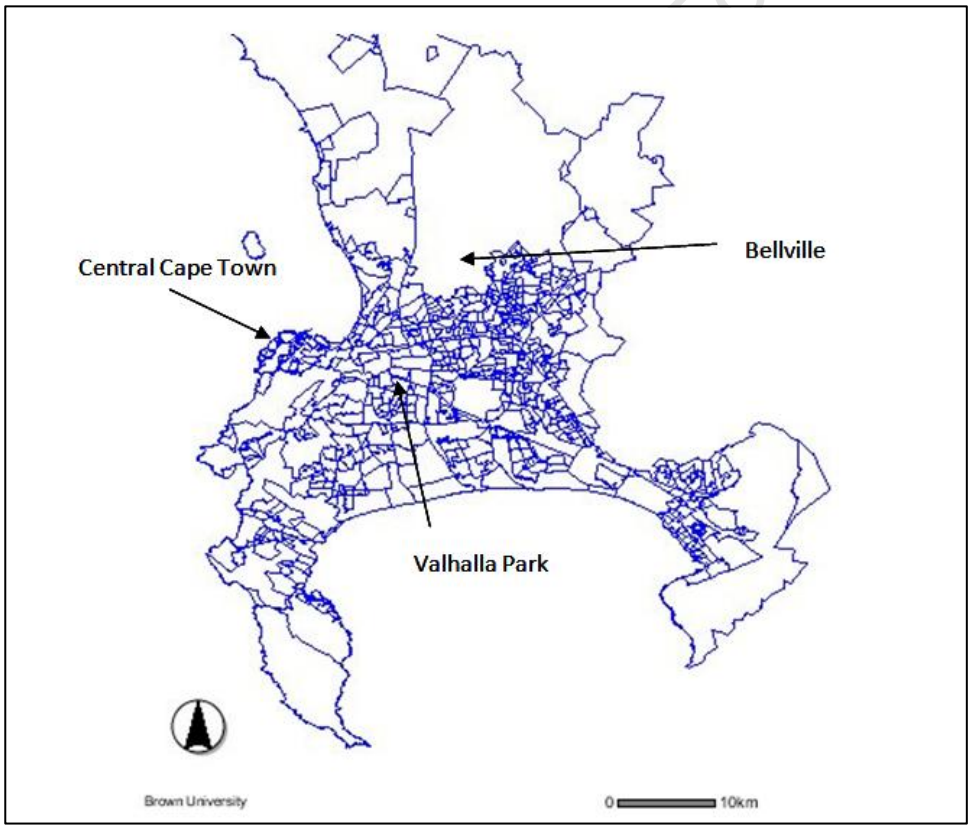

Figure 1: Map of Cape Town showing Valhalla Park, Central Cape Town and Bellville

[16] This rental stock does not serve as an income-generating tool for the City. Rather, it is a form of social housing aimed at those living in poverty, but who can afford to pay the rental costs. In the past, defaults on payment resulted in eviction. Nowadays, evictions are less prevalent (see Oldfield and Stokke, 2004), and instead, an indigent policy has been put into place to help payment defaulters pay off their debts, usually with some sort of trade-off in relation to water cut-off devices, though the implementation of the device has been vehemently resisted in Valhalla Park.

Moved On, Moving In: Forced Removals and Unfamiliar 'Home' Turf

While many of the younger residents of the neighbourhood were born and raised in Valhalla Park, much of the older generation were forced to move to the area from other, often more centrally located areas as a result of the Group Areas Act. Discussed in the following section, this experience was for many traumatic and disruptive. Nonetheless, residents have come to see Valhalla Park as a home over the years, and have found ways to improve the neighbourhood.

Forced Removals and Finding Oneself in the Unknown

The Group Areas Act prompted forced removals from neighbourhoods segregated as 'white', which resulted in dispersed communities, with neighbours relocating to different, usually unfamiliar areas on the Cape Flats. A Valhalla Park resident explains:

> And when the apartheid government, they pushed everybody out of Diep River, and so some of our people moved to Manenberg, and that's why I got my house, my first house in Manenberg (R.D., 20 September 2011)

While the woman above was quite pleased about getting a house of her own as she had been living with family in crowded conditions, the positive spin-off wasn't felt by everyone who was forced to move. A former District Six resident explains the lack of influence people had in where they were to move to:

> We had no options, there was no choices. We had to move, that was in the time of apartheid, whites only, and there were certain areas that the people were moved to, like Valhalla Park, Lentegeur, Mitchells Plain, Heideveld, and we were for Valhalla Park. We just had to move and adapt here in Valhalla Park... And we had to adapt and we had to travel to go to town and everything (F.S., 23 August 2011)

Many Valhalla Park residents, particularly those from District Six, were nostalgic about the neighbourhoods from whence they came, not only in terms of the sense of community, but also in terms of its prime location in central Cape Town. An interviewee discusses the move from District Six to Valhalla Park and the subsequent changes in lifestyle:

> We were forced to move down here... It was Group Areas. And these houses that we've got here, we got it through the Group Areas. Because they wanted District Six for themselves... You know, this place wasn't District Six. It could never be. District Six was a free country. You could have sleep in front of your doors in the evening, you could sleep in the yards, you can walk from District Six to Somerset Hospital, that was the hospital, you could have walked there. You could have walked anyway in District Six, nothing should have or would have happened to you. But here you can't do it (W.A., 22 August 2011)

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In the early days, Valhalla Park was a dangerous place to live, with different gangs fighting over turf. Things have changed for the better since then due to community activism and work by the civic organisations operating in the area, one of which was run by this respondent. Even though once unknown neighbours have become familiar over the years, the sense of freedom that areas of the city like District Six offered continues to be evasive.

One Valhalla Park resident, however, found moving to a new place meant getting to know new people and cultures, which she enjoyed after coming from a relatively rural background, the granddaughter of a farm hand in Constantia:

> It was fine, because when I moved in to Stormsrivier Way [in Manenberg], there was different people from cultures there, and you learn a lot from people where they come from, and they learn a lot from where we come from. So like here in Valhalla Park, here's people from Kensington, District Six, even Diep River. From all over. (R.D., 20 September 2011)

For those who were forced to leave their neighbourhoods, Valhalla Park, once unfamiliar, has since become home. This is true too for those who came to Valhalla Park for reasons other than forced removals. Some residents obtained houses as a result of being informal settlement dwellers, at a time when 'slums' were not tolerated by the state.

Moving as a Result of Being an Informal Settlement Dweller

Not all residents of Valhalla Park were the result of forced removals owing to the Group Areas Act. For others, the eradication of informal settlements and being on the housing waiting list meant moving out of shacks and into a council house. Another long-standing resident of Valhalla Park explains how she felt when she was told she had been offered a council house in the then relatively new area of Valhalla Park:

> And then he said, 'this man is going to throw you out, because nobody's paying... and then when you're evicted, the council will give you a house, there's a new housing project in Valhalla Park'. And I didn't know where Valhalla Park is... I never heard of Valhalla Park before, I never even travelled this way, I didn't know this part of the world... I only know Athlone, Crawford, Mowbray, Claremont, Wynberg, Cape Town and that, I didn't know this side. And then I said to myself, what, Valhalla Park? (G.S., 10 October 2011)

From this excerpt, it is clear that moving to an unknown area caused anxiety; however, even for those who were not being forced to move by the Group Areas Act, moving from an informal shack to a house was an opportunity, particularly when the informal settlement on which she lived was soon to be demolished by the landowner and she had nowhere else to go. This woman moved to Valhalla

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Park and immediately applied to transfer to a council house in a more familiar area. However, after some time had passed and she was offered a larger house in Valhalla Park, she somewhat reluctantly chose to stay in the neighbourhood.

For many residents of Valhalla Park, moving to the area was not solicited and suddenly living in unfamiliar areas of Cape Town led to many challenges. Nostalgic at times, most older residents are content in Valhalla Park now, and can't contemplate moving to a different area. Valhalla Park is considered a safe environment. Parents and grandparents spend time and money to provide various extramural activities to keep children 'off the streets'. In addition, there is an active civic organisation that fights for the rights of the residents and is willing to challenge the state when it needs to, particularly in relation to issues of housing. After unsuccessful negotiations over a number of years with the state over housing provision, the civic organisation decided that enough was enough, and with residents built houses - an informal settlement - of their own. This story of Sewende Laan, recounted in Chapter 3, is important because it has prompted a new housing development, and sparked hope for those who have been waiting for housing for long periods of time.

The research design and overall experience of this research project are discussed below.

The Practicalities of the Research

Embarking on this research project meant finding a way to research a difficult and personal topic: that of how people live in often exceptionally difficult housing conditions and situations. This topic was prompted by my first research experience, a mini research project in Valhalla Park during the third year of my undergraduate studies. Overcrowding, living in informal settlements and long waiting lists were the topics that our class explored, and at the presentation afternoon on campus, it was clear that there was scope for more research regarding these topics in Valhalla Park. In addition, after reading many reports of the country's low-cost housing woes in the media, which often focussed on the numbers, but rarely on the experiences of those waiting, I was interested to research waiting for housing qualitatively. After such a positive initial research experience in Valhalla Park, my supervisor and I developed this project around the housing situation in Valhalla Park, with particular emphasis placed on the experience of waiting and how this affects everyday life for housing applicants and their families. Some preliminary research was conducted during April and May 2011 to get a better idea of the situation and to test my questions, as well as to have some empirical research already collected for my research proposal. Once the proposal had been

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accepted, I formulated a more detailed list of open-ended questions[17] to guide the research, and spent about four months researching the topic of waiting for housing and so-called 'temporary' housing solutions whilst waiting for housing with various residents of Valhalla Park.

A critical part of my research involved working with the chairperson of the civic organisation, Ms Gertrude Square, who agreed to assist with the research process. She became my 'guide', and not only accompanied me on most interviews, but also found people with interesting stories to tell for me to interview. In addition to this, on a more practical level, she acted as a chaperone in an area where outsiders may not be safe. Working with Aunty Gerty (as she is known) meant that I had access to many Valhalla Park residents, some of whom are reluctant to talk to strangers about such personal things as waiting for housing and how they live in the mean time. Aunty Gerty was also able to take me to people who had found ways of accessing housing that are not consistent with the state's housing database, sometimes done individually, but often orchestrated through the civic organisation, which has housed many families using various methods to get around the formal waiting list.

Overall, I conducted 24 in-depth interviews with residents of Valhalla Park, some of whom were community activists. The majority of the respondents were female, probably because the interviews took place during the afternoons, when women were home looking after children[18], and most respondents are either waiting for housing or have been on the waiting list previously. These interviews lasted from around 45 minutes to 2 hours in length, and were very conversational. Key themes that I explored in these interviews included the housing histories of participants; the neighbourhood of Valhalla Park and how it has changed over the years; the processes of application for housing; current housing situations and the challenges of this; what waiting feels like and what it means; interactions with the local housing officials and the ward councillor; perceptions of government as well as hopes for the future. I also interviewed three[19] government officials, including the ward councillor and the housing manager for the area, as well as a former housing

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[17] See Appendix B.

[18] Of course, this is not to say that it is exclusively women who look after children, and men who go to work. Aunty Gerty and other activists were keen to point out on many occasions that it is most usually the women (with a few very dedicated men as the exceptions) in the community who do all the community work, and women were certainly the most interested in sitting down for a chat about their housing situation.

[19] I attempted to interview senior-level housing officials, those involved with housing allocation policies, with a view to gain a better understanding of the actual housing allocation process and how it functions; however, this proved difficult, and respondents where 'very busy' or not interested in being interviewed. Fortunately, local-level housing officials (working presently and in the past) were available for interviews. These combined with analysis of secondary documents, policies, and data on the allocation process helped with analysis. Nonetheless, the allocation process is contested and complex, a thesis topic unto itself. Overall, I have termed these processes 'opaque', as information on how allocation works is not available or clear. Indeed, one housing official, when asked how the housing database system works, quipped, 'we'd all like to know that'.

manager, focussing particularly here on their roles in the community, the challenges they face and more generic questions about housing in the area and how housing allocation and the database works[20]. Most interviews were informal, with open-ended questions and an interest in the life histories of the participant. Before each interview, an informed consent form[21] was completed, introducing myself and the project, explaining that the interview could be stopped at any time and that respondents did not have to answer questions if they did not want to. I also asked how they would like to be named in the thesis[22]. Through all of these interviews I was able to gain a detailed understanding of how people who are waiting for housing do so, and learned about the ways in which waiting affects many layers of everyday life for housing applicants and their families.

In addition to these interviews, at the suggestion of my supervisor I chose a block of houses in Valhalla Park and conducted brief interviews here in order to ascertain whether the information I had gathered from the more networked interviews corroborated with the experiences of families in this randomly selected area in the neighbourhood. These short interviews were about 5 to 10 minutes in length and were more survey-like in design, with more impersonal questions that required shorter answers[23]. If any exceptional cases were found, a follow-up interview was organised. It transpired, however, that all the cases in these houses were quite 'normal' and so I didn't conduct any follow-up interviews from this process.

Aside from the interviews that Aunty Gerty thought appropriate and organised for me, we used the 'snowballing' technique to find other people who might be interesting to talk to about their housing experiences. This was another way to 'randomise' the participants, though inevitably respondents would point us in the direction of people who we had either already spoken to or had plans to meet with. In all interviews, unless the respondents wished otherwise, I used a digital recorder to record the content of the interviews. This was for both practical reasons (my handwriting being illegible at the best of times), and so that I could interact with the participant, which I usually struggle to do if I have to write down the contents of the interview at the same time as engaging with the interviewee[24]. Keeping abreast of the conversation was important to me, not wanting the interviews

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[20] See Appendices C, D and E.
[21] See Appendix A.
[22] I gave three options on the informed consent form, including for me to use the respondents' real names, a pseudonym, or their initials. Although most respondents wanted their full names to be used, I have made the decision to use initials only. Since June of this year, there has been an increase in gang activity and general unrest in Valhalla Park and as a result, I have to take into consideration the safety of all participants. In addition to this, in considering the ethics of research on a topic and personal as housing, I have chosen not to include any cases that could be damaging to respondents and their families.
[23] See Appendix F for these questions, and Appendix G for the information collected in these interviews.
[24] While I realise that digital recorders can be very intimidating, I liked that in using them, not only could I engage properly with the interviewee, but I would also get very accurate quotations understood in the context

to seem one-sided and monologue-like for the interviewee, rather favouring the back and forth dialogue as described in Knapik (2006: 9).

Aunty Gerty's role was not just to organise the research participants. Her presence had other effects too. She smoothed the way across difficult interview terrain, encouraging respondents to tell me their feelings and not to feel inhibited by my obvious difference and affluence in comparison to their circumstances. When I expressed my concern[25] that people might feel that they couldn't speak freely because of her admittedly very strong and possibly intimidating presence, she took matters into her own hands: for those who were used to being interviewed (typically other community activists) and were comfortable with the process of interviewing and my presence, (and I felt comfortable with them), she left me to conduct these interviews on my own. She would either go and visit the neighbours, or sit in the kitchen and chat to other household members. On one occasion, she took over the running of a small shop while I interviewed the shop owner in my car. By retreating when she considered it appropriate, the community members could speak freely. In other cases where respondents needed her presence or her translation (my 'suiwer'[26] Afrikaans not always up to the task), she stayed, and sometimes participated. Many of my best interviews came from these more informal, chat-like interviews, where her additions resulted in conversations flowing, and going into more detailed accounts of waiting and living conditions, as well as chat about how she and the civic organisation had intervened in housing situations. While sometimes we strayed off the topic of housing, we would typically move into other topics still related to the community, which all added to the layers of description and detail that a qualitative research project requires.

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of the full interview. I always asked permission from the participant before switching it on, and if they weren't comfortable with it, did my best to reassure them that the recording would not go further than me and my research purposes. After reassurance from me and Aunty Gerty, however, all respondents agreed that it was fine to use the recorder.

[25] A concern that was raised before my research proposal was accepted, was that working with the civic organisation would mean that interviews would be very networked and might only represent the side of the community that the organisation wanted to be seen. While I didn't believe this to be the case (for without working with the organisation, a research project in Valhalla Park could not be possible), I did share these concerns with Aunty Gerty, who tried to work around this fact by giving me some space when she could.

[26] Ross (2010: 138) gives a very good description of the Cape Flats Afrikaans *taal* vernacular and its relation to suiwer (pure) Afrikaans (the type that I was taught at school and am most familiar with). Cape Flats taal, "wonderfully expressive, tonal, plastic and inventive, its quick singsong and tight gutturals are generally considered of low status compared to the slower forms of *suiwer* (pure) Afrikaans, ostensibly closer to Dutch, that was the language of power in apartheid South Africa". For greater detail on the language of the Cape Flats, see the rest of Ross's chapter 6: *Truth, lies,* stories *and straight-talk: on addressing another*.

With the goal of thick description in mind, I began the research with good intentions to write detailed field notes after each research session[27]. As the weather warmed up and we started walking (rather than driving) to our interviews, Aunty Gerty and I would often chat along the way, with her typically explaining in greater detail what was said or what had been going on in the background on the way home (to her house, where I'd meet her in Valhalla Park and leave my car). Any interesting points from these discussions or from the interviews more generally stuck in my head, and I jotted these down. Obviously these details came from her perspective, but they often helped me to understand a little more about the context in which something was told to me in an interview. In an attempt to get some of these insights on paper, I wrote down a list of things I wanted to ask her to talk about while I recorded. Towards the end of the research project, we conducted an interview[28] about the nitty-gritty details that we discussed throughout the fieldwork experience. By asking her more about her insights, these interviews served as a way of reminding me of the finer details of the interviews, and also of the broader community aspects that I hadn't really set out to research, but that I learnt about anyway. All of these aspects of observation and clarification added to the depth of description that typifies qualitative research and ethnography. Understanding the rhetoric of qualitative research and its current objectives and nuances is discussed in relation to the prevailing literature below.

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Knowledge that is Qualified: Understanding Situatedness and Positionality

How stories and anecdotes about the research field are told to us as researchers is also linked to who we are and how the participant reads us as the researcher. Part of being a 'modern' qualitative researcher means responding to the call to "recognise 'our own positionality' (Jackson, 1993: 211), to explore the 'politics of position' (Smith, 1993: 305) and to examine this reflexively (Rose, 1997)" (Hopkins, 2007: 386). The recognition that who we are, how we look and how we speak, dress, walk and act reflect on how participants and general observers understand and react to us, as do less bodily aspects, such as "our class experiences, our levels of education, our sexuality, our age, our ableness, whether we are a parent or not" (Skelton, in Limb and Dwyer, 2001: 89). In my case, I am clearly different to most Valhalla Park residents: I arrived in a car, I was always accompanied by a well-known and respected community leader and in terms of physicality, my white presence in a

[27] I'm embarrassed to admit that these notes petered out after a few weeks, however, when going to Valhalla Park to interview lost its novelty and became part of my daily routine.

[28] This interview happened in three sessions when Aunty Gerty was needed at home as a babysitter (due to both her older daughters being offered short term work contracts), when going out for further interviews would have been impossible.

formerly (yet in reality still largely) coloured area was often found to be unusual, and on occasion, problematic[29].

This difference in perception had varying effects on how people reacted to me. For the most part, once people realised that the community organisation and Aunty Gerty sanctioned the research, they seemed content to talk to me. However, on a few occasions, it was clear that being a student had both advantages and disadvantages. To elaborate, some residents felt that as a university student, I had little to no authority or clout because I was just a student, and not a member of government who might have direct influence over important decisions. The idea that my research would be for my benefit alone and in all likelihood would not bring about tangible improvements for those I interviewed was problematic for those I researched, but also for me. On the other end of the scale, for some residents, I was a more trustworthy person as I wasn't promising anything I couldn't do, as politicians routinely do, particularly during election time[30]. In addition, as Duncan and Watson (in Savin-Baden and Howell Major, 2010: 54) note, there is sometimes a form of prestige attached to being interviewed. For some people in Valhalla Park, it was a novelty. For others, the fact that I was genuinely interested in what they had to say about their situation was unusual, and thus they participated, presumably enjoying being able to give their opinions to someone who didn't claim to know better, but maybe just humouring me, research being a fairly regular occurrence in this neighbourhood[31].

While I use the above examples to explain just two of the ways in which I was 'read' by the research participants (and the only two that were verbalised), it also explains how timing and particular political processes influence the research undertaken. Many other factors would have shaped the research, some tacitly, others more deliberately, as substantiated by Rose (1997, in Bondi, 2003: 66), who notes "many salient aspects of the positions of the researcher and the researched cannot be brought into conscious awareness". Aside from the obvious differences, affluence, level of education and not being married or having children made me stand out as 'different', as an outsider. Further, my identity is not static and changes from interactions, not only while within the field but also once away from the field, at home. How these interactions affected the process of researching and the

[29] I was once mistaken for a private divorce mediator, when a respondent arrived home to find a 'smart' car parked outside the house and me interviewing her mother, as had apparently happened before, when a visitor turned out to be a private mediator sent by her wealthy husband to try to organise child custody. She was thus very wary of me initially.

[30] Local elections took place in April 2011, and so this was a particularly prevalent area of discussion in relation to politicians and local councillors. This is a further example of how the research was embedded in a particular context.

[31] As a result of various third year, honours and masters students learning about the research experience in a collaboration with the Civic organisation and the Environmental and Geographical Science department (see Oldfield, 2008)

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knowledge gathered during the interviews is hard to know, but certainly they would have had an effect. These points explain to a certain extent how research is situated in a particular social, economic, political and temporal context, as well as in relation to the interviewer and her identity. Recognising the positionality of the researcher is as vital as understanding the other more frequently recognised issues that contribute to the context of the research, and being reflexive about how we as researchers influence research is important, as Skelton (in Limb and Dwyer, 2001: 90) asserts when she notes that

> To acknowledge, respect and work with difference means first that you have to: recognise the many differences that exist between yourself as researcher and those you want to work with; reflect upon what they might mean; and then think through how you deal with these differences and make them part of the research, rather than ignore them.

