

**Reclaiming the Spatial Imaginary: A Photovoice Study of Resistance to Displacement in  
Woodstock, Cape Town**

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### Abstract

Present-day South Africa is still characterised by colonial- and apartheid-era patterns of urban displacement that are exacerbated by gentrification. Low-income tenants' and evictees' experiences of displacement and its resistance have social, spatial, psychological, and political components. Examining these components can contribute to understanding the processes and impacts of gentrification. Reclaim the City (RTC) is a young grassroots campaign that resists evictions and demands well-located affordable housing in Cape Town through protest, education, and occupation. This study investigated how RTC activists experience and resist their displacement from the gentrifying suburb of Woodstock in Cape Town. Using a critical psychological framework, data from photovoice, participant observation, and key informant interviews were collected in 2018, triangulated, and analysed using thematic analysis. This study found that participants' experiences of displacement were characterised by being "thingified" as black low-income tenants through mistreatment by landlords, displacement from centres to peripheries, becoming invisible residents, and internalisation. This was compounded for those with intersectional vulnerabilities, such as women and African migrants. Such experiences uphold rather than contradict an *apartheid spatial imaginary*, encompassing the continuation of apartheid-era norms relating to psychological, spatial, and social elements of displacement into the present. While sometimes delegitimised for their illegal activities, this study illustrates how RTC activists combined strategies of building new identities, organising legal and illegal resistance to displacement, and making meaning of their occupation of a vacant building in Woodstock, to pave the way for new spatial imaginaries. Implications of these findings are discussed.

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

Since the colonial era, displacement and land dispossession have been prominent features of the South African landscape. One critical debate surrounds the accessibility of urban space to black low-income groups in South Africa, made particularly salient by the maintenance of apartheid spatial patterns in present-day urban environments. Bringing this into central consideration in the present day is an activist movement called Reclaim the City that campaigns for low-income inner-city housing in Cape Town. The following historical overview and introduction will contextualise this investigation of Reclaim the City's experiences of displacement and resistance, by highlighting how race, class, space, and power have historically been linked in South Africa and particularly in Cape Town.

It is worth noting that race is considered throughout this dissertation to be a category that has been socially constructed by oppressive systems and ideologies, but also one that has structural and material components and consequences for identity and experience. This dissertation makes reference to certain generalised apartheid-era categories of race, namely white, black, coloured, and Indian. It does so with the understanding that the experiences and identities of members of these groups follow certain social and structural trends, but are also fluid (Mama, 1995) and differ in terms of individual and intersectional experiences (Crenshaw, 1995). Accordingly, I use racial labels such as "black" and "coloured" to highlight the salience of apartheid racial categories in shaping people's experiences.

### **1.1 Representation and Power in the Colonial Era**

Segregation in the urban South African environment can be traced back to colonial policies that aimed to maintain social distance between indigenous groups and colonisers. During the colonial era, and particularly from the 1850s to the passage of the Natives Land Act in 1913, local European authorities increasingly began to restrict black, coloured, and Indian groups to segregated settlements outside developing urban areas (Mabin, 1992). Racialised and classed representations, interlinked with power, have historically influenced this urban spatial landscape in constructing social distance and legitimising the creation of spatial distance between different racial groups (Nahnsen, 2006).

The city centre of Cape Town, home primarily to the economic elite and business, was a particularly contested site for inclusion and urban citizenship (Miraftab, 2012). Under colonialism, property ownership was linked to power, rights, and citizenship in ways that endure to the present (Miraftab, 2012). In the 1850s, the independence of the Cape Colony was followed by a period of urbanisation which privileged wealthier residents and property owners (Miraftab, 2012). Central city areas were the first to receive investments and

improvements, while poor and peripheral areas received no such investment (Miraftab, 2012). Political citizenship and property ownership were linked, in that those who owned property in the city (predominantly Europeans) were able to contribute to political decisions, while those who did not own property did not have such power (Miraftab, 2012).