Understanding how knowledge is situated, then, is, to quote Rose (1997: 309), "'to shed light on the research process, although this should not be seen as navel-gazing". Recognising that differences between the researcher and the researched have effects on the outcomes of the process is significant to the integrity of qualitative research.

Credibility through Association: Fostering Links through the Civic

My association with the United Front Civic Organisation, as well as Aunty Gerty, as the chairperson, shaped the research significantly. On the one hand, Oldfield (2008: 276) explains, in the context of previous student projects in Valhalla Park, how working with a senior community activist and the broader civic organisation brings credibility and legitimacy to students undertaking research in the neighbourhood, arguing that

> [The senior community activist's] credibility and ability to inspire commitment and enthusiasm in the community activists to work on the project was critical. Moreover, the Civic's broader legitimacy in the neighbourhood has been the foundation on which the student research in the area functions.

Having a member of the community present encouraged the participants to answer in greater depth than they might have if it had been just me present and also helped me at many times when understanding became more difficult – not in terms of language, but in terms of context or filling in parts of the story that as an outsider, I wasn't aware of. Also, because she has worked both with and against the city, Aunty Gerty helped to elucidate dealings with the state and her clarifications gave me a better sense of the processes going on in the community. In addition, listening to the community members speak among themselves was also useful at times, and witnessing the interactions between community members while walking to and from our interviews was also a

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form of participant observation. However, while I acknowledge that her assistance was invaluable to me, her presence, like mine, is not neutral. As Oldfield (2008: 277) notes,

> 'Community' partners are always embedded in specific contexts, defined by different sets of power, historical and contemporary dynamics, with histories, specificities, subjectivities and particular imaginaries.

Aunty Gerty's presence came with a different but equally important and influential positionality, as an insider strongly committed to improving the community's situation, using various methods, both legal and illegal, to improve the circumstances of everyday living in Valhalla Park[32]. Understanding this embeddedness, we (my supervisor, the community activist and I) attempted to devise a research plan that would negotiate these politics in order to conduct the research as 'validly' as possible, even though however carefully it is planned, research is never objective, and cannot thus be 'saved' by being reflexive and acknowledging our positionalities. While Aunty Gerty's presence was another factor that needed to be negotiated, the research would not have been possible without her assistance and her belief in the legitimacy of the project. This added layer of complexity to the research process can be seen as simply another aspect of the messiness of qualitative research.

Conclusion

Qualitative research is a useful tool to try to understand the micro scale and the everyday experiences of a group of people. In this case, qualitative research allows for a detailed understanding of how people in Valhalla Park find ways of surviving in tenuous and difficult situations, and how they experience waiting for a house and living in temporary abodes for long-term periods. Understanding that research is always partial, never starts at the beginning and exists in many different contexts and terrains are part of the challenge of qualitative research. Acknowledging that identities of the researcher and the researched have effects on the knowledge that is generated through research is another aspect of this challenge, where positionality is as important as the social, economic, political and temporal contexts in which the research takes place. In this chapter, I have reflected on the research experience and the methodological design I used to probe my research questions around housing and the waiting lists in Valhalla Park. Identifying how my research is situated in various contexts as well as considering how my positionality, as well as that of the community activist who assisted me, is discussed in relation to the inherent messiness of research. How collaboration with the civic organisation enhanced, but also affected the information gathered is key to understanding how this project is embedded in specific social, economic, political

[32] Although her activism is not limited to Valhalla Park. She has also in the past worked in other areas on the Cape Flats and around South Africa, usually in her capacity as a member of the Anti-Eviction Campaign.

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and temporal contexts, all of which become part of how waiting for housing from the state is experienced on an everyday basis.

Chapter 3

Waiting...: Making Do in Temporary Accommodation

Introduction

Waiting for housing from the state is the norm in Valhalla Park. Most residents of this suburb are either registered on the integrated housing database and are waiting for housing, or have been registered on the former waiting lists systems and have received housing, typically during the apartheid era and through forced removals from suburbs zoned as 'white'. This chapter explores how waiting for a house from the state affects everyday life in difficult circumstances, often in overcrowded living conditions in family's rented council housing, in backyard shacks or on informal settlements. Each of these accommodation options has different challenges, as well as advantages, explained by the Valhalla Park residents in this chapter. It is apparent from the narratives that follow that for all households that are waiting for housing, 'permanent temporariness' is a lived reality, both physically and emotionally, as well as in the 'gray spaces' that applicants sometimes occupy to engage and circumvent the state. The 'betweenness' that arises from waiting has far-reaching consequences for the everyday lives of applicants and their families.

The first section of this chapter explores the effects that waiting has on everyday life for those living in tenuous situations in Valhalla Park. Living in confined spaces is difficult. Negotiating everyday routines to minimise friction between household members is a large part of the narrative of this section. For some, living in these conditions where independence and privacy are almost non-existent can become too difficult, and so they seek other accommodation solutions that alleviate some of these challenges. The second section of this chapter investigates how residents in Valhalla Park rationalise choices to live in more informal and often illegal contexts in order to have more space, privacy and independence. Living in an informal settlement is one such choice, where relative comfort and protection from a 'raw' life, a life lived in difficult circumstances where "ordinary social relationships are undercut by poverty's cruelty and by forms of violence – both structural and interpersonal – that shape and taint everyday interactions" (Ross, 2010: 4), are traded for space, privacy and independence. Finally, this chapter examines other methods people use to obtain a house, some legal, and others that are situated in the 'gray spaces' between the legal and illegal. These methods include the transferral of tenancy, 'marrying up' in order to obtain a house, as well

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as house 'grabbing'. The chapter explores notions of legality and illegality, embedded in legitimate struggles for housing.

Bursting at the Seams: Overcrowded Housing as the Norm

Waiting in place in order to become a recipient of an 'RDP' or 'BNG', state-financed house in Valhalla Park is normal and natural, and in this way it is unremarkable. The far-reaching effects that waiting for housing has, are not, however, mundane. One of these consequences of waiting for long periods of time is the associated overcrowded nature of housing in Valhalla Park. Many households have over the years outgrown their basic houses, and have been forced to make changes to accommodate new family members, meaning that there are typically several generations living under one roof. Waiting for housing for extended periods of time and the associated everyday constraints that come with living in temporary situations for the long-term are discussed in this section.

Challenges of Overcrowding

In terms of formal houses, Valhalla Park has remained the same size since the apartheid era when many of the residents interviewed moved into the area. Consequently, many if not most houses in Valhalla Park are bursting at the seams in terms of occupation. Generations are forced to live in overcrowded houses as the integrated housing database fails to accommodate people at the rate at which families need to divide into separate units. Houses are thus modified according to the changing needs of the inhabitants. This is done usually through additions of rooms adjoining the house, or erecting separate structures at the back or the front (or both) of the house. Partitioning within the home is also common, using either formal partitioning board or cupboards or curtaining to divide spaces. For those who do have more space than they require, allowing family, friends or unrelated tenants to erect a backyard shack on the property is a way of accommodating those in desperate need of accommodation, as well as an activity that generates a small income for the household. While living with other people partially solves the major problem of accommodation for families, it does come with its own set of challenges. These challenges were well documented in discussions with residents in Valhalla Park.

The challenges in living with others are complex. For those living as tenants, whether family or otherwise, not only is space tight and living conditions cramped, but the overwhelming rhetoric is that those providing the housing are doing the sub-tenants a favour, and thus the sub-tenants, even if they pay rent, 'owe' the landlord more than just financial compensation. A woman who has lived with various landlords in Valhalla Park noted the other tasks that she was obliged to take on:

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> Actually it weren't nice, because to stay around by people, sometimes you must be the maid, sometimes you must be the sole supporter, you must provide food, you must provide everything, if you can't provide that, people say 'I'm sorry, but you can't stay here anymore'. And they never used to clean their own house or anything like that, but now you must actually spring clean every day, things that wasn't nice, if they want to take your stuff, they're going to take it. (S.S., 15 August 2011)

Living in close confines means getting to know people intimately. One woman who discovered this for herself found living with her parents-in-law to be especially challenging. She found a different side to the public personas, and added that living in close quarters with people exposes their true colours.

> People can be strange when you're living there. That's why they say... you have to live with a person to know that person. (M.I., 29 August 2011)

For others, it's less about 'owing' the landlord and more about obeying their rules and keeping quiet about the things that bother you. For another resident who lives in a backyard shack with her in-laws, she emphasised that:

> If you're staying with other people, there's so much that you must overlook. You must keep quiet, you must have your distance, and you can't do whatever you want to... And to tell you the truth, to stay with other people, it can be your own family, but sometimes they treat you horrible. Really... You have to take it, you have to stand up and say Lord, give me the strength to go on... There's times that I can't handle it. I can't handle it. I ask the Lord why are you taking so long to get me a house? Really. To stay with other people is difficult... You must close your mouth, you can say nothing, it's not your place to tell them... Because it's not your house. There's too many things that you have to take on, and for this 14 years I've had it. I've had enough. I really had enough. (H.F., 12 May 2011)

For another resident, moving back in with her mother after the end of her marriage impacted on how her mother lives:

> I came here with my whole family to her [her mother]. She's got her way of living, my family, we have our way of living, so now I'm putting pressure on my mother, and she's old, she don't need this. You know, because she can't handle me and my children, because it's frustrating. (N.K., 19 September 2011)

These family dynamics are strongly affected by multiple generations living in tight spaces. Additionally, living in overcrowded conditions clearly affects everyday life and acts as an additional stressor to households that are often already under pressure.

Two Families, One House: A Struggle for Tenancy

A description of these grim situations can be found in the fight between two single parents over one house, a property in which neither family technically had the legal right to rent. A dispute over who

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moved in first and who had 'rights' to the property took fifteen years and much wrangling by community workers and the council to come to an arrangement to separate the women and find adequate shelter for each family. Over these fifteen years, the first woman lived with her four children in one bedroom of a maisonette, while the second woman and her five children lived in the other bedroom and the rest of the house. While initially they shared the kitchen, tensions ran so high that the first woman moved her kitchen into the small area under the stairs and then into her family's bedroom space. The only thing shared by the two families was the bathroom and the entrance gate, around which more power struggles played out. In these overcrowded and tense circumstances, the second woman and her children were afflicted by tuberculosis (TB) on two occasions, while the first suffered from depression. She explains the situation below:

> She was like a bossy person... and she wanted her way or no way, and she teach her children also like that. So her children fight with my children and if my children makes now a noise, she took the whole house over and I was like a softy. I don't know what happened to me but I was like a softy under her and she just... they abused us. They totally abused us in that house... So my kids were the whole time unhappy, unhappy. (M.I., 29 August 2011)

Like many mothers in similar circumstances, her children's best interests were her first concern, and the constant rebukes from the other mother in the house took its toll and undermined her self-esteem:

> When I was staying in [X] street, I was always, constantly sick. And I think I was in a deep depression as well. I was so stressed... I didn't sleep for six months. Every night I go to sleep, next morning I went to work...I was very sick and I thought I was going to die. That's how the depression eat me up, in that house... I was also always worried about my kids. I'm at work and what are you going to do to my kids when my kids come from school and so. (M.I., 29 August 2011)

Living in such situations compels some people to choose to live in an informal settlement. This move is sometimes seen to be a 'step up', as will be explained later in this chapter. In this case, for the less dominant of these two women, living in a shack would have been preferable to living in a house:

> It's much worse than living in a shack. Then I rather could have lived in a shack. But if I moved out and lived in a shack or build me a shack on a squatter camp or whatever, it would have, I wouldn't have get this house. (M.I., 29 August 2011)

This was a tough decision to make, as moving out would have improved her immediate living circumstances, but would have meant waiting for the customary long periods of time that following the trajectory of the housing waiting list usually entails. Eventually, a housing opportunity presented itself in Valhalla Park, and the first woman and her family moved out of the house. The second family continues to live illegally in the house that they shared.

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Not all families waiting for housing are able to live in such fraught circumstances. Some households choose to move out of overcrowded council houses into backyard shacks or an informal settlement. Valhalla Park's first informal settlement came about as a result of serious overcrowding in the neighbourhood.

Breaking Up the Family Unit

Arguably one of the most difficult consequences for parents living in informal settlements or in overcrowded backyard shacks is the need to split up the family unit because of a lack of space. For some families, this means that older children, often boys, sleep with grandparents or aunts and uncles who have houses in the neighbourhood, either to create more space in the so-called temporary home, or sometimes so that after a certain age, children of different sexes are not forced to sleep together in the same room, a method of upholding respectability of families. The interviewee below explained that her son walks from the family home in a backyard shack to his grandmother's house around the block every night after eating, in order to sleep there, leaving more space for his younger siblings.

> Because my children is big and to think I have only this place [a small backyard shack] to sleep with children...my son sleep now there by my grandma (H.F., 12 May 2011)

Another mother's son lives with his father in another suburb, as he is too big to be accommodated in the minute shack where they live at the back of his elderly grandmother's house:

> I had to give my one son, he have to stay by his father now... That is not what I wanted. I believe that children should grow up together... I can't wait to get a house, so that I can have my children all together. I don't sleep at night, because my children aren't with me. I mean my eldest son is 19 years old. He's still a child. (N.K., 19 September 2011)

She worried what her son might be getting up to without her guidance. Other backyard shack residents shared similar sentiments. The following extract suggests that one resident's requirements for a house are not extravagant. Simple things, like a toilet and having her children living with her were top of her list of requirements:

> I really want to have my own house. I am not long on the waiting list, but I always ask the lord. Only a house, that's all that I need. Because then I can have my own bathroom, my own toilet. That is things that I want to have for myself, for my children. To have all my children around me. (H.F., 12 May 2011)

The dispersal of the family unit is not always permanent, however. For some residents, it is a seasonal matter: as soon as winter sets in and shacks are cold and wet, young children go to sleep in formal houses with extended family members. A Sewende Laan resident whose shack was

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disintegrating[33] at the time of research explained why she so desperately hopes that the housing development happens before the next winter:

> All I can say and it's tough out there man, and I don't feel like living there [Sewende Laan] anymore... And already my two children is with their granny... My daughter of 19, she is living opposite by other people. There's still my son who's with me, but he's says 'Mommy, you're going to break down, I'm also moving to my mommy' [he's also going to go to his grandmother]. And I'm all alone ... that is now putting my family... scattered all over the show, and I'm the mom, and I don't think that is a nice thing. (L.O., 26 September 2011)

While usually this is a temporary or seasonal solution to a problem, in this case, because the shack is falling apart, the mother's idea to save money on reconstruction costs involves building a much smaller shack that simply accommodates her. This means that her children will continue to live where they are currently, while she waits for the houses to be built, when the family will be reunited under one roof. Choosing not to rebuild the shack is not an option, however, as she does not want anyone disputing her right to claim a house in the new development[34].

Changing family dynamics is not just due to the weather, however. These overcrowded living conditions are not easily negotiated by the old or sick, and the same Sewende Laan resident experienced a change in her family unit due to another sad occurrence which was compounded by her living situation:

> [My partner had a] tumour on the brain and after that he had to move back to his mother's place because to live on Sewende Laan, it's not so convenient because the toilets are outside, so is the fresh water, whereas his mother is living in a [maisonette] like this where it is convenient for him, because he is a sick patient. (L.O., 26 September 2011)

Family units change according to their living circumstances, and this is difficult for many families to deal with. Time spent separately due to a lack of space cannot be reclaimed. This is an example of temporal 'betweenness', where waiting for housing in an imagined better future comes at a cost in the present.

Overcrowding is a challenge for most people in Valhalla Park, and puts serious strain on families who are often already stretched to the limit. Overcrowding in rented council houses means having to sacrifice privacy and independence, where rules have to be obeyed and toeing the line is important to keep the peace. These effects of waiting for housing are not always bearable; some families move

[33] By the middle of summer in 2012, the shack had been demolished as it was no longer safe to live in.
[34] Although since the research was conducted, the allocation lists have been made public and this interviewee is one of the beneficiaries of the housing.

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onto an informal settlement to find privacy and independence in these tough circumstances. This is a difficult choice with benefits and costs, the focus of the following section.

Stepping Up, Stepping Down: Accommodation Solutions for Those Living in Wait

What constitutes a comfortable and secure accommodation solution is a personal decision. In the previous section, it became apparent that living in overcrowded conditions in rented council houses or backyard shacks means that many seemingly mundane tasks and activities have to be negotiated frequently. Choosing to live informally in an informal settlement is one such choice. While offering the possibility of independence, space and a certain (albeit limited) freedom in how to live, this housing option, while locally legitimate, is illegal. Making the decision to live in an informal settlement requires choosing to navigate these 'gray spaces' and the associated insecurities that challenge the idea of legal and illegal practises as binaries.

Rationales for Living 'Informally'

Once the decision had been made to create the informal settlement, many residents expressed interest in moving to the Sewende and Agste Laan settlements for a variety of reasons, mostly space and privacy:

> I wanted some space of my own ja. Because [under someone else's roof] you can't do what you want... Then I have much more space, then my children come and visit me, they can come, they are free. (D.v.W., 23 August 2011)

This father is now able to provide space for his children to come and visit him, something that he couldn't do when he was living with another family. Another resident explains how she told her mother she was moving out of their overcrowded house:

> [My mother's house]... it was too tight for all my kids, because my sister have children, my brother. We are five children, my mommy had five children and the house was too small for us. And I, tell my mommy, 'mommy, but I can't stay here because it's too tight here and I want my privacy'. (L.R., 27 September 2011)

Now, she has more space and is able to live according to her prescriptions, rather than her mother's:

> Because I'm on my own now, I can do what I want to do, you see?... [At my mother's house] I must ask for this, for that, and I can't do what I want to do, because it's not my house, it's my mommy's house and I must respect for my mommy and my daddy. When it's on your own, then you can do anything. Because you are the owner of the house. (L.R., 27 September 2011)

A community activist was also keen to point out some of the other benefits to living in an informal settlement for a temporary period:

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> As far as I'm concerned, there's a lot of them that don't mind... They've got their toilet facilities, some of them even have got water, they're connected to water inside of their shacks. So they've got no problem and most of them they don't have a little hokkie, they have a big shack. Like, rooms and a dining room and all of that. So most of them, a lot of them, whenever we speak to them then the majority will say 'as long as we know we are going to get houses, but we're not in such hurry to get away here'. They're buying their light, they're not paying any rent... They're not paying for water. [G.S., 20 September 2011)

Although this is a 'temporary' (ten-year long) solution for the Sewende Laan residents who are guaranteed houses in the new development that will be built in 2013, the same is not true of those living in Agste Laan. Moving to an informal settlement is thus not a permanent housing solution, but rather considered a stepping stone to a formal house, a move that allows one to live more privately and independently than one could in an overcrowded council house[35].

Shacks as Circumstantial

Many residents of Valhalla Park made certain that I understood that living in a shack was not reflective of their character or their aspirations, but merely a result of their situation. Many people explained that although they aren't ashamed of living in shacks, they want to live more comfortable lives in the houses that they were promised at the end of the apartheid regime, promises that are generally renewed during election times. A woman who had grown up living in a shack, but married and moved into a fairly affluent neighbourhood, then lost it all in a messy divorce, proclaimed her dismay at returning to live in a shack:

> I grew up in a shack. When we moved out of the shack, I never dreamt that I was going to go back to the shack. I never dreamt that I was going to raise my children in a shack. And they are maybe going to raise their children in a shack. I thought if we moved out of the shacks we're going up. But it seems we're going down... (N.K., 19 September 2011)

Now stuck waiting on the housing database as she cannot afford to buy a house, this woman fears that obtaining a house from government is not a realistic assumption. Having to move back in to a council house with her mother, living with her children in the tiny backyard shack is a very emotional topic for her. Her lack of options makes this a sensible, if difficult, solution. Many residents echoed this sentiment. Valhalla Park residents are not satisfied with the living standards in the area and the

[35] The notion of privacy in this case is certainly contingent on comparison with previous living situations, as although the informal settlement shacks are relatively well spaced out, they are far from private, and life continues to be played out in a very public way (see Ross, 2010: 25). Another example of the lack of privacy came from a Sewende Laan resident, who quipped that she was 'looking forward to teaching visiting children to knock on the door before entering' when they all move to their new houses.

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fact that few people on the housing database are accommodated in housing. A community worker noted that:

> People are waiting really, really very long for houses. And I mean your children are married, and they're on the waiting list and they have to stay in the yards, from their homes, move to squatter camps, which... everything is upside down. (W.A., 22 August 2011)

Another resident noted that the solutions that people come up with are not what they want, and that informal settlements and backyard shacks are necessary but not ideal:

> We people don't want to make a squatter camp in our yards, but we have no choice because the children is getting big. And a lot of houses have only one bedroom, you see now they, the children got to build in the yards. And there is a lot of fire, the shacks is burning out, a lot of fire in the places. (E.W., 7 September 2011)

While living in an informal settlement may have some advantages, these are areas vulnerable to disasters.

Dealing with Disaster: a Downside of Living Informally

Talk of fires is not an exaggeration: fires often ravage through informal settlements, wiping out the homes of many residents who are left without a roof over their heads or any of their belongings[36]. For people living in poverty, often unemployed and usually uninsured, this is a serious blow. For the residents of Sewende and Agste Laan, having a strong civic organisation engaging the City on behalf of the residents meant that electricity boxes were installed in each shack, eliminating the need for dodgy connections to street lights for electricity, as initially was the case. Backyard shacks, however, are more difficult to monitor and regulate[37], and connections from the house to the shack typically consist of an extension lead from a plug in the house trailed outside a window and led into the shack, with any joins in the connection protected from water by wrapping the plug in a refuse bag and duct tape. Dangers within small shacks extend beyond this however, to cooking on primer stoves or with gas in cramped conditions with poor ventilation. Combined with water from leaking roofs, living in shacks - in backyards or the informal settlements - has its downfalls. A Valhalla Park resident explains:

> I did stay by my sister in their yard in a shack. The shack was leaking so bad, when it rains then I have to sit with my three children in one corner and put buckets around me so that the water can fall in there. Very awful. (M.I., 29 August 2011)

[36] Very sadly, one such fire occurred in early 2012 in the Agste Laan settlement, razing several houses and killing a young boy.

[37] Backyard shacks do technically require a permit and approval by the City (J.K., 23 April 2012), though it is very rarely sought before they are erected.

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Leaking is a common complaint about shacks, built with rudimentary materials on a budget, usually meant to be temporary abodes; proper weather-proofing rarely forms part of their construction. A resident of Sewende Laan explains how her shack is starting to fall apart, and that the effects of this are apparent most especially during winter:

> It was leaking on one place by me, but since now, oh, it's everywhere, and the shack, it pools now... [In] the corner, the roof lifts, then it's a hole... And there's an opening there. Then the wind blows through there... Now I can't repair it because if I'm going to [replace one side] now, then everything is going, it's going to fall... (L.O., 26 September 2011)

Having to repair shacks is costly, and for this resident who is, like the other Sewende Laan residents, waiting to take ownership of her home in the new housing development, rebuilding her shack for the third time is an expense that she would rather not have to repeat. Not knowing exactly when the new housing development is due to be built, however, means that she has to choose either to live in a dwelling that is subsiding and open to the elements, while saving money, or spend some money rebuilding it. These sentiments were echoed by another Sewende Laan resident, who added:

> When...it's raining...the grandchildren, they're sick, they must go to doctor, sometimes we haven't got money to go to the doctor... We stay lovely here, but when it's winter... It's not nice anymore. (L.R., 27 September 2011)

A long-term resident of Valhalla Park who moved into her council house from a shack described how she used to survive the winter weather conditions:

> I came out of a shack, it was leaking... I had so a plastic bag that I put in the roof, and I pinch it with some drawing pins in the ceiling... and if I fall asleep then this black bag gets full of water and... it gets heavy, and then the drawing pins make a hole and the hole gets bigger and bigger, and becomes loose, and when it comes loose and I'm asleep, then it bursts, all that water bursts on top of my bed. And at that time I only had one blanket, one sheet... there wasn't dry blankets that I can put on my bed... And when I got this house, just tears were running down my eyes from gladness. I'm out of this get raining wet in the winter and all of that. (G.S., 18 October 2011)

For her, the most important aspect of moving out of a shack and into a house was getting out of the elements, having a dry place for her children to sleep. It is for these reasons that families often send children to live with family members in houses in the neighbourhood.

Waiting for housing has widespread consequences that affect many day to day household functions. For some applicants, when waiting for housing takes too long, other ways of accessing housing are sought, alternatives that step between the 'gray spaces' of legal and illegal methods to obtain better accommodation. The following section investigates the building of Sewende Laan as a way of accessing accommodation.

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Securing a Housing Project: The Case of Sewende Laan

The informal settlement of Sewende Laan occurred as a community response to the widespread issue of overcrowding. The settlement became the subject of a protracted court battle between the residents and the City of Cape Town, which ultimately culminated in a judgement stating that the residents of the settlement are entitled to housing in a future housing development. The judgement prompted a new housing development project in the area, where 777 houses are due to be built for Valhalla Park and surrounding neighbourhoods. Winning the court case and the subsequently imminent housing development means that there is renewed hope in the housing database system, and for those who have been waiting for many years, a tangible opportunity to access a house from the state is within reach.

Civic and Community Intervention in Housing

A long-term need for houses in the area started off the motions, and engaging the City council was the first step in obtaining housing. A former community activist explains the process:

> ...We had a meeting with the council for houses that needs to be built in Valhalla Park, and here's lots of vacant land where the council can build the houses, and we had meetings, several meetings with them, we send them several letters and we went and we earmarked some vacant land in Valhalla Park where there can be possibly houses be built and after two years of meeting with the council, sending letters, trying to come to some sort of agreement for accommodation for the people of Valhalla Park, it just went onto flat ears, they just don't seem to care. And so we told them, 'if you don't going to do anything, then after two years, then we've got no alternative but to start build our own houses, because the land is here. It's just for you to come build the houses. So if you say you can't build the houses, then what can we do? We must build our own houses... And after the last meeting we had, we specifically told them in the meeting, this is the last meeting that we have with you, and we're going back now and we're going to tell the people you're not prepared to build the houses for them. They must build their own houses, and the very next week we started building the houses on Sewende Laan, because that was the first vacant land big enough. (R.K., 15 August 2011)

After numerous meetings with the council that turned out to be fruitless, it was decided that the best way to get housing was to build it independently[38]. Many activists involved in setting up Sewende Laan take pride in the methodical way in which the land was laid out, with formal streets

[38] The City responded by, as the activist recalls: "Sending in law enforcement to come and evict the people and throw down their shacks. And we were prepared for them. As I told you, we plan everything. We do. And we were prepared for them. We were prepared for law enforcement and we were prepared for the Casspirs [armoured vehicles]... We barricaded the streets, burnt tyres and we stood on that Sewende Laan, the whole of the committee and the people in Valhalla Park, that stays in Valhalla Park... And they couldn't break down the shacks. And the following day, people started building again, and again until the whole of Sewende Laan was built" (R.K. 15 August 2011).

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wide enough for a fire engine to traverse[39], and equal-sized plots. One of the civic organisation's stipulations for the 'project' was that every person given a plot on the land had to be on the City of Cape Town's housing waiting list, and had to have proof of this. The time spent waiting was irrelevant, but proof of waiting was imperative. The community activist continues:

> [We built Sewende Laan] just the way we wanted the houses to be. It's just that people was building their own houses with wooden iron and stuff... So the people just bring their books, and then we check... are you on the council's waiting list... so that went on until the whole of Sewende Laan was full. And then the council came and gave eviction letters, 'they must be off Sewende Laan otherwise they're going to send in the bulldozers', and so we said 'we're not moving, take us to court... We had all our proof... because whenever we had a meeting with the council we demanded they send us the minutes of that meeting. So we have the minutes of every meeting that we had and we had copies of all the letters that was sent to them and the response back... The lawyers did everything for us. We just put the proof on the table, this is what we did in the two years, this is the negotiations, this was the comeback as far as this shack is concerned and how it is that people started building their own houses on this land. So we didn't hijack anything, it's just a piece of land that we asked the council to build for the people and they weren't able to build, so the people builded their own houses. And we won the case! (R.K., 15 August 2011)

All of these stipulations by the civic were clearly put in place for good reason: invading land is illegal and could result in legal proceedings, and in order to have a good case to present to the courts, the occupation needed to be done as methodically as possible. Another community activist, who lives on Sewende Laan, explained in a bit more detail how each 'invader' played a role in making a case against the City:

> So the lawyers was calling us [Sewende Laan residents] all in... They must come and they must put a statement where they come from, how they manage to come and build their own shacks, where they lived before... Say [for example] I did live in a backyard and my mother's house was too full, I had to live in a backyard, in a car, or just on the road, I have to sleep on the road. All different people. Another one came from Cape Town... [living] like the *bergies* [homeless people living on the streets]. (D.v.W., 29 August 2011)

The court case took several years to complete, and while the residents continued to live on Sewende Laan, they were doing so without electricity, water or toilet facilities on the settlement. After an altercation involving utilising the City's facilities at the local housing office, an agreement was made that electricity, sanitation and water would be made available while the court case continued.

In the 2003 judgement, Judge Selikowitz noted that the City of Cape Town had not made provisions for the people of Valhalla Park who were living in desperate situations. This resulted in the City

[39] Fires wreak havoc in informal settlements, so the need for a fire engine to be able to traverse the settlement was a necessary and wise precaution.

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agreeing to advance a housing project to service the area, and particularly the inhabitants of Sewende Laan. Although the plans are underway for the housing development, eight years later, the residents continue to live on Sewende Laan, and the site for the development has yet to resemble anything like a new housing project. However, the civic organisation has now taken to working with the city on this project; many of the civic organisation members are members of the housing steering committee, acting as liaisons between the community and the city. Sewende Laan presented an opportunity for people to live independently according to their ideals, although the conditions in the informal settlement are challenging. Moving to an informal settlement is not the only way to access housing without using the database, however.

Stepping In, Stepping Out: Negotiating Legality and Legitimacy

For many residents in Valhalla Park, waiting for a house legally is the only way forward. For others, waiting takes too long and they choose to find other, often illegal, ways to access housing. This section explores the lengths people will go to in order to obtain a house in a shorter period of time than the housing database typically delivers, and the ambiguities - the 'grayness'- that these options introduce.

Accessing Housing through 'Gray' Areas of Policy

Accessing housing legally, through waiting on the integrated housing database, is usually an arduous process, with no definite time frame to obtaining a house. As a result, there are various ways of working the system so that applicants do obtain a house. This I understand as the 'gray space' that is situated between the 'poles' of legal and illegal measures of obtaining housing, where house occupiers use a convoluted system of policies and laws that eventually entitle them to a house, even if tenancy is disputed. While in the past, house 'hijacking', the unlawful occupation of vacant houses, was fairly common in Valhalla Park, it is less so now because houses rarely become available for 'grabbing', as so many generations living under one roof mean that if the council's tenant dies, the family continues to live in the house[40]. A former community activist who used to assist people with finding houses to occupy explained:

> ... because in Valhalla Park, now, you won't find actually vacant houses, because the generations, the younger generation in Valhalla Park already grew up, and they're also now families of their own, so it's like quite overcrowded itself. So if I pass away there's always my children, or my children's children that are staying in the house, so the house

[40] For example, in the last six months, not a single house has become vacant formally (Interview with housing area manager, 23 April 2012). This may not be the case in reality (potentially houses have been 'hijacked'), but does illustrate the lack of formal turnover in rented council houses.

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> won't become vacant like it used to be in the past... So as far as jumping the gun of the waiting list, it can actually never happen in an area like Valhalla Park... (R.K., 15 August 2011)

Another community worker corroborated these sentiments, explaining that few council houses become vacant and thus available to occupy:

> [It is] seldom, seldom that somebody moves out of a council house, so people rather buy the house, the council house after a while. It's very seldom that somebody moves out and go buys somewhere else and so on. (G.S., 10 October 2011)

Besides buying the council house (only possible if all arrears have been cleared), transferral of tenancy is one way of obtaining a house. According to community workers, as long as that tenant's dependents are listed in the file at the local rent office, then they cannot be asked to leave the house[41]. The same applies if the person living in the house is on the waiting list; they cannot be evicted from a house unless there is another house to be allocated to them. A former community worker explains how the transferral of tenancy works as a way to obtain a house:

> If you can't hijack houses, you can still... there is ways and means to get a house. If you stay in a house for more than two years, that's also council policy, then you're entitled to get that house. If you're on a waiting list. But then you must be a sub-tenant or you must be a spouse or a family member of the previous tenant. Then you're entitled to that house. (R.K., 15 August 2011)

Although the two year part of that policy appears to have been abolished, it is still unusual to be evicted from a house once the actual tenant dies or moves out into a house that isn't owned by the council. Another community worker explains why he chose to go on the housing waiting list, prior to moving out of the house where he was living with an elderly man onto Sewende Laan:

> The time I decided to go on the waiting list I was staying in an old man's house, here also in Valhalla Park... Because if you stay with a person in their house, if anything happen to them - the policy of the City - and then if he died and you are still in the house, they can't put you out, and then the house must *mos* go to you... But you must be on the waiting list. That's why I decided to put me on the waiting list. (D.v.W., 23 August 2011)

The housing waiting list is, in these cases, a safety net that guarantees that you do not lose out on the house where you're living if something happens to the tenant. There are some cases, however, where the transferral of tenancy is more complicated, as explained in this excerpt of a conversation I had with a group of residents in Valhalla, discussing how a woman who had been waiting for a house

[41] This was corroborated by the local housing manager, although technically, the occupants need to fulfil the requirements (such as earn less than R3500 a month, for example) to be able to take over the tenancy (interview with J.K., 23 April 2012).

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for a long period died shortly before a letter for a housing opportunity arrived, and her children lost out on claiming the house.

> I know this [woman], she was on the waiting list for nearly 20 years, waiting for a house. And so she passed away. Now her two children have to suffer...They have to start from scratch ja, because everywhere the people chuck them out because they don't pay rent or the work, you know there is no work for people... Like Aunty [M]... She were on the waiting list for how many years. And then she just went ill and she passed away, and her children are grandfathers, and their mother's house, they still wait for the house, but the mother passed away, so the waiting list passed away. They're not going to get a house. After the mother passed away there has been a letter, the letter has been received that the mother must come in... But they couldn't get it because the mother passed away. It's not fair. When they were born, their mother was sleeping here and there with them. And now their grandchildren must also sleep here and there because they never had a house. I mean I don't think it's right. (S.S. and J, 15 August 2011)

It seems, from interviews with community workers who know the ins and outs of the system, that if a spouse dies while on the list, then the waiting period isn't lost, but rather is transferred to the remaining spouse. This 'investment' in waiting for a home legally does not die with their partner. However, for parents and children, this is not the case, and the waiting period is not transferred. In cases such as the one described above, when a housing opportunity becomes available shortly after the person's death, missing the opportunity becomes a bitter pill to swallow.

Transferring Tenancy

Transferring tenancy after the death of a tenant is rarely a simple process. Because the housing unit where the family lives is rented, a will cannot be made by the tenant to inform who should receive the house. Rather, this is for the family to decide, with guidance from the local housing office. Compounding these complications, the backlog of transferrals at the housing office means that the process can take many years to complete. Often, fights between siblings and their in-laws erupt over who should get the house.

I interviewed a resident who was currently in the middle of such a battle, involving the resident, a bipolar woman who struggles to live by herself, her brother, his wife and his wife's daughter, as well as the brother and sister's younger sister, who is mentally challenged and who has been deemed by the council as medically unfit to rent a house. To complicate matters further, the interviewee has been a housing beneficiary before, but very sadly, the house burned down when she let it to someone when she had to move home due to a particularly bad period of depression. Because the house was officially in her name and therefore no longer the council's property, the council could not rebuild the house for her, and she was not insured. She subsequently sold the plot for a sum of

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money that was less than the market value, using a dubious lawyer to do the transferral of the deeds. According to her, the deed was never transferred, and thus the plot is still in her name. Effectively now without any housing options (short of buying her own house, which is not a likely scenario), she is fighting to remain welcome in her late mother's house, something she feels is only possible if she is granted tenancy[42]. She explained how she visits the council to try to encourage them to make a decision about the transferral of tenancy of her late mother's home:

> ...I went to the office on Friday and said, 'listen here, when are you people going to decide who's going to get the house, because it is not nice, to sleep every night you go to bed you don't know tomorrow if you move, can you people please decide what you're going to do? And nobody want to pay rent because I'm not going to pay and then you get the house and you don't want to pay and I get the house, it's not nice to live like that. So can you people please decide what you're going to do?' (S.S., 15 August 2011)

Living in a state of uncertainty about her future, she spent much time speculating about what would happen to her if the house is transferred into her brother's name. Putting the house in the name of the mentally challenged sister would solve this problem, as then nobody would be forced to vacate the house, but the council deems this inappropriate. As the respondent has already had a house, she cannot legally be made the official tenant of this house. This was just one of many complicated stories regarding the rare asset that is housing in Valhalla Park. These experiences also illustrate the state of 'permanent temporariness', where uncertainty frames many daily tasks and interactions.

A similarly complicated story of accessing housing involves a prominent activist in Valhalla Park. She explained how she was negotiating her way around this tenancy minefield in her own rented house on behalf of her children:

> Some of our people is so quick to take off the children names that moved out of the house, and when it comes to that person pass on, then there's a whole confusion, you know? About who gets the house and all that... Like myself, everybody in the house is on the file, even [daughter who lives on Sewende Laan and who will receive a house in the new housing development]'s name, I never took [her] name off. Until she gets a house. I only took off my elder son, I only took off his name the other day; I wanted to make quite sure that he's settled. So he's settled, he's got his house in Delft... so nothing can go wrong there now... I even kept his name there for security reasons, maybe anything can happen there, and they say he can't stay here because he doesn't belong here, his name is not in there [the file at the housing office], so that is why I kept his name on until now, and just the other day I went to take it off. But [daughter]'s name is still there, the day when [she] move into her own house I'll take her name off. (G.S., 7 September 2011)

[42] She fears that if tenancy is transferred to her brother, his wife will have evicted her from the house before the day is out.

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Tenancy is thus also a complicated system to obtain a house, yet is understood to be one of the 'easier' and quicker ways to do so. Other, more dubious methods to obtain a house, are explored in the following section.

It's Who You Know: Utilising Contacts to Access Housing

While transferral of tenancy is one way of obtaining a council house, there are other ways of accessing a council house, often with tricky consequences. An interviewee told me about her niece, who married an abusive man, she thought, in order to get a roof over her head:

> But I mean like, maybe she will just get married to get a roof over her head, you see, that's why maybe they get married, just for accommodation or security. (S.S., 15 August 2011)

This 'marrying up' idea is not uncommon, though mostly came across during informal chat between the community members, as *skinder* (gossip) between neighbours, rather than formal interview material.

For other households, approaching the civic organisation is another route to accessing housing. Typically in the past, the civic intervened in the housing allocation process by placing people in need into vacant homes, or in exceptional cases, in homes with other people. An old man, for instance, prone to periods of mental illness, lived in a council house by himself, though hangers-on occasionally moved in with him, abusing him and taking advantage of his home. His house was in a shocking state of disrepair, and he wasn't looking after himself properly. Around the same time, a young woman living with her parents'-in-law came to a community worker hoping to be assisted in finding a house. Her living conditions were terrible, and as a result, she had had three miscarriages. The community worker gave the younger woman's request some thought, and asked her if she would consider moving in to look after the older man, feed him, treat him kindly, keep out the opportunists and assist him when he was ill. The woman agreed, and so did the gentleman, who was under the impression that the young woman was his cousin. This particular story is something of a triumph for the community worker, as two problems were solved in one go. The young woman and her family moved in with the man and made improvements to his home, putting in new windows, cleaning the house and painting it. The man was looked after properly by the family, while they had a better place to stay. The new family was listed as dependents under the man's name at the council, and when he died about eight years after they had moved in, the tenancy was transferred to them. In retelling this experience, the community worker stressed that this was a housing allocation

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that was not linked to the waiting list at all. While I didn't hear many other stories like this, this wasn't the first placement made by the civic organisation.

From navigating tenancy, to finding strategic ways of accessing housing through these same policies, the civic organisation plays an important role in these housing negotiations.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that waiting for housing is not merely mundane, but profound, shaping the ways in which people who are waiting for housing live and experience life. Particularly prevalent here is the temporal 'betweenness' in which applicants are forced to wait for housing, living in temporary accommodation solutions for long-term periods, waiting for better days in the future, yet having to get on with life while waiting in difficult circumstances, knowing that time spent waiting cannot be reclaimed. Because accommodation in the neighbourhood has not grown at the same rate as the population, overcrowding is a widely experienced phenomenon in the area, forcing many families to find accommodation solutions that work for them, but are not necessarily comfortable places to live. This results in the minutiae of everyday life having to be negotiated frequently. The frictions that come with living in close confines and the negotiations that are undertaken daily are often difficult to maintain over extended periods of time, and for some, finding alternative accommodation solutions becomes a necessity. For some of these people, life in an informal settlement is preferable, even if it does mean sacrificing relative comfort and security of tenure for privacy, space and independence. For those who choose not to go the informal settlement route, finding other ways to access housing becomes a priority. This is done both legally and illegally, using the city's policies to their advantage, as well as trying to subvert the policies in order to access housing. It is clear from this chapter that waiting for housing has profound effects on housing applicants, and that waiting for housing is more than just a technical status. The following chapter looks in greater detail at the emotional effects that waiting for housing has on the applicants.

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Chapter 4

Surviving, Existing, Living? Negotiating the Emotional Effects of Waiting for a House

Introduction

Waiting for housing is not simply a status, it is a complicated state of being that affects emotions and relationships. Housing applicants are left in a state of 'betweenness' in terms of material living conditions, and temporally, waiting for better days in the future. The alternative forms of housing are often also 'between' the legal requirements of the city. Firstly, this chapter investigates the emotional effects that waiting for housing has on applicants. Trying to remain positive, yet sometimes succumbing to negative thoughts about prospects for the future are part of this narrative. Secondly, the chapter considers aspirations for the future and the responsibilities associated with house ownership as experienced by those who have received housing from the state. This section deals with the physical and emotional changes in lifestyle that having a formal house is anticipated to bring. Finally, how waiting is experienced as a long-term state of affairs by residents in Valhalla Park, particularly with reference to the 'permanent temporariness' – the temporal 'betweenness' - that comes with waiting for extended periods of time, is explored in the final section. This chapter builds on the material effects of waiting as discussed in chapter 4, and further explores the emotional effects of waiting on housing applicants.

The Importance of Foundations: The Emotional Effects of Impermanence

Many of the themes discussed in the previous chapter point to the lack of a permanent, stable home to call one's own, and the problems associated with temporary living set-ups that are in reality long-term solutions to a lack of secure housing. Living in overcrowded conditions compounds these issues. Adding to these daily negotiations around housing are feelings and frustrations. This section briefly investigates how waiting for housing has crept into the psyche of some residents, toying with their self-belief and self-esteem, and leading them, at times, to struggle to see a way forward given the sheer number of years that they have waited for housing. These anecdotes point to the profound ways in which waiting for housing affects applicants.