This pattern of inequality was racialised by a “sanitation discourse” that classified white Europeans as clean, civilised, and global, while Africans were constructed as dangerous, rural, and linked to crime and unsanitary conditions, thereby threatening the civilised nature of the city with their way of life (Miraftab, 2012; Nahnsen, 2006). Such fear-based racial representations partially justified the political imperative of achieving race-based segregation (Miraftab, 2012; Nahnsen, 2006). Coloured groups were often particularly judged according to their “social respectability” to determine their belonging in the city, with belonging motivated by factors such as being born in the city and having a high social and economic status (Nahnsen, 2006). Coloured groups were allowed to live in closer proximity to the city, but separate settlements were built for black groups so as to separate them completely from the Europeans, while maintaining a proximity that still allowed Europeans to access them as cheap labour (Miraftab, 2012). A lack of adequate services in these areas led to actual outbreaks of disease and aided in naturalising the sanitation discourse, with the apparent necessity of segregation resolving the dilemma it held for liberal values of the time (Miraftab, 2012). Cape Town’s urban culture has therefore been influenced by discourses that construct various “others” in relation to the assumption that cities are a white invention and living space (Nahnsen, 2006).

## **1.2 Spatial Apartheid**

When the National Party came into power in 1948, they did so with a commitment to planned urban segregation, including the forced removal of racial groups out of homogeneously-classified group areas and the withdrawal of land tenure rights (Mabin, 1992). This built on the foundations of the sanitation discourse (Miraftab, 2012) and the population control propaganda of *swart gevaar* (Afrikaans for “black peril”). The introduction of the Group Areas Act in 1950 ensured that the apartheid government’s ideology of segregation was firmly entrenched in city space by relegating black groups to the furthest peripheries, coloured and Indian groups to more medial areas, and allowing white groups in the central areas, with buffers between them (Mabin, 1992). This “spatial apartheid” has largely been maintained in Cape Town to the present day.

District Six, for example, was a multiracial area of Jewish, Indian, Greek, and African immigrants, and black, coloured, and Indian South Africans, just outside of the inner city.

Drawing on the sanitation discourse, apartheid government authorities attempted to construct District Six as a “slum” that needed to be redeveloped, rather than a living community that had been neglected by authorities (Hart, 1988). In 1966, District Six was re-zoned as a white group area, prompting the forced removal of approximately 55 000 predominantly coloured people to the Cape Flats, a series of black and coloured townships outside the city (Hart, 1988). The area was then bought by the state and razed, but underwent little redevelopment (Hart, 1988).

The disruption of communities and collective identity, the psychological trauma caused by the displacement and destruction, and the fear, anger, and bitterness of displaced groups, were long-standing effects of these events (Hart, 1988). Materially, communities lost their livelihoods, property, and proximity to economic centres, to be placed in areas with little character, infrastructure, or opportunity, resulting in gangsterism and violence. Symbolically, the case of District Six made unacceptable the existence of a racially-diverse community, and diminished the visibility of low-income black and coloured people in the city centre (Beyers, 2008). In 1990, shortly before the repeal of the Group Areas Act (GAA), the late political geographer Dr. Glen Elder concluded an article on the effect of the Act by stating,

*South Africa, devoid of the GAA will not exhibit a markedly different pattern of racial residential settlement. White flight, violent racial confrontation, 'blockbusting', mistrust and suspicion are not simply products of racial residential segregation. Spawned by the GAA and a host of other laws, these actions and reactions are presently part of South African life.*(Elder, 1990, p.264)

The case of District Six, emblematic of how black and coloured people were exploited, removed, and their existence in the city erased, would remain in the public imagination for generations.

### **1.3 “Forced Removals” in the New South Africa**

In post-apartheid South Africa, it is internationalisation, gentrification, and privatisation that predominantly facilitate the displacement of working-class residents. Since apartheid, Cape Town particularly has been constructed and marketed as a cosmopolitan, multicultural city with European heritage and natural beauty, somewhat echoing its colonial construction as a white living space (Nahnsen, 2006). Cape Town often brands itself as a tourist city, leading to the commodification of its culture, history, and people as attractions (Bickford-Smith, 2009). In this drive to be a hub of economic and political importance, the global imperative has often been prioritised over specific local needs (Lemanski, 2007). While globalised central city and tourist areas create profits needed for domestic resources,

these profits are often re-invested in those same areas to attract more global interest and investment, rather than being redistributed into areas of concentrated poverty such that they too can develop (Lemanski, 2007), echoing colonial patterns of investment in the central city rather than the peripheries (Miraftab, 2012).