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The Quest for a Place to Put Down Roots

A place to call home and a stable living environment are important aspects for most people. A lack of permanence or security of tenure - a 'permanent temporariness' - shapes the daily struggles of families waiting. This material condition sometimes produces a lack of roots or foundations. One gentleman, when asked about his living conditions, complained that:

> *Ek is nou amper soos 'n nomade. Dan hier dan daar, dan hier dan daar.* [I am now almost like a nomad. Then here, then there, then here, then there.] (H.C., 12 May 2011)

By this, he referred to his family moving about, finding different places to stay for as long as they were welcome. For now, he was living with his mother in her one-bedroomed house. He was concerned that living in such conditions was not good for his family, needing more space so that his son wouldn't have to sleep in the same room as his grandmother, for example. Another of his concerns was the lack of a quiet and private space for his son to study so that he could have the opportunity to enter tertiary education.

Another gentleman had a similarly compelling housing history, stating:

> I was living by my mother, after my mother I stayed there, I go there, and I go there after there... you know, just like a circus, like a circus. (C.L., 27 September 2011)

These analogies express a 'rootlessness', the effect of not having a permanent place to call home. The lack of security in both cases is evident, having to pack up one's things and move on is a symptom of this lack of 'home'.

Distinguishing Between 'Living' and 'Existing'

Not all residents were able to characterise their life stories quite so succinctly, however. A resident living in a backyard shack explained that people living in these uncertain situations were not living, but merely existing, getting by on a day to day basis that prevents them from planning for the future and living fulfilled lives:

> There is a lot of people that don't have a choice... It is difficult. You know, I'm, I'm in this situation, I'm living here in this box that I'm living. People outside the box don't understand how people can survive in this box. How do you survive with whatever you have? But people survive. But people, if I must put it in one sentence hey, people don't live anymore, they exist. They totally exist. You live life, but if you think about it, life is evil. Really. And evil doesn't only mean people killing each other and that, there's a lot of things that evil mean, heartache, pain, suffering. It is so sad, so sad. (N.K., 19 September 2011)

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Going through a particularly bad period in her life, this extract points to the complicated emotions that waiting for housing means to this Valhalla Park resident. The solution to her housing crisis, living in a tiny backyard shack on her mother's property, has affected her emotionally and frequent disappointments have undermined her self-esteem and belief that she deserves better, something that she desperately tries to keep from her children to prevent them from absorbing and embodying the hopelessness that she feels.

She elaborated by explaining that she feels that there is little hope for the future, and that this causes people to do things that they may not otherwise have done, such as drinking excessively and abusing drugs:

> ...you can walk around in this place, you will see the people's faces... Hopeless. They feel there's no hope for them, there's no future for them. People that's lost, and I pray to God that I never get to that. When people lose their dignity, people lose their self-respect. People just lose themselves. You look at people, I see people that I knew, that I grew up with, people that were decent people, that same people are now alcoholics, cos there's nothing for them. Nothing. There's no future. (N.K., 19 September 2011)

This was told to me in absolute confidence, her children banished from the room while she spoke frankly about these feelings. She did not want her children to hear how deeply she felt about her situation, and how severe her loss of faith was, wanting them to continue to have hope and the belief that things do get better with hard work and time, and trust in the system. For her, however, the passage of time and the lack of clear signs of improvements in living conditions in areas such as Valhalla Park had worn thin her resolve.

Few other residents went down such an emotional road with me present. Mostly, the lack of faith in the system was expressed as anger, typically channelled at the government, ward councillors and individual politicians. It seems apparent that the lack of transparency regarding the processes of housing allocation can lead to people questioning the integrity of the system, akin to Rubin's (2011) article regarding perceptions of corruption. In Valhalla Park, the opacity of the housing database and its workings means that waiting in the 'dark' can be disheartening for those faithfully waiting to access housing through legal channels. Losing faith in the system is apparent in this resident of Valhalla Park's case.

This anger was further explored by a resident of Sewende Laan, who explained that the long-term state of flux in terms of their living conditions has meant that many people who should have been entitled to live in a house thanks to the court judgement have lost out, dying before they get the opportunity to live in relative comfort and security:

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> Yes, we didn't had other options than to build there, you know, because I wanted to be out of the house, because space wise, no and whatever, you see? But, it's not really nice to live like that. Not at all. I mean, for one or two or three years, yes, fine. But not for so long. This time, they should have made a plan now. You know, I mean, how much funerals also was on that field already? People passed away there, you know, like I said, how much babies was already born there. The years just go by but nothing happened, nothing materialised. (L.O., 26 September 2011)

Growing families place further burden on an already full settlement, and although not crowded yet in comparison to the formal housing set-ups in the neighbourhood, as well as informal settlements in others areas of Cape Town, moving into formal houses is looking increasingly more attractive.

From this section, it is clear that waiting for housing from the state affects people not only physically but emotionally, too. Narratives from Valhalla Park residents have demonstrated that living in a state of uncertainty while waiting undermines their self-esteem and leads them to question the state, its transparency and their relationship with it. Having to rely on others for accommodation and struggling to provide for children in these difficult circumstances feed into these feelings that stem from a lack of control over their lives. Waiting for housing thus has profound effects on the self-worth and belief of Valhalla Park residents.

Waiting for the Future: Aspirations for a Better Life in a House

Many people waiting for housing spend a lot of time thinking about what the future might hold, usually envisioned positively; aspirations for the future were a common topic of conversation during this research. For those waiting for housing from the state, dreams for the future are rarely extravagant, and tend to focus on a comfortable and more convenient lifestyle. For the few who have received a house from the council in recent years, the changes that having a house has brought have largely been linked to social and emotional changes in lifestyle. Receiving a house is not always an easy transition, however. This section explores some of the responsibilities associated with owning a house, as well as the aspirations for the future of applicants who have yet to take ownership. It is suggested here that these aspirations are not extravagant or unrealistic, but rather focus on the comfort and convenience that having a house brings.

Freedom and Space to be Yourself

For those who have waited on the database and received a house, it is a massive relief, and also yields a change in circumstances. For this woman, who shared a house with another family for 14 years, receiving a house from the council changed her life in many ways:

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> Everybody can come to me, we can sit, we can chat. It's not like uptight, it's very spacious we can move up and down, I can come and go as I please. And you know what, I was like somebody's being in prison. (M.I., 29 August 2011)

Likening her previous abode to a prison, having her own house has given her agency to live her life how she chooses. From having to live abiding by someone else's rules, to her own, is akin to freedom:

> I feel so free. Really, it's amazing. And sometimes I sit alone in this house; I love it. I just love it. (M.I., 29 August 2011)

For her, the silence of her new home was also a huge change; moving from a house with two families living together, to this house where it is just her and her children was calming. This echoes the sentiments of those in Ross (2010: 25), who argues that "shack living made a mockery of public-private distinctions" and that noisiness was a popular catalyst for arguments in The Park, the site of her research. Although this Valhalla Park resident didn't live in a shack, noise was still a very stressful part of sharing a house with another family. Obtaining a house from the government has, she believes, improved her health, not only because of the improved living conditions, but also because of the change of disposition in the house, where before the atmosphere was strained and tense, it is now soothing. She explained:

> I'm in a very good condition now, I'm not so sick. Because I'm asthmatic, I've got a thyroid as well, but I feel very healthy.... When I was staying in [X] street, I was always, constantly sick. And I think I was in a deep depression as well... But now, I'm in a much more... I'm in a better condition. I don't even feel sick. (M.I., 29 August 2011)

Not only did the new housing affect her health positively, but also her self-esteem:

> It means so much things to me. It means I've got my self-esteem back, I'm free, the most important thing is for me, is me and my children are free. We're breaking free. That's the most important thing. And we're not in prison anymore. (M.I., 29 August 2011)

For this woman, a change in scenario had many positive effects on her living conditions, health and self-esteem. Receiving a house from government meant that she could finally be herself, and not have to live according to the lifestyle that other people imposed on her and her family.

This is somewhat different to the more widely researched narratives of those who feel that moving into housing requires a more *ordentlik* behaviour, as explored in Ross (2010: 43). However, during informal conversations with residents of the informal settlement Sewende Laan it became apparent that residents who will be getting houses in the new development are worried about what moving into a house might entail, suggesting that they hoped they didn't get neighbours who '*skel*' (argue). Whether this concern was borne due to the association of impropriety with regards to loud

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disagreements and general rudeness, or just an uncertainty of the new neighbours, I'm not sure. Receiving a house in the new housing development is an exciting prospect. For many, the project is no longer just talk, and is starting to feel tangible and within grasp. However, while many are looking forward to moving into their new houses, others are more apprehensive of the responsibilities associated with ownership.

The Demands of Ownership

The responsibilities of having a house are many, and yet beneficiaries are expected to have this knowledge to hand, despite the fact that they will never have owned a house before. Also, although decent housing is an undeniable requirement for a better life, it would be foolish to assume that having formal housing will solve all the problems of the poor. For the people of The Park (in Ross, 2005; 2010), moving into formal housing did not lessen the uncertainties of everyday life. Ross (2010: 28) notes that "uncertainty about whether people could live up to their ideals and about their health and incomes and relationships" were still prevalent. Although few people in Valhalla Park have managed to access housing through the housing database, those who have, have realised that it is not 'free' as it is sometimes made out to be.

Elaborating on the narrative discussed in the previous chapter about the woman who received a house, but lost it in a fire and is now struggling for tenancy of her late mother's house, it is clear that obtaining a house had some consequences for her, particularly financial ones. She explains:

> I were on the waiting list for 10 years and I did get one of the RDP houses in Delft, which they say, it's a government subsidy and they actually say the government is giving the houses to us for free, and at the end of the day we have to pay rates and water. That were in '98 when I was getting a house in Delft, I was receiving a disability grant of R290 per month, where my rates where R89 per month and my water were like R250 per month. That's the free housing! (S.S., 15 August 2011)

The confusion about the promise of free housing and then needing to pay rates and water accounts were part of this woman's problem. Her situation was complicated by the fact that she couldn't live alone and so let the house to a tenant, when it burnt down. She explained that she didn't know anything about insurance as she'd never owned a house before. Not understanding that in possessing the title deeds, all maintenance requirements were her responsibility was another fact that was not explained to her. Some Valhalla Park residents explained that they would prefer to live in rented accommodation for these very reasons: if any maintenance needs to be done, this is the council's responsibility and expense, although waiting for the council to do this can be a lengthy process. The responsibilities of owning a home, although not elaborated in the following excerpt,

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were also clear to another resident on Sewende Laan, who is eagerly anticipating her new home, where she believes she'll be able to have more privacy and also more authority:

> The owner of the house has got discipline and respect... You [teach] your children manners, you learn, they can learn by you. One day you have a house, you's the owner, you must do that... That is right and that is wrong. It's very important to be a owner. And sometimes very difficult to be an owner of a house. You've got a lot of responsibility. (L.R., 27 September 2011)

Even with these associated responsibilities, housing is obviously a much desired asset, not only for comfort and shelter, but to be able to live better lives. While many people interviewed aspired to live in a 'better' neighbourhood, the area is home for many people, most importantly with a strong sense of community.

Social Aspirations

Although many of the people I interviewed live in dire and difficult situations, they all have dreams for the future and how they would like to live. For many, it's not so much about how they would like to live materially or physically, but more social; how they would like to have their families around them, living in a safe neighbourhood with places outdoors to enjoy. A woman who currently lives in a council house stated:

> If I had a choice in life, I would have lived in an area where there is not so much problems, a house that's a better quality that this. And a surrounding that is better than this for my children, where's there's parks, where there's facilities for my children to go to. If I had a choice in life. This isn't my choice. It's just I had no option... A place where you can see nature, where there's trees and stuff, parks where you can walk your dog, and house that you step in and you can feel the warmth. Not a house that you step in and it's no different from the weather outside. A convenient house. Not like this. So this isn't the house actually that I wanted, but it's my space, this. (R.K., 15 August 2011)

Comfort and convenience were key for many interviewees:

> ... just a comfortable house which is mine where I can say yes and no, come and sleep when I want to and just have food every day, and just be happy, I don't want to be unhappy. That's how I want to live if I can. So, I can work for myself because I can do a lot of things, so that's what I want. Just a quiet, comfortable house. It doesn't need to be that big. And happiness. It doesn't matter if I must eat dry bread and water every day, as long as I can be happy. Happiness is one of things that were very scarce in my life, childhood and adulthood, so. (S.S., 15 August 2011)

Part of this narrative centred around living in a situation where Valhalla Park residents don't have to worry about where they might be sleeping the next night, or the next month, or next year, or, indeed, worrying about where their children might be sleeping, due to space constraints where they live currently. Comfort and convenience are a large part of the appeal of a house; particularly shelter

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from the cold, rain and wind in winter, access to sanitation under the same roof and never needing to carry water in buckets. These are basic requirements that make life a lot easier for everyone:

> ... I just want to live my life one day at a time, and I want to live not in wealth, just in comfort. Just in comfort. I want... a flush toilet, running water, electricity. Well-structured house, but that is the main thing that I want out of life. (N.K., 19 September 2011)

This section has shown that the dreams of Valhalla Park residents are not extravagant; they are based on simple things that should be attainable in order for people to live a dignified, if basic life. For those who have received housing, the biggest changes in their lifestyles have been emotional, where improvements in physical living conditions have improved their self-esteem and mental health. The comfort and convenience offered by a house makes getting on with life so much easier, when mundane things such as using the toilet don't have to be planned. Formal housing, however, does not come without responsibilities, and sometimes having a house is costly. For most residents, however, living the kinds of lives that they aspire to have yet to be realised, and this is because waiting for housing is typically a long-term affair. The permanence of waiting is discussed in the following section.

Waiting: A 'Permanent Temporariness'

Waiting presents residents with various challenges, not least because it is typically a long-term situation that becomes a foundation on which everyday life must be enacted. This section explores the experience of waiting for a house from the state. The feelings associated with waiting, from hope and optimism, to frustration and a loss of conviction about the database, as well as the processes of allocation affect the housing applicants in different ways. For some, the experience of waiting is articulated through the material difficulties as a result of their temporary living situations. For others, the waiting for housing experience is largely emotional. These articulations of waiting and the temporal 'betweenness' that stems from the housing applicants' experiences of waiting are explored in this section.

Terms of Waiting: From Hopelessness to Optimism

The rather nonchalant nature of the excerpt from an interview reinforces the prevalence and normality of waiting:

> All my children are still waiting for houses... They all stay on other people's places. Bungalows, hokkies... one son still stays here by his skoonmense [in-laws], and the other one also stay here by other people here in the yards. (C.L., 27 September 2011)

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This seemingly commonsense attitude about the lack of housing and the extent of waiting belies the urgency in terms of need for a house. The integrated housing database holds the names of those waiting for a housing opportunity, either for a house to own - a RDP house, locally known as a 'matchbox house' - or to take tenancy of a council rental house. Since there has been no state-led development in Valhalla Park since the 1980s, there are consequently many people waiting for a house from the government in Valhalla Park. With the advent of a new housing development stemming from the Sewende Laan case, the first opportunity for residents to access houses to own[43] is presenting itself to those on the housing database in Valhalla Park. Although there is a process for how these houses are allocated, talk of waiting and how it feels for Valhalla Park residents has taken on a hopeful air, though doubt and loss of faith in the system are also still prevalent.

The housing database is rife with contention and tied up in suspicion of corruption, along with misgivings of government officials and politicians. Housing is one of the key bargaining tools employed by politicians when it comes to election time, as is clear from the quotation below:

> Every time you just hear about housing, housing, housing, but we never get the houses. And I'm actually sick and tired of even waiting for a house because for me it seem like a never-ending story. People that's not on the waiting list is getting houses nowadays, so it doesn't make sense for me, on the waiting list for all these [22] years. (F.S., 23 August 2011)

This woman felt that waiting to obtain a house legally meant that she would wait forever. Waiting is thus often tied up with frustration, confusion and jealousy of the people who manage to access housing.

> And you that's waiting legally as honest people, you are waiting and waiting, and sitting and waiting. And you're getting nowhere. Nowhere. (F.S., 23 August 2011)

Waiting encompasses a 'permanent temporariness', where life carries on in the every day, and yet, many moments are spent thinking about a time in the future when the aim of housing is met. Subsequently, waiting is more than just a technical status. It is also a highly emotional undercurrent to everyday life. Others described the feeling of waiting as changeable, when one day is positive, the next can see the resident reluctant to believe that getting a house from the government is possible:

> Waiting is like a particularity that you are in. It's a big problem. It's like you're in something that you wait for that never going to happen. Ja. It's nerves-breaking. You wait on a thing and everyday you don't feel the same. Today you feel I wonder if it going to happen today? And then somebody come call you, talk to you, say 'I hear that, I hear that and I hear that, that going to happen' and then you're happier again because you know that going to happen. And after next day other one come, 'that never going

[43] With the exception of buying council houses from the government.

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> to happen', and then you're in that pain again. It's pain, like you feel you are in pain of waiting for this house. It's not nice to wait on a thing. (D.v.W., 23 August 2011)

As evident in the extract above, waiting presents in ways that are both positive and negative. For the woman who had acrimoniously shared a house with another family for many years, she described the waiting as an aggravation, probably because her circumstances were so grim and coupled with the inability to sort out her situation due to changes in government and the council:

> The waiting make you crazy. Waiting for a house, it was making me crazy. I didn't know how I feel sometimes... (M.I., 29 August 2011)

Current waiting periods in Valhalla Park range from around 25 years to just a few months (though given that this was a relatively small 'sample', chances are there are people who have waited for longer). Typically, however, waiting is a long-term occupation, and is considered a fact of life for many unemployed or low-income earners. For some, waiting is not too bad if they have a comfortable and stable place to live while waiting for housing of their own. However, for others, insecure housing makes the situation more difficult, as this woman explains:

> Well I've been waiting now for 17 years. I'm staying at the back [of my mother's house] but if you see what that place looks like at the back... I say I've got a sunroof on the roof because if you lay on the bed you can see the sun shines in. So it's difficult. (N.K., 19 September 2011)

This sentiment was corroborated by many of the other residents who live in difficult situations. For this resident of Sewende Laan, knowing that she will one day get a house because of the judgement is a comfort, but the immediacy of her needs trump the consolation offered:

> ...I'm also getting frustrated now because I want to live in a house and I can't wait... But like I say, I can't wait, and I'm urging, I'm praying, I'm crying already, I just need a safe place to live in... If it rains, then that whole place is wet. The condition that we... and you know, TB is a high risk here, and children is getting sick... And the thing is, as I sit here, to be honest with you... I personally don't know when we're going to get houses. Yes, I know it's in the pipeline, that is just something to hold on. Yes, it's there, yes, but nothing materialise. (L.O., 26 September 2011)

Other interviewees had different reasons for wanting a house. In the following excerpt, this mother was reliant on family for a roof over her and her children's heads and although grateful, she finds herself in need of space, both literally and figuratively, feeling resentful that she has to live as a child in her parents' home, another example of the 'betweenness' that waiting constitutes. She explains:

> I really want my own house. A place of my own, because the kids, they are all growing up and they're having their own kids and it's getting crowded and crowded and everybody need their privacy and there's no privacy and I will remain a child in the house because I'm still living with my parents. You see? You have to obey the rules and the children have to obey your rules and their rules and you know? Children, they grow

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> up and they want their own privacy, they don't want to live a lot of kids in one room and all that. It's like my mother and my father in one room, four in the one room, my four kids in one room and one with me in this room, and their kids, the two of them in that room. So it's crowded. It's crowded. (F.S., 23 August 2011)

Another reason she wants her own house is because of the responsibility she feels to abide by her parents' rules in the house, and that she must ensure that her children and grandchildren abide by these rules too. This was a common theme with those living with family members, who didn't want to be seen to be taking advantage of their parents.

The attitudes towards waiting are often linked to the respondent's perception of the government. For many, government and politicians promise many things, few of which ever materialise. The overwhelming rhetoric by Valhalla Park residents about government is that their promises mean little when there is rarely evidence of housing projects in the surrounding areas:

> It's very bad, bad. There are people waiting 30 years, and ... it's all empty promises. Empty, empty promises. (E.W., 7 September 2011)

One woman noted that for her, the only way of getting a house was by getting a bond, indicating a complete loss of faith in the housing database system:

> What you have to do today, the only thing to become a homeowner is to go to the bank, get a bond, buy a house. As simple as that. That's the quickest way, because we're on this waiting list, it's useless. And senseless. That's my opinion... So I don't think then I'll ever be a homeowner unless I must also go for a bond and go buy a house. And like I feel like going back to Cape Town, go live in that area is going to cost me big time, and big bucks. And where? I'll never get a bond. (F.S., 23 August 2011)

Others shared this sentiment, though gave voice to their opinions in more sceptical manners, going so far as to call the housing database a sham; corrupt and opaque, with no one to hold accountable.

> It's a mess, and a mess and a mess and a half. God, the integrated thing, you know how many people is here on the waiting list?... The housing waiting list is just one big scam. Because you know why I say to you, look at the N2 projects. (D.W., 20 September 2011)

The N2 Gateway project, arguably the most recent housing project closest to Valhalla Park, was steeped in controversy from the start, and is a sore point for many Valhalla Park residents who had hoped to be accommodated in the new developments. A prominent community worker claims that no Valhalla Park residents were accommodated, although several were asked to contact the City of Cape Town in connection with a housing opportunity[44]. The N2 Gateway project is often held up as an example of the corruption within the housing database, as well as more generally in terms of the quality of the houses built. A similar sentiment regarding the housing database was shared by

[44] I was shown a letter sent to a resident about potentially qualifying for a house in the N2 Gateway project, though she claimed that she had never been contacted about it since, and nothing ever materialised from it.

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another resident of Valhalla Park, whose children are waiting for a house from the state. She explained that the housing backlog was unacceptable, and that government needs to recognise the extent of the crisis, rather than try to deal with the crisis that existed in the late 1980s and 1990s, while, in her opinion, casting a blind eye over the growth of the housing need:

> The government, because there's still a lot of people on the waiting list, you see, everywhere there is a lot of people that is on the waiting list and I feel the government must come, they must look to the people's need for the houses, because there's a lot of them that's on the waiting list. There's a lot of squatter camps who, some of them don't live well like here... They must look, even at children, you see, who also needs houses. They just mustn't look at the people long on the waiting list, they must look five years, two years, they must give everybody their house. And they can do it, because they do build stadiums, they build that and they just stand there, and the people need the houses, you see? They can see to them. They can do that for the people. (F.W., 16 August 2011)

The furore around the new stadiums built for the 2010 soccer World Cup has abated somewhat, but that does not mean that the residents living in appalling conditions have forgotten about how quickly these went up and the vast sums of money that were spend on the stadiums. As this woman rightly points out, the housing crisis grows by the day, and solving it (assuming that it can be solved) means looking at the problem holistically, taking into account the extent to which the population is growing and to what degree this population will need assistance from the state in terms of housing. This is by no means an easy task. However, it is instances like these, where preparations for the World Cup took centre stage rather than the severe housing shortage, or the failings of the public health system, or the education system, for example, that create disillusionment in the public who are reliant on help from the government.

From this section, it is clear from the sentiments expressed above that waiting is complicated, embedded in processes and procedures that aren't often clear and leave applicants uncertain as to how the system works. The experience of waiting is compounded by this lack of clarity regarding the process. In addition to this, waiting is multi-faceted, and impacts many Valhalla Park residents in different ways. Waiting ultimately has one goal: receiving a house of your own. The ups and downs that come while waiting for something as important as a house are an understandable side-effect. The 'permanent temporariness' that waiting for long periods of time encompasses for applicants means that emotions can be fraught, and that everyday life is compromised. For some, this means simply surviving; for others, existing, while having a house is considered necessary to be able to live a full life. This 'permanent temporariness' of waiting places housing applicants in a state of 'betweenness', in this case most often temporally, where residents find themselves waiting for better times in the future, even though these better days are not guaranteed. Emotionally,

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'betweenness' is also apparent, where the emotions associated with the experience of waiting for housing can change quite quickly according to what applicants hear from a neighbour, read in the newspaper or see on television. Equally, the opacity of the ways in which the housing database works casts doubts in peoples' minds regarding how fair and equitable the allocation process actually is. This compounds the emotional effects of waiting for housing.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the experience of waiting for housing affects many aspects of life for housing applicants. The 'gray spaces' in which people live while waiting for housing are challenging, and have emotional as well as material consequences for housing applicants and their families. The first section of this chapter explored the emotional effects of waiting for housing. Living in tough conditions, where security of tenure is often tenuous and many daily activities have to be negotiated in order to prevent animosity wreaks havoc on emotions. Applicants questioning their relationship with the state regarding whether they deserve decent housing has huge effects on their emotional state. The second section of this chapter explored Valhalla Park residents' aspirations for the future and what they envisage when thinking about the future and having a house. For those who have accessed housing, the responsibilities as well as the positive changes in lifestyle were explored. For many Valhalla Park residents, waiting is a long-term situation, and although it is the norm rather than the exception, waiting for housing places applicants in various states of 'betweenness'. This 'betweenness' exists temporally, where people live for better days in the future, while the present is enacted in less than desirable living circumstances. Looking forward to a future that is steeped in uncertainty can be challenging, and because of the long waiting periods associated with waiting to access housing through the legal channels through the state, it can be argued that waiting places housing applicants in a state of 'permanent temporariness' (Yiftachel, 2009: 244), as a result of the 'gray' physical and emotional spaces in which people are forced to wait.

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Chapter 5

Citizen-State Encounters: The Challenges of an Opaque Process

Introduction

The previous chapters have argued that waiting for housing has profound consequences on the everyday lives of applicants, resulting in dismal living conditions and having detrimental effects on the emotional well-being of Valhalla Park residents. This chapter explores how waiting for housing surpasses the mundane processes of application and the profound effects that waiting has on applicants, and suggests that waiting and the interactions with the state around housing also affect how the state is perceived by residents. Furthermore, these interactions and perceptions with the state shape how communities choose to interact with the state, as well as the citizen-state encounter. In suggesting that the state is distanced from its citizens in relation to the housing database and the process of waiting for housing, I am not suggesting that the state is completely absent from the Valhalla Park community. The state plays an important role in many of Valhalla Park residents' lives, providing various state grants that provide crucial income for residents[45]. The state is also present in providing clinics and healthcare, education, employment initiatives, rental housing itself, as well as taken-for-granted infrastructure and funding various feeding schemes, for example. In this chapter, therefore, resident's articulations and critique of the state as complacent are explored specifically in relation to the everyday realities of waiting for housing that Valhalla Park residents experience.

This chapter first explores the technical processes of application that are considered to be a rite of passage for those who are eligible to access housing from the state. Here, I also explore how the processes of application for and allocation of houses have shifted over the years, as well as the subsequent confusion that prevails for housing applicants and housing officials alike. Considering

[45] Although the once-off housing subsidy is also a state grant similar to the likes of 'all-pay' for children, pensions, and disability grants, amongst others, it appears to be understood differently in Valhalla Park. Council housing, RDP or BNG housing with title deeds, and the workings of the allocation systems seem almost mystical to most Valhalla Park residents, who cannot fathom how they work. The other types of social grants, however, are easier. They are received reliably on a monthly basis and are organised through the South African Social Grant Agency (SASSA). The workings of these grants are less relevant, because they are reliable in terms of access, and do not need to be manipulated in order to improve one's chances of receiving the grant. Understanding how social grants are perceived and understood by the poor is a complicated terrain and would provide a rich topic for future research.

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housing officials' perspectives on waiting for housing adds to the analysis here. Housing officials - lower-level government employees - are confronted by the everyday tough realities of the housing beneficiaries, yet are unable to step outside of their procedural boundaries to make improvements to the ways in which policies are drafted and implemented. Simultaneously, they are limited by staff shortages and budget cuts. The second section explains how perceptions of the state are shaped by interactions with local ward councillors, and with politicians, particularly during periods of campaign for election, as well as through media reports on corruption and fraud by government officials. Coupled with the opacity of the housing allocation processes, these perceptions influence how people interact with the state when waiting takes too long. This chapter argues that the state is largely seen as distanced from the real effects that waiting for housing encapsulate.

The citizen-state encounter in relation to waiting is a complicated one, with housing applicants engaging formally with the state to access housing. However, at the same time, the state is sometimes circumvented by these same applicants, some of whom live in illegal contexts. Equally, some applicants challenge the state directly when waiting takes too long, finding ways to access housing that are not in accord with the formal housing allocation practices. In this way, the interactions with the state result in a sort of empirical and conceptual 'betweenness', where residents straddle the middle ground between legal and illegal, formal and informal. Waiting for housing in these uncertain contexts results in a 'permanent temporariness' in the ways everyday life is lived.

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Waiting in the Shadows: Unclear Systems and Processes

> It was just the same... It was just after a time, we had our books changed, our application cards. The colours changed from the white to the red. And on a time it was blue as well... Because we had to go it Bellville and, just go in and renew our books and then we got the red. (*Saskia: So every time government changed the books changed?*) No, I don't know. I'm not sure. I'm not sure because that was the last time, and then every time you just hear about housing, housing, housing, but we never get the houses. And I'm actually sick and tired of even waiting for a house because for me it seem like a never-ending story. People that's not on the waiting list is getting houses nowadays, so it doesn't make sense for me, on the waiting list for all these years. (F.S., Valhalla Park resident, 23 August 2011)

> They were first the City of Cape Town, and then... City of Cape Town, became the South, and became under Tygerberg... Then it became amalgamated as the [Uni]City, the City of Cape Town. (P.T., former housing manager, 23 April 2012)

For both residents and officials, processes of housing allocation are often unclear. This section explores the process of application, where applicants visit their local housing office to fill in application forms and provide proof of their income, for example. This is almost a rite of passage for

Valhalla Park residents, yet understanding the rest of the process, such as how housing becomes available, how it is allocated and the criteria that drive these processes of housing allocation remain unclear and difficult to understand for both applicants and housing officials at the neighbourhood scale. Conversations around the process of application quickly turn to the frustrations that applicants experience while waiting for housing. Applicants feel 'kept in the dark' about where their applications stand and their chances to access housing. These are part of this frustration, as is the fact that they are unable to calculate where they are on the database, and how long their wait might be. Drawing on von Schnitzler (2008) and Borges (2006), it becomes clear that in this case, the applicants wait in the 'dark', unable to manipulate their application data into more eligible cases, and in effect, unable to speed up the housing process. Yet, the workings of the housing database are equally opaque to the housing officials, in these instances, the face of government. While empathetic to the everyday realities of the housing applicants, they are also recipients of housing database and allocation policies, not part of the discussions when policies are drafted or implemented because of their level of standing in the greater scheme of government hierarchies.

Interactions with the state appear to be the onus of the applicants, who are expected to keep details updated, ensuring that the state is aware of their full situation as well as having up to date contact details. Applicants are not contacted until such time as housing becomes available, either through a rental opportunity, which, as has been demonstrated, is rare, or through a new housing development, in which case the state contacts applicants to urge them to make further contact with the government officials in charge of the housing development. This section explores the procedural side of the application for housing from both the Valhalla Park residents' point of view as well as those of the housing practitioners.

Applying for Housing: Commonsense but Complicated

The most recent incarnation of the housing waiting lists, the integrated housing database, is comprised of the amalgamation of various waiting lists compiled over the years. Along with the many changes in government over the last twenty years, the waiting lists have changed in multiple ways too. They include those originating in the 39 local authorities during the apartheid era, merged into six municipal lists during the interim period of 1996-1999, and later drafted into the integrated housing database (See Table 1: Housing Management in Valhalla Park from the 1980s to Now, below). In effect, the housing database is comprised of many different processes of application. Applying to be on the housing database, typically still referred to as the housing waiting list, is at first glance a simple system, where applicants fill in a form and present proof of their income. Accessing a

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house is usually (though clearly not exclusively) through two ways, either through a rental property, where the City of Cape Town is effectively the landlord of the house; or through a new housing opportunity, which typically utilises the once-off capital subsidy grant and which enables beneficiaries to become owners of their own home. For each of these options, there is a list of criteria which must be adhered to. These criteria have also changed over time. Currently, applicants for housing should be over the age of 18, be married or have dependents, be South African citizens and should not have had access to a government housing subsidy before, amongst other things. Most importantly, the applicant should not receive more the R3500 income per month.

Period	VP managed by	Character	Type of list
1980-1994	City of Cape Town (former)	Apartheid era non-democratic 39 individual municipalities Offices located in Cape Town CBD	Neighbourhood lists collated at neighbourhood office
1996-1999	Municipal local council (MLC) – Tygerberg	6 municipalities Tygerberg one of these 6 Offices in Bellville	Integrated lists
2000-2006	Unicity		Continued to use lists
2006 onwards	Unicity		Integrated housing database

Table 1: Housing Management in Valhalla Park from the 1980s to Now

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Although the criteria for accessing housing have changed over the years, the actual application process appears to remain similarly unremarkable. The process of standing in queues with your documents at the ready is seen to be so mundane that during interviews, it became clear that applying is almost a rite of passage for anyone who is either getting married or who is over 18 years of age and has a dependent[46]. One person described it as similar to going to apply for an identity document – equally tedious, yet a necessary piece of documentation to have. She explained that her children had to go on the list:

> So it's very important to put them on the waiting list. Everything change. So everybody is, there you see there's a lot of people is long on the waiting list, like 30 years, 25 years,

[46] Applying for housing is a norm to such an extent that the actual application process is described as very boring, and I stopped asking about it after a few interviews when it became clear that the question regarding applying was considered to be irrelevant in the face of the effects that waiting has.

> 15 years, you see before they see to this from 5 years, 4 years, they see to them first, make sure they have a house. Then they come to the five years, two years... So they first see to the people who is long on the waiting list. (F.W., 16 August 2011)

This woman understands that waiting is inevitable, but the security that is offered by being on the housing waiting list is important, particularly if the process one day changes. This sentiment reflects the many changes in the formulation and functioning of local government as well as how the waiting lists were administered given these changes.

The integrated housing database is complicated to understand, mostly because information regarding how it actually functions is not readily accessible. Part of this confusion lies in the many administrative changes that have occurred with regards to the housing waiting lists since the end of the apartheid era (see Table 1: Housing Management in Valhalla Park from the 1980s to Now). A housing official explains:

> There were originally I think it was 39 councils within the metropolitan, within the area that we now manage. And well there are a couple of regions. It came down to six I think it was. It extends from Cape Town to Hout Bay on that side, Helderberg, which is Somerset West, Macassar, and up the West Coast to Atlantis... And I think when we became a unicity, the six became one and that's been difficult because they had to amalgamate all the waiting lists. And presently the figure stands at between 300 and 400 [thousand] families that are waiting on the houses. That are waiting on the database for housing. (J.K., 23 April 2012)

Each of the 39 councils had housing waiting lists of their own, managed in different ways. Valhalla Park's list was managed by the then City of Cape Town municipality. A former housing official explains this:

> They belonged under the City of Cape Town, Valhalla Park. It was the City of Cape Town, Cape Town Municipality, a municipality on its own, run in Cape Town, before we amalgamated ... [Valhalla Park] had managers sitting in town, and they belonged to the City of Cape Town and they had their own housing policies. (P.T., 23 April 2012)

In 1996 when the 39 local metropolitan areas were amalgamated into six local authorities, the ways in which the housing waiting lists were managed changed again. For the residents of Valhalla Park, these changes weren't typically explained in terms of the changes in government (see Table 1, above). Rather, the change was articulated in terms of the offices where you went to update your details or to apply for housing. Initially, applications were made in the city centre, as this was where the City of Cape Town had its offices. When Valhalla Park later fell under the Tygerberg municipality, the colour of the application book changed, as did the logo on all documentation. Perhaps most importantly for the applicants, the location for applications and updates of details moved to the Bellville offices.

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While an issue of local government bureaucracy, a decidedly ordinary conversation about the process of application quickly turned into a conversation about the anger that a resident felt about the housing shortage and the fact that she had not received a house. For her, this was the most important part of a conversation about housing, as opposed to the process of application that I was interested in.

At the same time, while the changes in administration of the housing policy may have been problematic for those who had to travel to update their details, the changes in government meant that serious shifts in the policies had to be undertaken to align with restructuring of local government and the creation of non-racial, equitable policy. Part of the challenge in doing this was the very different contexts and backgrounds of the 39 local metropolitan areas. A former housing official explains:

> They had diverse housing policies, different designs of houses for different people, for different reasons and all this. And also with different contexts... contexts in terms of politics, context in terms of social, context in terms of economic. (P.T., 23 April 2012)

Creating a single housing policy that spoke to most residents of Cape Town was a challenge. A former housing official explains the process, arguing that the loudest members of the metropolitan governments were heard:

> Even when it came to... the formulation of the housing policy in both Tygerberg and the City. The loudest voice was heard and it was people who were previously from the City of Cape Town. It was the biggest municipality and it has been there for a long time... Because if at all we are sitting around the round table from the previous municipalities, it means you have to take something good from my municipality... even if it's just one thing, one small thing. It needs to be incorporated in that policy so that people in Khayelitsha are able to reflect and be able to see that there's something in it for me, there. If there's nothing in it for them they won't even respect that policy (P.T., 23 April 2012)

This former official argued that because the new housing policy largely resembled the policy of the former City of Cape Town's, it was not respected by the community as much as it might have been had the successful parts of each metro's policy been incorporated. When it came to implementation, she suggested that although the policy was solid theoretically, in reality, it was a different matter:

> It was easy because we had one policy, but it was a bit challenging in the sense that even though you have a policy in place... it's a paper... it doesn't necessarily change people's mindsets, it also doesn't change the context, it also doesn't change the economic, social situation. So, for me, it is a sort of a disjuncture. The situation is still the same, whereas they're coming up with this beautiful, democratic... first world policy that doesn't talk to the context on the ground... It's taking ... that we live in homogenous communities... So there wasn't any room to leverage and say the context, you know, these were previously disadvantaged people, that is you need to consider

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> this and this and this and this... Then in a way it caused a lot of conflict, even when I got there. Yes, I had this housing policy, but then to implement the housing policy; it became really quite a challenge, because you had to level the playing field. (P.T., 23 April 2012)

Understanding these different historical contexts was what the policy failed to do, perhaps because it was implemented relatively quickly after the end of the apartheid regime, a sentiment that was echoed in academic critiques of the immediately post-apartheid housing policy (see for example Mackay, 1999).

Understanding the nuances of living situations was perhaps glossed over in the bid to correct the previous government's shortfalls and to start delivering housing and other infrastructure for the underprivileged majority as quickly, and importantly, as equitably, as possible. The former housing official elaborates:

> So you can't just come in and impose a framework. You have to look at the context, and what's there... What foundation can we lay and also what can we change to bring about an acceptable change in this area. But then they just thought all communities are... alike, they are poor people, these people, and they are the same. They are unemployed and they don't earn, or they earn between this money, this amount and this amount, therefore they are the same. (P.T., 23 April 2012)

The ward councillor in Valhalla Park, speaking about present circumstances, made a similar observation, stating that:

> We've got a specific mandate as to what the city wants us to do, which is basically service delivery issues. But if you stay in a community like this, you can't limit yourself to what your mandate is, because most of our problems is social issues. (N.A., 7 September 2011)

In an environment where local officials' knowledge of systems and realities on the ground is sometimes questioned, they are not always able to implement policy in ways that they think will be most likely to succeed. In criticising local government agents for being out of touch and unknowledgeable of their community's real struggles, the real detail of what local officials can and cannot do within the bounds of their job descriptions and roles as government members often are overlooked or lost. In a similar way to those who are waiting for housing, lower level local government officials working in neighbourhoods like Valhalla Park often are also stuck within the bounds of a frequently changing system and broader government structure. It is thus important to recognise that 'human technologies of rule' (Corbridge et al., 2005) are limited in what they can do, but also have strong opinions with regards to what should be protocol and isn't. Housing allocation has also changed over the years in the post-apartheid context, though this has happened largely behind the scenes.

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Shifting Housing Allocation Policies and Practices

Housing allocation has also changed over the years, from the individual waiting lists managed by each metropolitan local council, to those administered by the six local authorities. In those years, it worked somewhat differently to how it operates now:

> So each area would have had their own list, the old way it used to work was that the people who managed the database would send out the list, or say the top 100, or top 20 people to each office for that area, and we would then use that to allocate according to the size of the family or dwelling. That's not happening anymore. When there's a vacancy you've got to notify them [the central office]. They then look at the lists. (J.K., 23 April 2012)

A former housing official elaborates on the allocation process in the interim government period (1996 onwards):

> Almost every week we'd get that printout of the top ten people who are supposed to be getting houses, whether it's rental or ownership. People had to complete a form, are you interested in rental or whatever, people would say either of the two, they are interested, then it means that you have to incorporate that person in both lists, you know, that is the database, then you survey, that is, you check your database and then you sort of extract ten top people that is on a weekly basis to check, you know, when a house gets available, a rental house, then you are able to inform the next person in the list (P.T., 23 April 2012)

Now, because the housing waiting list system has shifted and changed so many times[47], it is widely misunderstood, and the belief still exists that people are accommodated on a first come, first served basis[48]. Although people understand that the system has changed, they do not often know how. Indeed, this information regarding housing allocation and the criteria which are put into place to choose beneficiaries is not easily available publicly[49].

A housing manager discusses this in relation to another area in Cape Town:

> It's an education curve because you find that a lot of the people who come in from the rural areas, they don't understand how the process works. So we've found that they'll

[47] Some of the challenges of these changes in allocation policy, as well as the problems with amalgamating various waiting lists, are explained in an undated document, entitled Draft 5 Housing Allocation Policy City of Cape Town

[48] Although this seems to be the case for rental housing, it is not so for new RDP housing. This is explained on the City's website by Pollack (2009).

[49] In order to better understand the allocation criteria and the housing database from the city's perspective, I intended to email officials involved at the policy and implementation levels. Disappointingly, it was not possible to interview City officials. Despite repeated attempts, officials were too busy to respond. Fortunately, my interviews with neighbourhood level administrators – housing practitioners in their own categorisation – were successful and proved a fruitful set of conversations in which to understand the complexities and challenges embedded in the integrated housing database and historically in the many waiting lists that have circulated in the City. For a more detailed discussion on methodology see chapter 2.

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> come, the moment there's a new project, the moment the sod is turned, you will find that there will be an influx of people coming to an office for forms, because now they think that they're going to apply for that particular project that's being built. But what normally should, what does happen is that when somebody fills in an application form, it gets captured into the system, and... it goes immediately to the people that control the database in Bellville (J.K., 23 April 2012)

In sum, then, housing practitioners no longer have a direct role in house allocation, whether rental or new development. As a result of the amalgamation of the different local metropolitan councils into the single City of Cape Town 'unicity', actual housing allocation decision-making happens now at a central department in the City, not within neighbourhood housing offices. Neighbourhood housing officials, who receive questions from those waiting for houses, do not have access to the database themselves, and have to phone the central offices to get this information. These hurdles frustrate interactions between community members and housing officials.