**1.3.1 Neoliberal urban renewal and privatisation.** Uneven development and urban exclusion are further perpetuated by post-apartheid neoliberal urban planning in Cape Town, where racialisation is replaced with economic mechanisms that achieve similar ends (Miraftab, 2012). *Neoliberalism* in this sense emphasises meritocracy, free market capitalism in the allocation of land and power, and the privatisation of public services. Urban renewal approaches by neoliberal governments generally uphold a “revanchist” focus on reclaiming working-class land and developing it for the middle classes, accelerating the dispossession and displacement of low-income residents (Rodríguez & Di Virgilio, 2016). In Cape Town, public urban space has additionally gradually been sold to the private sector for development, prompting the eviction and displacement of longstanding low-income communities, and their exclusion from well-resourced, privately developed areas (Spoceter, 2007).

The Cape Town City Improvement District (CID) system, for example, further entrenches inequality into the spatial map through economic incentives that invite private investment and market force control into areas of prime tourist, residential, and economic importance, to promote their urban renewal (Lemanski, 2007; Miraftab, 2012; Visser & Kotze, 2008). CIDs are areas of the city in which property owners can vote to raise levies to fund additional security and cleaning initiatives. Miraftab (2012) compares the CID system, where wealthier residents can pay additional rates in certain areas to access superior municipal services, to how mercantile elites in similar areas were the almost exclusive recipients of government investment in the colonial era. The CID system maintains the linkage of property ownership and political citizenship, given that only property owners, rather than residential and commercial tenants, can vote, give input to, and direct the CIDs and their related development initiatives (Miraftab, 2012). The CID system is further argued to maintain the colonial sanitation discourse by conflating poverty with crime and grime, and seeking to rid urban areas of all of these (Miraftab, 2012; Nahnsen, 2006).

Miraftab (2012) therefore argues that planners have “allowed their imaginations to be captured” (p.29) by uncritically adopting best practices from the Global North. Nahnsen (2006) similarly calls for new discourses of urban development that do not rely on white groups’ fears of othered groups. Urban political citizenship largely remains contingent on property ownership and wealth and, discursively, a newer sanitation discourse of crime and

grime that justifies exclusionary urban development. According to Miraftab (2012), the classification of these policies as innovative undermines South Africa's potential in the post-apartheid era to imagine urban planning and renewal beyond the colonial and apartheid lens.

**1.3.2 Gentrification.** Gentrification, originally defined by Glass (1964) to mean the migration of middle-class groups into working-class neighbourhoods more proximal to increasingly desirable city centres, reinforces uneven development. Gentrification is often seen by governments as a means of deconcentrating poverty, by attracting investment into low-income areas through middle class movement into these areas, to create opportunities for upward social mobility of lower-income residents (Formoso, Weber, & Atkins, 2010; Shaw & Hagemans, 2015). However, it is more heavily associated with the consequence of new residents upgrading these areas, privatising their services and spaces, and increasing rent beyond the reach of working-class residents, who are subsequently displaced to peripheral areas and excluded from development (Formoso et al., 2010; Glass, 2013; Lees, Slater, & Wyly, 2008). This is not easily separable from consideration of race in countries that experienced segregation. Those living in former white areas characterised by their superior services and locations generally are able to own homes that appreciate in value, to have access to sufficient education, and to experience less exposure to environmental hazards (Lipsitz, 2007). This creates an enduring privilege that is passed on to future generations, largely preventing their displacement with more modern gentrification.

#### **1.4 The Case of Woodstock**

Woodstock is a suburb near Cape Town's central city. Despite historically accommodating working-class white and coloured people and European and African immigrants and refugees, it did not face the same scale of forced removals under apartheid as similar communities like District Six (Garside, 1993). Under the Group Areas Act, some parts of it were zoned as "white" and later rezoned as "coloured" towards the time the Act was repealed, and some remained "controlled" or "undefined" areas, not assigned to a specific racial group (Garside, 1993). Coloured people were therefore able to rent accommodation or buy property in Woodstock through nominee buyers, and made up a large proportion of the population (Garside, 1993).

Despite Woodstock's practical status as a multiracial area, Elder (1990) highlights how the lack of legal recognition of this beyond being classified as "undefined" meant its coloured residents lived under constant threat of displacement or punishment. Such groups faced racial confrontations, denial of access to services, constant threats of harm from right-wing groups, and exploitation and eviction by landlords (Elder, 1990). Still, being in close

proximity to the economic opportunities of the central business district and their long-standing communities was beneficial.

Woodstock's "forced removals" mainly came with the onset of gentrification, which intensified from the 1980s onwards (Garside, 1993). Landlords increasingly aimed to attract middle-class tenants to earn higher rents, by renovating their properties and evicting longstanding working-class residents (Garside, 1993). Businesses and new developments began to target a wealthier clientele. This gentrification continues to the present day. Although neither the City of Cape Town, Western Cape Provincial Government, nor National Government keep a statistical record of eviction cases, media and independent research reports give some idea of the extent of the problem (Pillay et al., 2017). A report by Ndifuna Ukwazi, a non-profit land litigation and research organisation, mentions various high-profile evictions in Woodstock over the past two decades, with some eviction cases displacing up to 200 residents at a time, some displacing whole rows of houses, and some displacing families who had lived in their houses for decades (Pillay et al., 2017). Many residents were evicted from poorly maintained buildings by landlords intending to renovate their properties for wealthier tenants, and many were also charged high rents that they could not afford (Pillay et al., 2017).

In many eviction cases, if evictees are to be rendered homeless and are on the waiting list for government-sponsored housing, they are eligible for alternative accommodation under the Emergency Housing Programme (Cirolia, 2014). However, the only available transitional housing (at the time of this study) exists at Delft Symphony Way Temporary Relocation Area (commonly known as *Blikkiesdorp*, Afrikaans for "Tin Can Town") and Wolwerivier Temporary Relocation Area, both about 30 kilometres outside the city centre. These sites have been labelled inhumane and unjust for their lack of adequate living conditions and location outside the central city, particularly their distance from residents' communities, schools, and places of work; overcrowding; small, non-secure, leaking and uninsulated shacks; as well as crime and the lack of amenities such as police stations and hospitals (Cirolia, 2014; Pillay et al., 2017; Ranslem, 2015). This is in contrast to the well-established and -serviced multicultural community of Woodstock.

Temporary Relocation Areas are argued to facilitate evictions, as legal evictions require the availability of alternative accommodation, and such areas have also been used to relocate low-income communities from areas which stand to produce higher profits from redevelopment (Newton, 2009; Ranslem, 2015). The "temporary" nature of these relocation sites is also considered a mischaracterisation by various researchers and activists, as many

residents have been there for several years, waiting for permanent housing (Cirolia, 2014; Ranslem, 2015). Ranslem (2015) argues that Temporary Relocation Areas undermine the state's requirement to ensure the fulfilment of South Africans' rights to adequate housing, by trapping residents in "indefinite temporariness" (p. 66) while waiting for elusive permanent housing.

It is difficult not to draw parallels between the present-day case of gentrifying Woodstock, and the case of forced removals in District Six in 1966. Here, too, evictions or forced removals are facilitated by the bulldozing of homes to make way for new developments and new residents as the identity of the area changes, as well as the government-led relocation of residents to under-resourced settlements far from the city. Even in news articles, evictions of low-income tenants from inner-city areas are still often represented as "forced removals", and a racialised and classed map of the city is often superimposed upon its geography (Dougan, 2018; Pather, 2016; Villette, 2017). Despite the end of colonialism and apartheid, spatial violence looms large in the public imagination. More broadly, these patterns of eviction and peripheral displacement concentrate wealth, government investment, and opportunity in certain areas and, thus far, concentrate under-funded affordable and low-income housing on the city's periphery, which reinforces rather than transforms spatial apartheid (Turok, 2001). This serves to facilitate the economic and spatial exclusion of low-income groups from the inner city.