Common Frustrations for Applicants and Officials

In the past, applicants were able to walk into a housing office in their area to make enquiries about their standing on the housing waiting list, which helped to assuage the worries of many residents. This is no longer possible because of the integration of many previous administrations' housing waiting lists into a single housing database, a housing manager reflects:

> I think there's a lot of frustration... and a lot more frustration than I've seen in the past, because before people could come to your office and you could say to them, look, here's the list, here's your name, there's still ten people before you. You know, because you get that short list. Now you don't get that any longer. So you've got to say to them, look, I'm going to have to call Bellville, call the database people and see ... what your chances are... I think before people used to come and say, I'm second on the waiting list... They were quite right, they were, because we could show it to them. Here's the list... we've got 100 people but you're there, or you're there or whatever. Now we can't do that. (J.K., 23 April 2012)

Not only is this frustrating for the residents, but also for the officials.

The lack of transparency makes it seem as though the officials are hiding the housing allocation proceedings, which can lead to perceptions of corruption, as well as mistrust (Rubin, 2011: 484). Because of the opacity regarding the criteria in the allocation of houses, understandings of how the process works are largely based on how allocation happened in the past. The most common understanding is that houses are allocated strictly on a first come, first served basis[50], although it is

[50] A common cry in Valhalla Park when asking about the waiting periods and the time spent waiting is that 'they are still busy with 1980's list'. There is thus a disconnect between what people understand to be the process, how houses are allocated in reality and the associated credibility of these allocations given the prevailing understandings of first come, first served housing allocation.

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more complicated than that. Foremost, housing allocation is income related. If a household earns more than R3500 a month, they are no longer eligible for housing assistance. Area is also a factor for allocation. When applying for housing, you are asked to note the area in which you would like to live. After these two criteria have been met, then the time spent waiting for housing is taken into account. In terms of prioritised cases, although these used to be at the discretion of the housing manager, they no longer exist. A former housing manager explains how allocations used to happen in the late 1990s:

> [For] rental, you are called in for an interview. You just don't say, oh, a house is available for you. They say a house is available, come in, then you get interviewed. Because maybe your situation has changed, you earn more and you don't qualify because you're earning more than R3500.
>
> (*Saskia: And things like number of children, and the size of the house, does that matter, or not so much?)* That, it doesn't matter... People are so desperate that they take whatever that's available. But then... you take into cognisance people... who are disabled, or... are physically challenged. Then if it's flats, you don't give people an upstairs flat. You make a lower ground floor available. And then another thing... maybe you prioritise women with children, you prioritise... Lots of children with an elderly mother or whatever, then you give priority to give a person a house with maybe more rooms or whatever. (P.T., 23 April 2012)

A current housing manager corroborated this statement:

> We used to have a priority list for sick people, people who were on the top floor with heart trouble... or people in wheelchairs and so on, but they're not doing the priority thing any longer. It's only on the recommendation of the director that we can actually house somebody who's in dire need. Because every case is the same. (J.K., 23 April 2012)

Moreover, few housing allocations take place. In Valhalla Park, there hasn't been a vacant house in six months (personal communication, local housing manager, 23 April 2012). This too adds to the feelings of frustration that residents experience.

Challenges for the Housing Officials and Politicians

It is perhaps because of the exceptionally long waiting periods that people apply for housing and then get on with life wherever they're living. Applicants tend not to visit the housing offices to update their details, even though it is their responsibility to update them in the event of moving. A housing official explained her annoyance with residents who fail to do this:

> They'll tell you they're sitting on the waiting list for so many years, here's my red card or here's my blue card, but they don't actually go and ensure that you have update contact information. Because if you don't have contact information, you can't contact the person ... I get very angry when I read reports in the press about oh, this person has

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> been waiting for so many years. I wonder if they've ever been to check if they are still on the list. (J.K., 23 April 2012)

A former housing official is equally adamant about this:

> Especially for if at all you're changing your address, change of surname, change of your status, change of whatever, whatever. You have to get in touch. If you don't, it's your responsibility. (P.T., 23 April 2011)

During interviews with housing applicants I was intrigued to know how people make sure that they are still on the housing database, wondering if people made frequent trips to check on their application, given the significance of their housing need. It became apparent that most residents did not regularly check up on their status.

A former community activist, who has accessed housing illegally, but has been on the waiting list for 21 years, explained the process as she sees it:

> *(Saskia: Do you ever have to go and update your application?)* No. Once you're on the system, you stay on the system. You only go off the system the minute you sign for a council rental house. But you're on the system, whether you move around, you stay on that system. It's only if the council send you a letter, you must just, if you move, you must renew your address. Because if the council send you a letter to inform you, you must go in, come sign for your house, they must have the right address. Because if you don't respond, you're not interested in the house anymore. Then they take you off. That's the only thing that you must do. If you move, you must change your address. But you stay, even if you're on that list for 30, 40 years, you stay on the list.
>
> *(Saskia: And do you update your number of children, your dependents?)* You don't update. It's only when they send you a letter to inform you you've got a house, then they call you in. Only then do you inform them who's going to stay with you, how many children, things like that. But when you go and apply for a house, you don't say your dependents. Ja, if you've got dependents, then you put them down, but you don't go back and say there's still two extra or three extra. (R.K., 15 August 2011)

She didn't think that having more children might affect your application, and it turned out, nor did most Valhalla Park residents that I spoke to.

Interestingly, on the City of Cape Town's website, there is a system in place to check whether you are registered on the housing database. Entering your name, surname and ID number, a line comes up, stating:

> [Name] with Id number [XXXXXXXXXXX] applied on 2001/01/21 and is on the Housing Database with Registration number 47522[51] .
>
> (from http://web1.capetown.gov.za/web1/searchhwl/HWL_search.aspx)

[51] Name and ID number blanked out to protect the identity of the applicant

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This system is helpful to check that you are registered, yet it does not provide further information regarding the status of your application, or indeed, the details of the application, which might have been useful in order to know when to update. There is not an ability to calculate your eligibility, as there was in the case of Brasilia (see Borges 2006).

The lack of impetus on the side of the applicants to update details is problematic for the neighbourhood housing officials because they cannot check on everyone in their records. While in the past campaigns were run in order to ensure that people were updating their data - also to encourage people to pay their rent and arrears so as not to be evicted - it seems now that due to budget cuts, this is no longer done. In addition, because the housing offices are already short-staffed, going through the files to ensure that details are correct is not usually possible. For the housing officials, this is just one aspect of their jobs that they are not able to do adequately. A housing manager explains the challenges on their side of the housing issue:

> We're beginning to feel we're losing the battle... There's just so much to do and we don't have enough staff.... They've been concentrating on all the other substructures of housing, like new housing, getting the police force, the law enforcement up and running and so on, which is a good thing, but existing housing, which is one of the oldest sections, has not had many new staff members appointed in the last 10 years. So when people leave, and at the moment we're going to lose... historical knowledge, because what we find, all of us, the whole top structure are all in their 50s and 60s. (J.K., 23 April 2012)

She elaborated by detailing what the housing officials have to do:

> So I've got four housing practitioners, and they each do approximately 500 tenancies. The ideal is about 300... They don't get to doing a tenth of what they should do (J.K., 23 April 2012)

It is for these reasons that the housing officials struggle to complete their tasks. Not only are they short-staffed, which complicates fulfilling their roles, but the tasks that they are asked to do sometimes go against the grain.

A former housing manager explains how she wanted to deal with people visiting her area's office:

> For me, we needed to do lots of development, whereas what we did there was a once-off thing, it was administrative and management, a very bureaucratic type of way that we did housing, especially because rental housing for me is a one-stop shop where people will ever be able to see the face of government. That is, most poor people don't go anywhere, they don't go and report anything anywhere, whereas in the housing office they go and report water, electricity, sewerage and whatever. You know, the type of complaints and things that were not directly linked to housing, and I felt that people in the housing offices needed to have certain basic skills, you know, like so, okay, with my social work background then little bit of counselling people need to know. Especially when people are in a traumatic situation (P.T., 23 April 2012)

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She notes that doing her job became procedural, that she found herself ticking boxes, rather than interacting with people meaningfully and trying to solve their housing problems. She found this particularly prevalent in relation to implementing the indigency policy, which in those days could not be renewed after a six month period, effectively rendering those who couldn't afford to pay rent with no solution and liable for eviction if they were to default on payments. In her opinion, the system that local government put into place meant that the council was constantly butting heads with civic organisations:

> [There was] lots of animosity and enmity and also confusion in there, because at one platform you'd be negotiating with the community leaders that this is what we must do and how we're going to go about indigency and whatever, and on the other hand there was this other, the councillors call it the carrot and the stick approach. Which doesn't... If you're not using the developmental approach working with the communities, then you're not going to win at the end of the day... There's going to be this antagonism and this animosity between the officials and the community as a result then, you end up with a situation where... almost anything that's done by government is met with negativity. (P.T., 23 April 2012)

For this housing practitioner, being stuck in the banality of processes and procedures was what the job became. In sum, she suggests: "Housing was seen as a nuisance... and it always was under budgeted" (P.T., 23 April 2012).

The City of Cape Town also acknowledges that the process of housing delivery is arduous, noting on the front page of the online housing site that:

> Although the plan provides for the development of some 4 500 new housing opportunities (in the form of rentals, ownership and/or a serviced site) per year, amongst others, it is not able to immediately redress Cape Town's current housing backlog, which is increasing at a steady rate due to population growth and the impact of rural-urban migration. The City's ability to deliver public sector housing is constrained by its limited financial and skills resources, not to mention the complicated nature of the housing production process itself, which includes lengthy environmental and approval processes and protocols for intergovernmental cooperation.
>
> (http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/housing/Pages/default.aspx)

With a small housing budget, a large spatial area to cover and slow processes to go through before sod is turned, some people find waiting takes too long, and for lack of alternatives, seek other ways to access housing, as has been explored in the previous three chapters.

The housing allocation process in Cape Town is complex, not only from the point of view of housing applicants, but also from the perspectives of housing officials who work at the neighbourhood scale. Moreover, the housing allocation system has shifted and changed in many ways over the last twenty years, from numerous local metropolitan councils, all with their own housing policies and products,

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to the interim government where six local authorities attempted to amalgamate their housing waiting lists to create an updated and fair list. Following this, these six municipalities amalgamated again, creating a unicity with one integrated housing database. It is thus no wonder that the housing allocation and delivery processes are contested and fraught in their implementation. In the following section, I reflect on the ways in which they shape citizen-state encounters.

Empty Promises and Dashed Hopes: The State as Complacent?

Arguably the most important point of contact between the local community and the government is the local ward councillor, elected by the residents in the ward. While some feel that he does his job, others were more vocal about what he doesn't do for the community, even though he lives in the neighbourhood and knows the types of problems that they experience. His actions directly shape how people view the state. Similarly, government officials and what they promise during election time is also a way in which government is 'represented' to most Valhalla Park residents. Promises during election periods that later come to nothing are particularly damning. This section explores how people in Valhalla Park speak about government and how they view their citizen-state encounters.

Possibly because of the many promises rolled out during electioneering periods, from which little comes, Valhalla Park residents are reluctant to believe everything the government and its agents tell them. Possibly the most influential actor in this network for residents of any neighbourhood is the ward councillor, considered to be the link between communities and the local government[52]. Many perceptions are built on his actions, and the things he manages to achieve in the community during his term as councillor. While many Valhalla Park residents agree that the ward councillor's job is not an easy one, particularly in a neighbourhood with as many socio-economic issues such as Valhalla Park, they are also critical of the level of engagement of the councillor in the neighbourhood, arguing that community workers do the lion's share of the councillor's work in the neighbourhood. For many, councillors do not engage fully with the circumstances people are facing in their ward:

> The councillors that make all these decisions, or whoever makes this decisions... they're sitting in their cushy chairs there, and they're playing God with other people's lives... They don't know what the people go through every day of their lives. They don't know what is happening. Old people don't pay rent, put them out. They don't know the circumstances. (N.K., 19 September 2011)

[52] Though of course, while councillors are supposed to be the link between communities and the local government, this is not always the case. Sometimes civic organisations have better links to the government, either in general or in more specific cases. Valhalla Park is no different. Civic organisation members have fostered relations with the government and other bodies, such as the police force, so that they don't need to use the 'middle-man' of the councillor. For other things, however, the councillor is used for his access to the government's resources.

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Although in this extract the resident is referring to a broad range of government officials, and not just the ward councillor, the overall feeling is that government officials are out of touch with the everyday realities that face many citizens. The notion of promises made during election periods formed a large part of discussions.[53]

> They promise so many things for us but they don't give it. They promise you, don't worry... But they sit there. (L.R., 27 September 2011)

Other residents were less diplomatic, and demonstrated their disappointment in the councillors during the interviews:

> They [the councillors] don't give a damn about the community out there. They don't reach out. People have to reach out to them, and people have to put them there when they needed the people, but when people need them, they are not there for the people. (W.A., 22 August 2011)

Councillors are seen as a small part of the problem with government, though, as corruption by government officials was an even more common topic of discussion, particularly in relation to housing projects that seem to struggle to get from the planning stage to the ground, as many feel the Valhalla Park housing development has. This, the residents argue, has serious consequences for those who are waiting for housing in often dire situations:

> ...For the council, that's nothing because that's not their lives, but as far as I'm concerned, the council is messing with people's lives... It's children that must sleep on floors every night, it's families that stays in shanties where they lay on the bed and it's like a waterfall on them. So it's people's lives but the council don't see it like that. They just see this like another job. It's just another job that I'm doing to get my wage at the end of the day... That was the difference all these years between the council and the civic organisations. (R.K., 15 August 2011)

Very vocal on the topic of corruption within the public structures, a former community worker noted that when projects fall away, the money that was allocated for the project disappears, never to be seen again:

> If that falls away, what happens to that money that was already allocated for that purpose? It just disappeared into thin air. Because afterwards you don't hear anything about it. But it's money that was lying there, and it's tax money that's just disappeared. That's just one of many things that happens in our government. And we don't actually see it because we don't go into detail of certain stuff that's been allocated for things. We just take it for granted, oh it never happened, it's fine. (R.K., 15 August 2011)

[53] The prevalence of conversation about 'empty promises' may be attributed to the timing of the local government elections that took place earlier in 2011, when the bulk of this research was conducted, and so the pledges made by those standing for election were still fresh in the minds of those doing the voting.

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While not all residents were as critical, one woman suggested that because Valhalla Park and the civic organisation mobilise when government fails to do what was expected, it seemed to her that the government at times punished them for fighting for their rights:

> Even Valhalla Park people, we get so little things from the government. Everything that we want we must fight for it... I suppose the government look at us as maybe barbarians or whatever, because we must fight for whatever we want. And it's not nice because they don't treat us fairly towards other communities. (S.S., 15 August 2011)

Another resident had a similar sentiment, saying that everything she had, she had fought for by herself:

> I'm not interested in government, because the government does nothing for me. I've got to look for a job on my own, I've got to see for my education on my own. Everything that I want in life I have to do it on my own. Nothing is free. I struggle on my own. Thing that I want to achieve in life, I've got to do it on my own. No government is with me or beside me, or is backing me up. The only thing that government is giving me at this very moment is every month that R260 All Pay...for the little one. That's all. That's all. Which I am grateful for that, because that goes into his travelling allowance to go in to school... Actually government says it does this, it does that. Government did nothing for me. I'm still on a waiting list, government can't even give me a house. I solve my own problems. (F.S., 23 August 2011)

Government is thus present in Valhalla Park residents' lives in various ways, though not always positively.

For most, interactions are limited to those with the local councillor and with government agencies in accessing the social grants that keep many families in this neighbourhood afloat. This does not mean, however, that residents are not informed about the goings-on in government; clearly, people have perceptions which are shaped in very specific ways, through these interactions and also through word of mouth and media reports. How politicians conduct themselves during phases of electioneering, as well as how they deliver on these promises is also a key factor that helps to shape Valhalla Park residents' perceptions of the state. Often finding the local councillors sorely lacking in what they can and will do to help the community, which in turn reflects badly on the broader notion of 'the state', residents sometimes choose to take matters into their own hands, as has been seen with regards to housing.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that for the people of Valhalla Park the state's processes and procedures for housing allocation are largely opaque and intangible. The first section explored the process of applying for housing from the state, and the ways in which this is seen to be a mundane part of being on the housing database, and yet is fraught with complications that make the housing

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allocation process opaque to most citizens and even government officials, who are powerless and tied to what they have been employed to do. The opacity that exists shapes the citizen-state encounter, leading many residents of Valhalla Park to assume that the state is somehow remote from their grim everyday realities and uninterested in their problems, despite having numerous interactions with other state bodies in accessing other resources (such as social grants). The second section explored how Valhalla Park residents' perceptions of the state are formed in relation to the interactions that they have with different 'human technologies of rule' (Corbridge et al., 2005). For example, contact is often usually with ward councillors, and how they behave directly influences perceptions of the state and how it wants to help poor citizens. These perceptions are further influenced by politicians during periods of campaign, as well as by reports in the media. These perceptions in turn dictate how people choose to deal with the state.

In the case of Valhalla Park, it is rarely possible to calculate how long it might take to get housing, or how to 'work' the system like Donna Maria could, as explored in Borges (2006). Added to this the faltering of meaningful interaction with the state regarding new housing developments, the civic organisation chose to challenge the state, building houses for themselves. Not being able to understand how the processes of housing allocation work leads to many frustrations for housing applicants, as well as suspicions of the systems and the agents that operate them. Being stuck in the 'permanent temporariness' of waiting for housing is challenging too, and fuels these frustrations. This chapter argues that the citizen-state encounter, for housing, is shaped through these frustrations, as well as through the effects that the 'permanent temporariness' of everyday life has on applicants. Because of these perceptions, the state is understood to be distanced from those living in these challenging conditions while waiting, and results in a particular citizen-state encounter; one that is 'gray', that takes place in the middle ground between legal and illegal and formal and informal. This 'gray' encounter encompasses the varied ways citizens choose to interact with - and against – the state that are prevalent for those who are waiting for housing.

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Chapter 6

A 'Permanent Temporariness': Citizen-State Encounters Between the (In)formal and the (Il)legal

Introduction

The previous chapters of this dissertation have indicated the extent to which waiting for housing affects many aspects of everyday life. It has become apparent that waiting for housing often means living in overcrowded conditions, sometimes informally, and making do with accommodation that is typically meant as a short-term solution, yet as a result of the serious housing backlog, is used for long periods of time while people wait to access housing from the state. The material consequences that come from living in these often dire situations include having to mitigate these tough material and social living conditions. Materially, negotiations around the effects of weather conditions play a large part of everyday life, particularly in periods of cold and wet weather. Socially, living in confined spaces with many people can place strain on relationships, particularly when resources are limited and services such as water and electricity are paid for collectively. In addition to the material consequences of waiting for housing, emotional consequences also frame this experience. Living in a state of uncertainty, not knowing when housing might become available, if indeed it ever will, can leave people feeling despondent about their situation. Anger at their situation and at the people who promise to solve the issues of the past, yet do not demonstrably deliver on these promises, can lead to tension in communities and between community members and local government officials and politicians. In circumstances such as these, finding ways to access accommodation without waiting for the government can be a way to circumvent the struggles outlined above; struggles that punctuate everyday life for many people semi-permanently.

Waiting is thus not mundane as perhaps previously supposed, and clearly has great effects on many aspects of everyday life. In this sense, then, waiting for housing may be considered profound, influencing the minutiae of daily activities as well as other spheres of life; a symptom of living in uncertainty. Waiting for housing does not suggest that the potential beneficiaries have a lack of drive or ambition, or a lack of agency when it comes to accessing better accommodation. Rather, those who choose to wait to access housing legally often do this in ways that require juggling complex realities that do not always conform to legal requirements, while attempting to engage the state to access housing through formal, legal channels. Waiting to access housing legally, while living

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in illegal circumstances, such as on invaded land, for example, is one such example of how people strive to interact with the state, and yet circumvent it at the same time.

This dissertation argues that these complicated living realities places housing applicants in a state of 'betweennness' (Perramond, 2001) or 'permanent temporariness' (Yiftachel, 2009a; 2009b) as a result of the 'gray spaces' in which they live, spaces that are neither legal nor illegal, formal nor informal. These 'gray spaces' are compounded by the notion that housing allocation and the processes of waiting, while logical and instrumental as a way to obtain housing from the state legally, are also opaque and complex. As a result of this opacity, the type of calculability that Borges (2006) documents in relation to accessing housing plots in Brasilia, or those that become daily realities in relation to other resources (such as water) as documented by von Schnitzler (2008) are not applicable in the case of South African residents who are waiting for housing. With regards to housing, where applicants are on the list and what their chances of receiving a house are is not something that can be calculated or negotiated. The nature of housing allocation in South Africa means that the criteria through which allocation occurs, as well as weighting of this criteria, is largely unknown.

This inability to estimate where applicants are on the list or when they might receive housing situates applicants in a kind of conceptual and practical 'betweenness' (Perramond, 2001). Here, 'betweenness' relates to being in the middle, of waiting and the resultant feelings of confusion that stem from not being able to calculate when housing might be accessible. 'Betweenness' also encompasses the reality that those waiting for housing are often living in situations that confront the divides between formal and informal and legal and illegal. Sometimes, when applicants question their relationship with the state, the 'betweenness' embodied in waiting becomes too much to bear, and residents find other ways to access housing.