### **1.5 Reclaim the City**

Reclaim the City (RTC) was founded in 2016 by domestic workers in Sea Point and organisers from Ndifuna Ukwazi, a research and law non-profit organisation in Cape Town. Its first campaign was to stop the sale of prime provincially-owned land in Sea Point to property developers, calling instead for it to be used for social housing (Reclaim the City, 2018c). RTC is now a fully-fledged grassroots housing activism organisation, supported by Ndifuna Ukwazi, which provides support to evictees and low-income tenants in the form of political organising, research, and litigation (Reclaim the City, 2018a). Under the banner of "Land for people, not for profit", RTC aims to disrupt property power, embark on actions that increase the access of low-income groups to well-located affordable housing in Cape Town, and end practices of displacing people to relocation camps outside the city (Reclaim the City, 2018b). It is guided by a formal constitution, which promotes inclusivity, non-violence, equality, a poor and working-class struggle, dignity and respect, justice, and transparency (Reclaim the City, 2018b).

The movement has made headlines particularly for its creative forms of protest, including gatherings outside politicians' homes and property developers' offices, public statements and videos on social media, legal handling of large group eviction cases, and occupations of vacant buildings. In 2017, RTC notably occupied two vacant government-owned buildings in Cape Town, one in the exclusive suburb of Granger Bay and one in gentrifying Woodstock. The former is owned by the Western Cape Government and City of Cape Town (Pentz, 2016), and the latter by the Western Cape Government with the City of Cape Town having Power of Attorney (City of Cape Town, 2017), but both have been vacant for a number of years. In the movement, Helen Bowden Nurses' Home is called "Ahmed Kathrada House" or "AKH" and the Woodstock Hospital is called "Cissie Gool House" or "CGH". An early statement released by the occupiers of these buildings declared,

*We are residents of Woodstock, Sea Point, Marikana informal settlement, Blikkiesdorp and Khayelitsha. We are from communities at the forefront of the housing and segregation crisis in our city. We stand in solidarity with the struggles of all poor and working class people who still live homeless under bridges; in shacks and informal settlements at the edge of our city; in backyards and wendy houses on the Cape Flats; and in store rooms and domestic quarters in former white suburbs. (Reclaim the City, 2017)*

The occupations were initially used as an act of protest or political leverage to force the government to meet their demands (Reclaim the City, 2017). Demands included using publicly-owned inner-city land to build affordable housing, especially for vulnerable groups like the elderly, homeless, and immigrants; building temporary housing for evictees closer to the city centre; upgrading informal settlements; and engaging meaningfully with low-income communities (Reclaim the City, 2017). In 2018, a decision was made to increase the number of residents in Cissie Gool House from fewer than 50 to over 400 permanent occupants who were facing eviction from their homes. RTC and Ndifuna Ukwazi have now held these occupations for almost two years, during which the City of Cape Town has identified ten inner-city sites for affordable housing (Democratic Alliance, 2017). Some of these are planned (at the time of writing) to be developed in Woodstock and Salt River, where RTC has concentrated much of their protest action. RTC has generally received support from a wide portion of South African civil society. However, their methods and goals of protest have also been criticised by powerful groups such as provincial and municipal leadership (Adriaanse, 2019; City of Cape Town, 2016; Zille, 2017), property developers (Geffen, 2017), and local residents.

## **1.6 Outline of Thesis**

Recognising that the making of place is interwoven with psychological processes, this thesis explores the psychological landscape of displacement in Cape Town through Reclaim the City's spatial activism, focusing on their Woodstock chapter. Chapter One has provided a historical overview and contextualisation of urban displacement, particularly in Woodstock, and briefly described Reclaim the City. This introduces the study's focus on displacement and resistance, and demonstrates how colonialism, apartheid, and neoliberal urban development have influenced the spatial form and the public imagination. Chapter Two reviews the interdisciplinary literature on the lived experiences of urban displacement and its organised resistance and introduces the aims and research questions of this study. Chapter Three outlines the theoretical framework of critical psychology employed in this investigation, the multiple qualitative methods used, and other methodological concerns relating to sampling, data analysis, ethics, and reflexivity. Chapters Four and Five present the findings of this study. Chapter Four presents findings related to the experience of displacement and Chapter Five highlights strategies employed to resist displacement. Chapter Six, the final chapter, concludes with a summary of the findings and their significance and describes some limitations and recommendations of this study.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

The following literature review highlights significant theoretical contributions and research findings from the interdisciplinary literature on displacement and resistance. It begins by outlining place and displacement. Links between place identity, representation, and belonging are then discussed and qualitative features of experiences of displacement are highlighted by drawing on different studies. Last, resistance to displacement is considered, demonstrating the particular significance of occupying public space. The aim of this literature review is to weave together research from disparate disciplines that demonstrates the qualitative and psychological forms of displacement and resistance that occur alongside urban change, and to highlight the place of this study within this.

### **2.1 Place and Displacement**

Cities are more than sites of residence and consumer activity. Research from a variety of disciplines considers the social and psychological processes of urban life that are facilitated or impeded by the city. From a geographical perspective, Bailly (1993) argues that individuals bring together structural, functional, and symbolic features to create place, developing meanings of spaces beyond their functions. Space is therefore given existential meaning through the consciousness and ideology of its inhabitants to become “place”, and places hold individual and collective memories and symbols through being our life-worlds (Bailly, 1993). The “psychology of place”, drawn from geography, anthropology, psychology, and psychiatry, accordingly argues that achieving a sense of belonging to place is an important goal of individuals, incorporating key aspects of familiarity with place, attachment to place, and place identity (Fullilove, 1996). These are both internal and external, in that belonging arises as both a subjective feeling and a state that is recognised to some extent by others. Place is therefore considered to be a psychosocial location, supporting psychological and social health. It influences the shaping of our human existence and relationships and is shaped by human thought and action (Fullilove, 1996).

Some evidence for the meaning of place beyond physical space itself can be seen in a photovoice study in which 29 American adult and youth residents of under-resourced urban areas were asked to take photographs of meaningful places in their neighbourhood (Nowell, Berkowitz, Deacon, & Foster-Fishman, 2006). The authors found that characteristics of place were meaningful to participants in relation to their personal histories, in communicating the community’s value and character and that of its members, in defining the community’s social norms, and in providing cues to reinforce their identities and remind them of their potential

(Nowell et al., 2006). Further examples of such studies are provided in the following sections of this chapter.

*Displacement* accordingly takes both physical and psychological forms. Displacement is used here to refer to three processes of involuntary removal from one's residential location, outlined by Marcuse (1985) who drew on earlier definitions (Grier & Grier, 1980 as cited in Marcuse, 1985). Displacement can be direct, in that residents, past and present, might be made to leave their place of residence due to factors which make it uninhabitable, such as service cut-offs or rising rent (Marcuse, 1985). Exclusionary displacement refers to residents being unable to move into a new residence because of similar factors beyond their control, while displacement pressure occurs when displacement has already taken place in the area, disrupting lower-income residents' social fabric or their economic viability of continuing to live there (Marcuse, 1985).

These are to be understood as disempowering and marginalising processes of movement which cause a disruption of a sense of home, of community resources, and of justice (Slater, 2009). In the case of segregation resulting from racist spatial planning, many marginalised residents additionally find that their social networks in their neighbourhoods provide a reprieve from the exclusionary nature of the broader city (Lohnert, Oldfield, & Parnell, 1998) and rely on these networks as a resource for resilience and well-being, more so than better-resourced communities (Betancur, 2010). However, displacement removes the space in which the community forms and operates, which can disrupt necessary social support networks and place attachments found in neighbourhoods (Formoso et al., 2010). Displacement can cause feelings of loss or nostalgia, disorientation due to the loss of one's neighbourhood and community, and alienation from place, diminishing one's sense of belonging and general mental health (Fullilove, 1996). It is therefore not enough to attempt to understand displacement without empathy for the meaning places hold for those who use and inhabit them, or to understand individuals without consideration of the spaces they inhabit.