This chapter brings together the empirical story of waiting for housing in Valhalla Park, as discussed in the previous four chapters, with the literature that the empirical narrative speaks to. Firstly, the chapter looks at the individual strategies of coping with the effects of waiting for housing, considering particularly how households manage while living in overcrowded and often informal conditions, and how households find ways to negotiate these often difficult living conditions, echoing arguments made by Ross (2005; 2010). Secondly, this section explores the 'betweenness' (Perramond, 2001) and 'permanent temporariness' (Yiftachel, 2009a; 2009b) that exists for people who are intent on waiting to accessing housing through formal means. The chapter then moves on to explore, thirdly, community-led strategies that are employed to access housing, particularly when waiting is considered to take too long in the context of a formal housing allocation process that is

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largely opaque in its functioning and where notions of calculability (see Borges, 2006 and von Schnitzler, 2008) are not applicable. Drastic and illegal methods, such as invading land, to obtain housing are typically community-led strategies. Oldfield's research on the subject explores how agency is employed by communities to fight for what they consider to be right (Oldfield, 2000; 2004; Oldfield and Boulton, 2005; Lemanksi and Oldfield, 2009, among others). Less extreme measures of accessing housing include 'inheriting' a house from a family member, 'marrying up' and civic organisation 'placements', where families are placed in houses that are not fully occupied or have become vacant.

For all potential housing beneficiaries, however, engaging with the state is the norm, and requires engaging and interacting with the state and its human technologies of rule (Corbridge et al., 2005). These interactions occur through formal channels when applying for housing, while at the same time, circumventing the state informally in terms of how you live in the mean time. In addition to this, challenging the state while remaining formally engaged with it as a housing applicant is also possible. These conflicting states of being illustrate the notion of 'betweenness' that afflicts housing applicants, where formal processes of application stand in contrast to the ways in which accommodation is sought. The citizen-state encounter is thus a complex one, with a sense of 'betweenness' and 'permanent temporariness' situated at the core of the relationship. The 'betweenness' that exists in the ways accommodation is accessed by the poor, who engage and circumvent the state by living in informal (and sometimes illegal) contexts, yet at the same time wait to access housing through formal, legal channels, results in a citizen-state encounter that is envisioned and enacted in different ways for different purposes.

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'Gray Space': Waiting as a Lens on Citizen-State Encounters

The 'housing crisis' is a term that is used fairly frequently in relation to the housing shortage in South Africa, as well as in terms of the slow delivery of housing opportunities by the state. In Cape Town, 400 000 households are waiting to access a house from the state, yet only around 8500 units are delivered annually in this city. This suggests that there is a serious housing shortage that means many people live in uncertain and difficult situations while waiting. This research project builds on the already existing body of academic work that looks broadly at the urban poor's housing situations in South Africa to reflect on this lived experience. The literature on housing policy and its transformation in South Africa demonstrates that while there are concerted and genuine attempts to provide decent housing to the majority of previously disadvantaged citizens, this has happened with varying degrees of success (Huchzermeyer, 2001; 2003; Gilbert, 2002; 2004; Charlton and Kihato, 2006; Pithouse, 2009). This thesis does not engage with this broad-scale reflection on

housing policy (and its changes). Its focus, however, on waiting to access housing from the state as the legal route to secure tenure, the processes of application and allocation of housing, as well as the notion of waiting for housing is a largely under-researched aspect of housing in South Africa. This gap is surprising, considering that technically, everyone who accesses a house from the state should be registered on the housing database and, if the examples of Valhalla Park are anything to go by, would have waited to access this housing for some time. Nonetheless, academic discussion of the waiting process is minimal. In focussing on this issue, this thesis contributes to the topic of waiting, as well as the broader discussion on the lived experience of the urban poor living in uncertain circumstances in South Africa.

This research project also sits in conversation with a literature focused on families living in overcrowded conditions; some in formal council houses, some in the backyards of family, friends or tenants' council houses, and those who live on the informal settlements of Sewende Laan and Agste Laan. A well-defined body of literature that speaks to the micro experiences of everyday life of the urban poor, particularly with regards to informal settlements (Ross, 2005; 2010) and the daily negotiations that are prevalent when living in these challenging conditions already exists. This literature illuminates the myriad ways that living without secure tenure and without long-term accommodation affects families and households in both mundane and profound ways, economically, socially, physically and emotionally, providing a nuanced understanding about the 'raw life' that is associated with waiting for housing, and the other hardships that insufficient housing for the urban poor produces. Investigated through a lens of waiting to access housing from the state, I build on this literature here.

In this dissertation I have looked particularly at the material as well as the emotional consequences of waiting for housing. In the case of the material effects of waiting, these take very similar forms and shapes to other projects that investigate the everyday realities of those living informally, and parallels can be drawn particularly with Ross's studies (2005; 2010). Investigating how quotidian practices are negotiated with reference to living in temporary accommodation for the long term, this study suggests that waiting for housing is more complicated that simply a status. In exploring the banality of everyday routines and activities, the profound influences that waiting for housing have on residents' lives are illuminated. This is discussed in chapters 3 and 4. In addition to the material hardships that arise from waiting for housing, emotional effects of waiting exist too, not only as a result of waiting for housing, but also as a result of the living conditions that many hopeful housing applicants have to contend with.

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Investigating the process, experience and effects of waiting forms the basis of this project. Waiting for housing from the state is not a simple or mundane process, but rather is complicated and messy, and has profound effects on the everyday lives of those living in wait. For the state, waiting is understood as merely a technical process of application, fulfilling the stipulated requirements and then waiting for a housing opportunity to become available. For the applicants, however, waiting for housing is more than the technical notion the state assumes it to be. Waiting in difficult situations has consequences for many aspects of everyday life, as well as larger life processes which cannot be paused while waiting for something that is neither quantifiable nor definite. The housing database is placed at the interface of the citizen-state encounter and yet is a largely under-researched and overlooked arena of the broad housing topic. How these interactions and effects of waiting influence the citizen-state encounter is part of the larger project, and is analysed in the body of this chapter.

Living in a perpetual state of uncertainty and insecurity, waiting for something as important as a house, places Valhalla Park residents in a state of 'betweenness' (Perramond, 2001) or 'permanent temporariness' (Yiftachel, 2009a; 2009b). These notions of 'betweenness' and 'permanent temporariness' are particularly prevalent for those living in overcrowded houses or in backyard shacks, where the desire for a better quality of life means having to wait for housing in very difficult circumstances, and trying to balance the desire to wait to access housing legally, with moving elsewhere and potentially finding oneself in even worse circumstances (such as another backyard shack or an informal settlement). 'Betweenness' is also affected by what other people are feeling in the surrounding areas, for example, in Valhalla Park, optimism is now at a high because of the imminent new housing development. Before this, however, there have been periods where without contact with the City officials, the inevitability of the new housing development was questioned. In the context of waiting for housing from the government in a system that is opaque and not obvious in its functioning, 'betweenness' in terms of where people sit in the spectrum of 'gray spaces' between legality and illegality of their current situations, not knowing what matters and what does not in relation to eligibility for housing as well as 'betweenness' in questioning their place in society compounds the complicated processes that encompass waiting for a house from the state. The notion of 'betweenness' that Perramond (2001) develops in relation to fieldwork and the space where geographers and researchers find themselves in the middle of stories, histories and realities can thus be appropriated to explain the experience of waiting for housing. In addition to this, Yiftachel's (2009a; 2009b) concept of 'gray spaces', links the ideas of 'betweenness' and notions of calculability (von Schnitzler, 2008) to further conceptualise the contradictions that exist for those waiting for housing, where waiting is both technically procedural, logical and normal, yet as a lived experience is complicated and affects many areas of everyday life. Living in 'gray spaces' illustrates

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the problematic hybridity that Young and Kiel (2010: 90) recognise as existing in some places where formality and informality overlap. Similarly, McFarlane (2012: 91) suggests that 'permanent temporariness' can be experienced when the formal and informal divide is blurred. Waiting for housing is therefore not a precise way of living; rather it is a multitude of ways of being.

While these household-level strategies play an important role in accommodating the large numbers of people waiting for housing from the state, these are not the only solutions that people employ to access housing. In Valhalla Park, the sheer number of people waiting to access housing, and the seemingly disinterested nature of local government to investigate the feasibility of creating new housing in Valhalla Park resulted in a community-led strategy to provide additional housing for the young families of the area. As a result, the informal settlement of Sewende Laan was borne.

When Waiting Takes Too Long and Circumstances are Fraught: Resorting to Community-led Initiatives

While waiting on the housing database is the legal route to access housing from the state, it is clearly not the only way to find formal, permanent accommodation. From the previous three chapters, it is clear that waiting for housing can take very long periods of time, and for some, these delays can force applicants to seek other options to access housing. In Brasilia, Borges (2006) shows how transparency in the criteria of housing allocation allows applicants to present their most 'eligible' case to the state in order to attempt to speed up the process of obtaining a housing plot. The state has criteria, evident in policy and in the ways in which policy frames who is prioritised for housing access. In the case she analyses, citizens enact and perform these criteria to manoeuvre their position on the list. In the South African case, these criteria, such as earning below R3500 a month and needing to be married or have dependents, are generic, yet the nitty-gritty workings of the processes of allocation are not made public, and so the notion of juggling one's circumstances to manoeuvre one's position on the waiting list is not possible.

Similar to Borges (2006), von Schnitzler (2008) suggests that in many other cases of basic need provision, such as water and electricity, notions of calculability become embodied in the everyday lives of the urban poor. State policies and their implementation in poor neighbourhoods - in her case water - shape residents, changing the ways in which they calculate their use of resources. The state thus influences access to resources but also how individuals and families 'perform' everyday life in quite fundamental ways, allowing and forcing residents to economise and rationalise choices. However, in the case of Cape Town's housing database, neither Borges' (2006) nor von Schnitzler's (2008) situations are applicable, because not only is the housing database in South Africa complicated to understand, but it is also in many ways opaque, working seemingly invisibly behind

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the scenes to allocate housing based on criteria that are not made public. Manipulating the database in the ways outlined in Borges (2006), or being able to calculate your chances or your position on the list as you can with other needs (von Schnitzler, 2008) is not possible in this case. Legal routes to housing, other than waiting, are not transparent, and thus are not calculable in any precise way. Changing your choices, or highlighting particular elements or variables of need doesn't move you up the list.

There is thus no way of knowing where you stand on the waiting list, and this important aspect of calculability is lost. It is here that 'betweenness' is evident both concretely and conceptually. Living in uncertain and often informal conditions while waiting to access housing from the housing database, without being able to calculate their chances of obtaining housing places applicants in a state of 'betweenness' or 'permanent temporariness'. Waiting to access housing from the housing database as a household in need, while at the same time situating this waiting in the context that 400 000 others, also all in need, are waiting for the same thing, is difficult terrain to negotiate. In this context of unknowing, the inability of residents to calculate their odds of receiving a house can result in their finding other ways to access housing. In the 'gray spaces' between legality and illegality, formality and informality, and where residents "exist partially out of the gaze of the state authorities and city plans" (Yiftachel, 2009a: 89), housing applicants who can no longer wait to access housing formally find other ways to access better accommodation. In practice, technically illegal routes, options that go beyond or behind the state, are more transparent routes to access a formal home. This research project suggests that without knowing and understanding how the state works through the housing database and waiting for housing, it is difficult to mediate ways through the state system. Sometimes, waiting just takes too long. These complicated reasons explain why many people risk attempting to access housing illegally. In waiting to access housing, and sometimes being forced to find other ways to access decent accommodation, housing applicants have a particular relationship with the state, where ambiguities and inconsistencies drive these interactions. Following Yiftachel (2009a; 2009b), I term these interactions 'gray' encounters.

Agency as a Community: A Drastic Measure

'Gray' encounters with the state are inherently ambiguous, yet they do not preclude agency to find other ways to access housing. Oldfield has written extensively on how communities mobilise to access housing and other resources when the state fails to provide access to these resources in an acceptable period of time (2000; 2004; Oldfield and Boulton, 2005; Oldfield and Stokke, 2007; Lemanski and Oldfield, 2009; Thorn and Oldfield, 2011). This approach explores how communities

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challenge the state to access these different services and how they use savvy but sometimes illegal techniques to be heard and have their needs and requirements conveyed to state officials when formal channels fail to work.

In parallel, Robins, Cornwall and von Lieres (2008: 1079) argue that "in the scramble for livelihoods and security, poor people tend to adopt plural strategies; they occupy multiple spaces and draw on multiple political identities, discourses and social relationships, often simultaneously", in order to get what they need, local communities do not lack agency, and in an attempt to address the issue of overcrowding in Valhalla Park, the civic organisation approached local government to urge the officials to investigate the feasibility of a new housing development project on a specific piece of land in Valhalla Park. When after several meetings with the council proved to be fruitless, the civic organisation decided that if the government could not build houses because they lacked the resources, then the people would build the houses themselves. On the selected site, shacks were erected. However, because this was technically a land invasion, a battle ensued between the City and the 'invaders'. Once it became clear that forcibly removing the shacks wasn't going to work, eviction letters were sent to the residents, who chose to defend their case in court. With the assistance of pro bono lawyers, the case was defended, and the community won the right to remain on the land, as well as to be accommodated in a housing development in the area.

Not dissimilar to backyard shacks, the temporary nature of the building materials of the shacks on Sewende Laan means that they are also not really suitable for long-term residence. The Sewende Laan settlement is now over ten years old, a long time to live in temporary accommodation, although families are guaranteed a place in the new housing development, to be built in early 2013[54]. Agste Laan, the other informal settlement in Valhalla Park, was started for the same reasons, though it has not been the subject of a court case. Rather, this settlement is tolerated by City officials, because, according to various civic organisation members, the City spent too much money on the last court case against the Valhalla Park community and lost the case anyway (G.S., 10 October, 2011). Agste Laan residents will thus not automatically be a part of the new housing development, but rather continue to be beholden to the waiting list to decide if they are eligible for a housing opportunity in this development. This example, of waiting for housing legally while living in an illegal setting, illustrates the kind of 'gray space' that exists in housing applicants' interactions with the state, where citizens are not insurgent (Holsten, 2009) or transgressive (Earle, 2012), but rather interact with the state in 'gray' encounters that fall between the legal, procedural interactions

[54] Although this deadline moves frequently (this is the current date for building to begin), the housing development is becoming tangible as the allocation lists have been posted in public spaces and street names are decided.

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and illegal direct challenges to the state. In these contexts, there is agency to find housing independently, but the ways in which this is done are ambiguous. Engaging with the state in applying to access housing formally, while at the same time circumventing the state to access decent accommodation in which to wait is a key 'gray' space that housing applicants are forced to occupy. These challenging negotiations for shelter place applicants in situations of 'betweennness'.

Other Strategies to Access Housing as a Community

Of course, not all routes to access housing without the state's intervention are as dramatic as land invasion. Various other methods to access housing exist, the most frequent, and not illegal, is for those people to 'inherit' a house from a parent when they die. Although the house still belongs to the council, a tenancy transfer can occur if the person who is to take over the house fits into the criteria of a potential housing beneficiary (particularly with regards to income, which should not exceed R3500 per month) and is listed in the local housing office's files as a resident in the house. Although transfer is slow and arguments can erupt within the house regarding who should be the beneficiary, this is a relatively fail-safe method to access a house, and is probably the most prevalent way of accessing housing in Valhalla Park.

It is here where notions of calculability can, to a certain extent, be determined, where households are advised about who should apply as the beneficiary so that they continue to comply with the policies regarding housing allocation. This does mean, however, that housing turnover is slow, as transfer can no longer be done while the current tenant is still alive[55]. Also, because houses tend to remain within families for many years, those who are waiting without a house to access will wait for long periods of time. The system can also be exploited, as was indicated in chapter 3, where civic organisation members placed a family in need of a house with an older man who was living by himself, telling him that they were his cousins, when in fact they were not. Although in this case it worked out well, bitter stories are told of women 'marrying up' to obtain a house, where men who stand to 'inherit'[56] a house from parents are targeted so that decent housing is secured for the future. Similarly, tales are told of extended-family members coming from other neighbourhoods and moving in with older relatives so that they will be able to 'inherit' the house in the future, again, securing decent accommodation in a context where housing opportunities are limited for the poor.

[55]In the past, elderly parents were able to change the name of the tenant on the tenancy agreement (typically transferring the tenancy to a child), in effect securing the tenancy of the next generation. This is no longer possible while the tenant is still alive.

[56] This is usually through a transfer of tenancy as houses are typically rented from the City.

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While some of the stories I noted in my field notes are speculative, largely gossip and rumour in nature, these are the ways in which the system is 'worked', and suggest how houses are obtained in a shorter period of time than the housing database might take. For others, moving to an informal settlement was a way of staking their claim to living independently, even if when they moved the settlement was illegal and informal and the threat of future eviction was a real possibility. Although the Sewende Laan households will each become homeowners in the imminent housing development, this is not the case for the Agste Laan residents, who continue to live informally and technically illegally, although they are aware that the civic organisation of Valhalla Park is strong and would be willing to fight the City council again should the need arise. Living in a state of 'permanent temporariness' is a symptom of waiting for housing, and 'betweenness' is thus far-reaching; it affects many aspects of everyday life for those waiting to access housing. This 'betweenness' exists in the material and emotional ways in which life is lived while waiting for something as important as a house, as well as how people engage with the state and circumvent the formal processes for accessing housing at the same time. Accessing housing then, is complicated. Waiting is the legal route to obtaining housing from the state, and yet it typically takes a long time, and the wait is unquantifiable. It is unknown and indefinite. In this 'betweenness', these factors push some people into choosing to find housing in other ways. In these cases, it is important to explore and consider the contexts in which people are waiting for housing in order to gain a more nuanced understanding of the 'gray' encounters that dominate citizen-state interactions around housing.

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Conclusion

As Robins, Cornwall and von Lieres (2008), and also Corbridge et al. (2005) suggest, state-citizen relations are not tidy and linear, but messy and complicated. Waiting for housing from the state is all this – it is legal, but it is complicated, it takes long periods of time and is simultaneously unquantifiable. Furthermore, housing applicants' understandings of housing allocation criteria are murky as a result of the opacity of the housing allocation systems. From the narratives outlined throughout this dissertation, it is clear that housing applicants do not lack agency. They have the impetus to solve problems and fight for what they believe is right. This sometimes means that the poor seek different channels to gain what they need, "deploying a repertoire of tactics that makes use of multiple discourses" (Robins, Cornwall and von Lieres, 2008: 1082). Many people start off wanting to access housing legally, waiting on the housing database until they are contacted by housing officials who have a housing opportunity for them. However, for some, this waiting takes too long, and for these people, different ways of accessing housing are explored. Some employ methods such as occupying land and 'grabbing' houses. For these and other people who seek housing, engaging with the state, against the state and with other agents is done to access housing.

Valhalla Park, evidently, is no different, and as suggested by Robins, Cornwall and von Lieres (2008), residents find multiple ways to access what they need. Engagement is thus not only with or against the state, but with many actors situated between the community and the state.

Waiting for housing is rarely a passive state of being, and working both with and against the state forms part of the interactions that surround accessing housing. Waiting for housing forces citizens to have a particular relationship with the state: present and accountable in order to be on the housing database, and yet trying to hide the sometimes illegal circumstances in which they live. In engaging in these 'gray' political zones of 'betweenness', the citizen-state interaction that comes from this type of engagement is in essence a 'gray' encounter. This relationship with the state perpetuates the notion of 'betweenness' that waiting encompasses. For others, remaining on the waiting list is juggled with circumventing this formal and legal process of accessing housing to access it in illegal ways, such as through land invasions, another form of 'betweenness' or 'grayness' that those waiting to access housing have to negotiate. Negotiating the spectrum of ways to access housing that fall between legal and illegal is more complicated a process than simply corruption; it is a more nuanced practice where applicants consider each side of the legal/illegal coin in relation to previous experiences and dealings with the state. Finding the middle-ground between what is legal and illegal, legitimate and debatable, and formal and informal requires facing the type of 'betweenness' of everyday life that pre-empts these decisions, and well as the 'betweennesses' that will arise as a result of this decision-making. Waiting for housing thus presents a different view of state-society relations in a poor neighbourhood, where 'gray' encounters are the norm in terms of housing.

Understanding how these interactions shape applicants' perceptions of the state, as seen in Corbridge et al. (2005), is a part of this project. Acknowledging that the state matters for the majority of the poor population is essential, yet recognising that the state is seen differently in specific interactions is also important. In relation to housing, residents of Valhalla Park specifically are frustrated and angry at what they assume to be the state's uncaring and disinterested attitude towards providing housing for the poor coloured population[57]. However, while they consider the state to be distanced and apathetic, they have not given up hope for housing projects completely. Also important is that the state is not a "monolithic entity" (Fuller and Harriss, 2001: 14), but rather is layered, comprising of many human technologies of government, all of which are different and also have bearing on how the state is perceived. For many Valhalla Park residents, interacting with

[57] It must be stressed again that this research project argues that the although the state is considered by many to be apathetic, this is only in relation to the housing backlog that exists and the dire circumstances in which many people are forced to live while waiting for housing. The state is present and visible in many other spheres of life for the urban poor in Valhalla Park and elsewhere, particularly through state social grants and also in its presence in the housing office, where rental housing is regulated.

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lower-level government officials is quite normal. These interactions, and encounters with the other state agents, such as ward councillors and local politicians, do influence how the state is perceived. In chapter 6, it became apparent that the ward councillor is seen to play an important role in the community as the formal and elected liaison between the community and local government, and yet some residents believe that he does not do enough to help the poor residents. Others are more disillusioned by local politicians, who make plenty of promises during election campaigning periods, yet fail to deliver on these pledges once elected. Different departments are also viewed individually. The department and officials that deal with social grants, for example, are not considered to be distant because they deliver social grants on a monthly basis. In terms of housing, however, the apparent lack of impetus on the government's side to provide decent housing for the poor taints how the residents see the government with relation to housing. These impressions, coupled with the tough living conditions that are prevalent for those waiting to access housing from the housing database (chapter 3), as well as the emotional effects of waiting (as explored in chapter 4) result in a critique of the state and how it deals with its citizen's problems, as explored in chapter 5.

The direness of the living conditions that prevail for many people who are waiting for housing from the state in places like Valhalla Park leads people to question whether they are indeed equal citizens when they seem to be passed over for housing. In addition, the emotional effects of waiting contribute towards these perceptions too. The emotional effects of waiting for housing, while adding texture and layers to the narratives around the material effects of waiting for housing, are also important because they start to influence perceptions of the state as an entity concerned with improving the lives of the poor and disenfranchised. As considered in chapter 5, every interaction around housing, whether directly with the state or even indirectly, through the media or the rumour mill, actions by and hearsay about local ward councillors and politicians results in perceptions of the state as distanced and seemingly disinterested in the everyday struggles of those waiting for housing. 'Betweenness' here takes the shape of questioning one's place in society, of being a citizen without having the same rights and access to basic resources that were promised when inequality in terms of race was abolished at the end of the apartheid regime. Where the housing database is at the forefront of the interaction between the citizens and the state with regards to housing, and is the only legal route to access housing through the state, these perceptions of how local councillors and politicians deal with something as important as housing result in the formation of the citizen-state encounter, and perceptions of the state through this. 'Betweenness' also comes to the fore in not being able to calculate where you stand on the waiting list, or how long it might take to access housing results in perceptions of secrecy, and seemingly wilful opacity.

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Like Yiftachel (2009a: 93), who argues that "the inferior position of marginalised gray spaces and groups is not simply a result of 'discrimination' but the consequence of deeply embedded institutional, material and spatial systems which accord unequal 'packages' of rights and capabilities to the various groups", South Africa's processes of waiting are deeply embedded in historical political and bureaucratic systems and contexts. Waiting places housing applicants in a state of 'betweenness' that has far-reaching consequences for their everyday lives, with insecurities and ambiguities as a result of the 'gray spaces' in which they live. Like Corbridge et al. (2005: 8), who argue that "we need to play close attention... if we want to come to a more nuanced understanding of how people inhabit and encounter the state, and how they react to its everydayness and their senses of what it is to be a citizen, client and/or subject", there is a need for a nuanced understanding of the politics of 'betweenness' and 'permanent temporariness' that are symptoms of living in the 'gray spaces' that abound in the urban landscape of South Africa. In doing this, the 'gray spaces' that challenge the binaries of legal and illegal, formal and informal, legitimate and illegitimate, right and wrong, just and unjust, can inform a different type of citizen-state encounter in relation to waiting for housing.

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Conclusion

Many people in South Africa wait to access housing formally from the state, yet interestingly, waiting for housing is largely unexplored in academic and popular debates. Waiting is not just technical, it does not simply encompass applying to access housing and then waiting for the application to be accepted. Given the importance of housing, waiting for long periods of time is challenging and affects many spheres of everyday life for applicants and their families. Living in often extremely difficult living conditions whilst waiting - in overcrowded council houses, in backyard shacks or in informal settlements - has serious effects on the everyday lives and emotions of applicants, and these effects of waiting in turn shape the ways the state is perceived in relation to housing provision. Waiting for housing is thus significant for various reasons, the first being that waiting (particularly waiting for long periods of time) is a genuine problem affecting a large number of the poor in South Africa, who are beholden to the state to provide housing. In this context of slow housing provision and unclear 'muddy' state systems of allocation and housing provision, applicants find themselves living in a 'permanent temporariness' (Yiftachel, 2009a; 2009b), where sometimes the only way to access housing is located in the middle-ground between legal and illegal and formal and informal practices. In embracing these 'gray spaces' (Yiftachel, 2009a; 2009b), a particular relationship with the state occurs, one that can be termed a 'gray' encounter.

This research project is also significant because it adds to an already well-established literature on everyday lived experiences of those living in uncertain circumstances. This thesis builds on this particular body of work, exploring how waiting affects the everyday, and illuminating how sometimes the mundanity of waiting to access housing from the state actually has profound effects not only on how people live, but also how they 'see' and interact with the state.

In the past, there was little hope for those people in Valhalla Park who were waiting for housing from the state. Given the numbers of people waiting for housing in Cape Town, Valhalla Park, which already has a large number of council-owned rental houses, would probably not benefit from a housing project anytime in the near future. However, since the creation of Sewende Laan and the court case that was won by the Civic organisation and the community, housing applicants are hopeful. Talk around waiting has turned to the positive, and although people continue to be apprehensive, a housing project is imminent and many people (though not all) will be accommodated. Exploring waiting for housing in the context of a forthcoming housing development

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project is interesting, particularly taking into account peoples' perceptions of the state in light of this development, which although is definitely in process, has taken longer than anyone thought.

For me, being able to research this project after several years of wanting to continue with research in Valhalla Park was rewarding. Learning more about the processes of waiting for housing, and how waiting affects everyday life for families was part of what interested me, and I feel that this research brings the difficult circumstances in which people wait into dialogue, and exploring this topic qualitatively grounds the statistics that are overwhelming, but cannot convey the extent to which waiting affects applicants' lives.

Robins, Cornwall and von Lieres (2008) suggest that citizen-state encounters – in some ways the heart of democracy and of citizenship itself – are never linear and tidy, but rather that all interactions take place in particular contexts, contexts that are often messy and difficult to define. Waiting for housing from the state is precisely this; it is situated in specific contexts, and is messy and complicated. Waiting for housing is legal, and yet illegalities can be produced as a consequence of being forced to wait for too long. Agency of the applicants should not be overlooked, and engaging both with and against, and despite the state is a part of the South African social housing narrative. Nuanced understanding of the ways in which people wait are thus important in order to understand that there is a 'betweenness' (Perramond, 2001) located in the middle-ground between formal and informal and legal and illegal.

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Extended Interviews (organised chronologically)

Interview with H.F., 12 May 2011

Interview with H.C., 12 May 2011

Interview with R.K., 15 August 2011

Interview with S.S., 15 August 2011

Interview with F.W., 16 August 2011

Interview with W.A., 22 August 2011

Interview with F.S., 23 August 2011

Interview with M.H., 23 August 2011

Interview with D.v.W., 29 August 2011

Interview with M.I., 29 August 2011

Interview with E.A., 5 September 2011

Interview with E.W., 7 September 2011

Interview with councillor N.A., 7 September 2011

Interview with Mrs K., 19 September 2011

Interview with N.K., 19 September 2011

Interview with Mrs R., 19 September 2011

Interview with R.D., 20 September 2011

Interview with D.W., 20 September 2011

Interview with L.O., 26 September 2011

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Interview with L.R., 27 September 2011

Interview with E.N., 27 September 2011

Interview with C.L., 27 September 2011

Interview with L.J., 4 October 2011

Interview with G.M, 4 October 2011

Interview with G.S., 10 and 18 October 2011

Interview with former housing official, 23 April 2012

Interview with housing manager, 23 April 2012

Block Interviews

Interview with D.V., 11 October 2011

Interview with C.R., 11 October 2011

Interview with E.D., 11 October 2011

Interview with T.A, 11 October 2011

Interview with D.T., 11 October 2011

Interview with V.H., 11 October 2011

Interview with J.F., 11 October 2011

Interview with C.K., 13 October 2011

Interview with N.K., 13 October 2011

Interview with M.R., 13 October 2011

Interview with P.v.R., 13 October 2011

Interview with V.B., 13 October 2011

Interview with M.d.B., 13 October 2011

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Interview with M.S., 13 October 2011

Interview with M.J., 17 October 2011

Interview with P.P., 17 October 2011

Interview with M.D., 27 October 2011

Interview with J.P., 27 October 2011

Interview with K.P., 27 October 2011

Interview with R.A., 27 October 2011

Interview with B.T., 27 October 2011

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Appendices

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Appendix A
Research Consent Form

Consent form for Saskia Greyling's Masters research project at UCT

'Waiting for housing and housing whilst waiting: Housing applicants' negotiations for shelter while waiting for a house in Valhalla Park, Cape Town'

Conducted with assistance from the Valhalla Park United Front civic organisation

Thank you for agreeing to let me speak to you about your housing experiences for my Masters Research project. I would like to use your information in my thesis to illustrate everyday lived experiences of peoples' housing conditions in Valhalla Park. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask me, and if there is anything that you'd prefer not to speak about, please just tell me.

- ☐ Are you comfortable with me using your information in full in my project?
- ☐ Would you prefer me to use small pieces of information taken out of its specific context?
- ☐ Would you like your name and surname used?
- ☐ Would you like your initials used?
- ☐ Would you like a completely different name or number assigned to your interview so that your information remains anonymous?

Name:
Address:
Date of Interview:

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Appendix B
Research Plan/Questions for Valhalla Park Residents

Plan for research in Valhalla Park

Introduction

- Please tell me a little bit about yourself (where did you grow up, how did you come to VP, how long have you been here, etc)

Questions about the Application for housing process

- Where did interviewee apply?
- How did interviewee know to apply?
- When did the interviewee apply?
- Has the interviewee renewed or updated his/her application? Why and where did he/she do this?
- Has the interviewee had any housing offers from the government?
- Was the application made under the interviewee's name, or as a couple? If applicable, why did you choose to be listed as single/married?
- What type of shelter assistance did you choose on the application form? (i.e. free standing house, flat, semi detached / row house, room in a hostel, piece of land to build your own home, help with upgrading you shack where it is, buying a credit-linked property, shelter in an Emergency housing project, an old-aged unit)
- Which suburb would you prefer to stay in? Why? What do you like about that suburb?
- Do you think it matters how long you've lived in Cape Town and in Valhalla Park?
- What are the housing officials like? Do you know them personally? Are they helpful with your application? How do they help you?
- What do you think of the government in relation to waiting for housing?
- How do your interactions with the housing officials shape how you see the government? Do people talk to each other about their interactions with the housing officials? It is usually about being treated well or badly?

Questions about waiting for housing and housing solutions while waiting

- How does waiting for a house feel?
- Do the feelings associated with waiting change over time?
- Do you ever feel like giving up waiting? If you do, what happens next?
- What does having a house of your own mean to you?
- How will having a house of your own make life easier?
- How do you want to live?
- What are some of the struggles of living in a house that isn't yours?
- What are your options for housing whilst waiting? Why did you choose this one?
- Are there any benefits to living like this?

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- How long have you lived here?
- How does the space work? What do you share with the other family, and what is yours or theirs?
- Do you have access to the house while they're out? What do you do if not?
- Is this a long-term solution? If you had to move, where would you go?
- Where did you live before you lived here?
- Do you think formal housing helps problems other than just the housing problem? Things like crime, integrating neighbourhoods, having an asset so that you can borrow money?
- Would you choose to stay in Valhalla or move to a housing development further away? Why?
- How important is it having neighbours who you know? What will happen if you move?
- Who is waiting for housing in your family? How long have they been waiting? What do you know of their stories?
- Do you know anybody who got housing from the government?
- Is there anyone in Valhalla who you think we should speak to?
- How do you feel about the government in relation to waiting for a house?
- What do you have to say about the new housing development?

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Appendix C
Questions for Ward Councillor

Questions for Ward Councillor

- Role of a councillor – role in the community and role in local government
- Is the job harder in areas that are 'poorer' than other areas? Are the budgets for each ward the same? Does your budget have to stretch further? What do you prioritise?
- What are some of the biggest social problems in the area at the moment? What do you do to support the community?
- Do you play a role in housing in your community? How?
- Are you involved with the housing database, 'waiting list'? Does the system work? What do you think could be done to improve it?
- Do you believe the housing database system to be transparent enough?
- Are you involved with the new housing project? How is it going? What stage is it at now? What problems have been encountered along the way? When do you anticipate the houses being finished? Do you see problems arising with the allocation of houses? Are the houses to be rental or subsidy houses?
- Changes of municipality and the influences this has had... change from CCT to Tygerberg to CoCT, etc...

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Appendix D
Questions for Former Housing Official

Questions for Former Housing Official

- Can you please explain the role you played as an area manager
- period of employment
- scope of job
- Areas that you worked in and their differences, e.g. Khayelitsha listless prior to 1994 (site and service, core houses)

- How did the waiting list system for coloured areas work during this period?

- What were the requirements to qualify to be on the list in those days? (income, did you state where you wanted to live?, no of children?) And these days? Are certain factors weighted more than others? Are these factors kept quiet deliberately?

- How did the lists change with the changes in government (e.g. segregation, Tygerberg, Metropolitan Local Council, unicity) – who looked after the lists?

- What did the changes in the government structures and where the lists were managed make? Did they work as they were formally supposed to?

- Did these changes lead to confusion for the applicants? (or was it just about the colour of the books as someone in VP suggested)

- How did the city see the applicants in those days? What did they make of the waiting periods and experience? What were the city's priorities in terms of the list? Who were their priorities? Do you think this has changed at all?

- Did the city ever work with civic organisations around the lists? VP community members say so, but is this the case?

- What are some of the problems that were associated with the lists then? Now? Accuracy, keeping them updated, in-house fraud?

- What were some of the challenges of your job?

- How do the lists work now? What is the significance of the name change – list to database – what does this mean exactly? Do they actually work like they are supposed to formally?

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Appendix E
Questions for Housing Manager

Questions for Housing Manager

- Can you please explain your role as manager?
  - Scope of job, what it entails, challenges

- Can you explain how the housing database system works?
  - How did it work before (if that applies)

- What parts of housing do you deal with? Transfer of tenancy, vacancies, etc? List allocations for new settlements? Updating details of tenant and applicants? Who contacts whom?

- What are the requirements to apply to be on the housing database these days?

- What is the average waiting period here in Valhalla Park?

- How frequently does housing become available?

- Do evictions ever happen in VP, the rest of the city? Maybe you could explain how the indigent policy works?

- How do you think the city understands the people who are waiting for housing? Where do they think they are, who are they, what are their priorities – backyards, informal settlements, overcrowding?

- Could you explain the differences between the old 'list' system and the new 'database' system? How do you think applicants see these changes, if at all?

- Can you tell me about the allocation procedure? How does it work? What really counts - number of children, years waiting, the area you're waiting for?

- Are there any problems associated with the accuracy of the list? How is it updated?

- What are some of the challenges the city faces with regards to housing?

- Can you recommend anyone at the City/Bellville who I could speak to about the current housing database?

- How is the new housing project coming along? What stage is it at?

- Are there any documents you would recommend that I look at?

- Do you need a permit for a backyard shack?

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Appendix F
Block Interviews Questionnaire

Short block questionnaire for Valhalla Park

- How long have you lived in your house?
- How many people live in your house?
- Do you have a backyard shack? Who lives there? What is their relationship to the house owner? How does it work, what are the 'rules'?
- Do you own or rent this house?
- How long did you wait until you got this house?
- Where were you living before? Why did you move? Was it better/worse than now?
- What are some of the challenges of living like this?
- Is anyone who lives in the house on the housing waiting list? For how long? Are they hopeful that they'll get a house?
- What does it mean to you to have a house of your own?
- Have you made any changes to your house?

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Appendix G

Information Gathered from Block Interviews

Information Gathered from Short Block Interviews

Name	Years in House	Backyard Shack	Members Living Here	Own/Rent	Waiting List	Challenges	Other Details
D.V.	6/7 years	Yes – lives here	3 in backyard shack, 3 in house	Rent	Yes, 3 years	So many when the landlady was still alive – 'ons het elke dag geskel' [we fought every day] about the rent, she would cut off their water supply etc "The waiting list is too long, you wait for many years. The subsidy works quicker"	Lived with parents in VP before Lives with mother's friend Applying for a subsidy house – found house in Delft, waiting for transfer to go through 1 bedroom with space for additions Doesn't know area but just wants to be in a house "It means a lot to me, I can do my own thing and don't have to be scared to iron all my clothes now because the light. Then I have responsibility, I must check my own stuff. [I want] my child more to be free, because he can't come here with any friends or something like that"
C.R.	43 years	No	4 people, son, daughter, 2 grandchildren	Rent	No – inherited house from mother		
E.D.	30-something years	Yes – family members live there	5 people	Rent	Yes, lived in Crawford before		"Almal moes hulle eie huis he" [Everyone should have their own house] Did partitioning, tiling, garaging

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T.A.	24 years	Yes, newly added for daughter and child	7 people (husband, three children, one husband and grandchild)		Yes, waited for about 5 years, but lived in a place that was demolished in Saltriver, got houses then	House was vandalised before she moved in	Daughter waiting for subsidy, but struggling to find a house Lots of talk, about unemployment, lack of money, going backwards instead of forwards in life Sister on list for about 20 years, lives in a house that she rents (i.e. a subtenant) Respondent lived with her in-laws and said It was very challenging. She hasn't seen them for ten years.
D.T.	25, 26 years	Yes, but not used now because it leaks and is very cold	2 people, her and her son	Rental, but trying to buy house from council	Yes, waited for 10 years to get a house Lived with her mother before		"You're private, you're on your own, you don't need to depend on other people. You can do whatever you want, whenever you want" – living in a house of your own. Changed the floors and added built-in cupboards.
V.H.	Transferred from another house in VP, but in this house for 36 years	No, but has made additions Had a shack, but added on formally later	3 foster children, 2 children from first marriage, 7 people in house	Own – bought house in 2005	Yes, from Vrygrond originally No one else on waiting list	No challenges because she's made use of all the space	Made changes to yard and at the front of house, tiling "I love to be on my own so that I can be... I like to be quiet, because you know my children they are big and they make music, hard music, they bring friends" Wants to sell house when she dies Two bathrooms – very unusual for VP Plans to build an upstairs
J.F.	More than 30 years	Yes, two rooms at the back	6 children and her and her husband = 8 people And four		No, got house from mother, who died Children aren't on list (thought	Stand in a line for the bathroom in the morning Two boys sleep on the floor	

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			grandchildren		they had to be married to be on the list, despite having dependents)		
M.R.	38 years in Valhalla Park, 27 years in this house	Yes, one person lives in the shack	Her, grandchild, one son and her sister	Rent	Yes, about 17 years, but then got a house due to 'emergency' and sick child	Children sleep on the floor in the kitchen	Transferred because they didn't want to stay on the other side of Valhalla Park, but the size of the house is the same She wants to live alone and wants her children to get their own homes Her husband did partitioning
P.v.R.	30 years	Yes, boarder lives there	Her sister and her two children, respondent's child and a boarder	Rent	Mother died and she got the house, no one on waiting list except boarder	None	House still not in her name Likes to be her own boss, "don't be scared I'm running too much water... you feel free, independent" Tiling, redid the bathroom
V.B.	Over 30 years	Yes, for the three children	6 people	Rent	Yes, was her husband's, but she has been waiting 18 years	None	Tiling
M.d.B.	32 years	Yes, but attached to house for the children	4 people – her, her husband, and 2 older children	Rent	Yes, was on list for about 5 years Moved because of Group Areas	"It's fine, we live from day to day. Whatever happens, happens, but everything is quite fine here. No problems."	Partitioning Home shop for about 4 or 5 years
M.S.	Grandfather's house – he's lived here over 30 years	No	5 people	Rent	Doesn't know	No rules	Likes the comfort of a house – no leaking, etc Partitioning to make two bedrooms

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C.K.	Over 30 years	Yes – daughter in backyard shack	She and two daughters live here, and another in the backyard	Rent	Not on waiting list, but was forced to move due to Group Areas	No challenges because they're her daughters	Daughter has her own electricity box which eliminates arguments Share the bathroom, not the kitchen House is better than shacks because it's not as cold and doesn't leak
N.K.	32 years	Yes, three shacks	15 people	Own	It was his father's house and he has since inherited it	Says it's fine, but body languages says otherwise	Lived in Elsie's River and in Belgravia before "I'm lucky" to have a house of his own No changes because he has no money to do so
M.J.	Over 30 years	Yes daughter lives here, shares only the bathroom	6 people, including son	Rent	Her daughter's on the list – waiting for 9/10 years Respondent wasn't on the waiting list, got house because of Group Areas act	It's a bit crowded because her grandchild stays in the house, his mother in the shack outside – he sleeps with respondent and her husband "It doesn't matter you complain, you must go on"	From District Six One bedroom house, and has to make plans about who sleeps where Shares the house's electricity House has caught on fire because of the electricity connection "You can't even take people in today because you get too much problems with them" Her son's room was once a tyre repair place that her son-in-law ran
P.P.	33 years		3 people		Was on waiting list to get the house	No problems	Lived in Crawford before, in a shack Likes having her own house and doing what she wants to do
M.D.	30 years	Yes, 2 shacks Family members live here	5 people in the house and 5 in the shack	Rent	Transferred from her mother's name	It's been a long time, so they've got used to it Have own electricity boxes Sometimes there are problems, but they	Shacks went up about 5 years ago

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						sort them out by talking, fighting, Aunty Gerty mediates	
J.P.	29 years	Yes, daughter lives here with her husband and 5 children	2 people in house	Own – bought from council about 10 years ago	Daughter on list for about a year Julia got house on waiting list for about 6, 7 years	No problems, just that there are a lot of people and strain for Julia	From Kalksteenfontein "It's nice to have you own house"
K.P.	28 years	No	4 in the house – her, her husband and two sons	Rent	Yes, waited for a short time Son and daughter are on the list	No problems	Lived in town – 'strollers' in town – sleeping wherever they could
R.A.	26 years	Yes, Respondent and her husband live in one shack, and her brother and his girlfriend live in the other	8 people	Rent	Yes, she's been waiting for 5 years	Challenging, but manage to share the bathroom and kitchen	"I've never been homeless so I don't know the opposite of that. It's always great coming home, nice dry place, warm place, so it's great" Tiling, geyser, and expanded with the wendy houses, and then built-in cupboards

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B.T.	Over 30 years	No, but have an extension	Her, husband and three children, one grandchild and her husband's nephew	Rent	It was her mother's house; she was granted tenancy	No problems	No rules, but have to share the bathroom It means a lot to have a house of her own – it's a lot of responsibility

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