## **2.2 Place Identity, Representation, and Belonging**

*Place identity* provides a useful tool for further understanding the psychological and political components of displacement. In environmental psychology, place identity traditionally refers to a cognitive appraisal of one's physical environment, and the effect of this in defining or negating one's self-identity, often investigated through quantitative studies (Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983). Place identity, like displacement, is social and political: individual place identity requires both having a place and knowing that it is recognised and respected by others (Fullilove, 1996).

Place and place identity have more recently been considered using a critical and discursive lens to identify how they are constructed through language and talk and how they function politically or ideologically (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000). Dixon and Durrheim's (2004) discursive psychological analysis of interviews with black and white beach-goers on a desegregated South African beach, for example, suggested that the designation of the beach as a whites-only area under apartheid had created a white place identity. White groups then experienced post-apartheid desegregation as a form of displacement, while black beach-goers in turn constructed the desegregated beach as a site of liberation where both they and the white beach-goers belonged, classifying white beach-goers' retreat from the beach as inappropriate (Dixon & Durrheim, 2004). It could be said that white groups were empowered by historically exclusionary white place identities, while black groups' power to challenge these depended on their construction of alternative post-apartheid place identities.

Other studies, while not explicitly examining place identity as a discursive construct, provide similar insights into the interweaving of urban change with representations of place and belonging. Using Participatory Action Research, Cahill (2006) explored 6 young African American women's experiences of gentrification in the Lower East Side of New York in the 1990s. The women described how they were policed by social representations, in being associated with racialised and classed stereotypes related to poverty, single motherhood, urban decline or "the ghetto" and crime, which were materially reproduced by structural inequalities (Cahill, 2006). They argued that these stereotypes were used to justify disinvestment from the neighbourhood, and facilitated their displacement by fixing their stereotyped representation in the public imagination, in a manner which constructed their identities as incongruent with the gentrifying identity of the neighbourhood around them (Cahill, 2006). Aside from these representations rendering them out of place, they also fostered within them a fear of exclusion, prompting behaviour centred around negotiating these stereotypes (Cahill, 2006). Faced with a whitening and gentrifying neighbourhood, they were forced to assimilate into whiteness, move out or be displaced, or render themselves invisible (Cahill, 2006).

Similarly, studies in Vancouver, Cape Town, and Long Island demonstrate how the construction or representation of marginalised groups as being out of place in relation to certain place identities can be influential in facilitating their displacement. From interviews with informal recyclers in a gentrifying neighbourhood in Vancouver, Parizeau (2017) described how space and amenities were increasingly privatised and taken ownership of by wealthier residents, decreasing low-income residents' access to space and increasing their

displacement. Once again reminiscent of the sanitation discourse, informal recyclers constructed as poor, dirty, or undesirable were socially excluded, and their neighbourhood was symbolically constructed as a place of poverty that requires intervention (Parizeau, 2017). Lemanski and Saff (2010) similarly found in historically white middle-class areas in Cape Town and Long Island that middle-class residents' discursive strategies of exclusion of black and immigrant groups ("outsiders") involved the inscription of values onto space, demarcating power relations that privilege long-standing property owners (Lemanski & Saff, 2010). Namely, talk of the sociocultural preservation of the neighbourhood, as well as a fear of crime, concerns about overcrowding and damage, and the decline in property value, all associated with "outsiders", were instrumental in this exclusion (Lemanski & Saff, 2010).

In the Cape Town study, predominantly white residents of the area additionally formed the Muizenberg Improvement District and carried out various legal, physical, and economic measures intended to remove immigrants and gangs from the area, citing a fear of the changes to their environment (Lemanski & Saff, 2010). These studies demonstrate how place identities situated in particular historical and political or ideological contexts can contribute to the exclusion and displacement of groups represented as out of place.

### **2.3 Qualitative Experiences of Displacement**

Displacement has been examined in various ways. While quantitative methods are useful to understand the number of people displaced and the spatial and economic patterns of displacement, qualitative or mixed-method studies can provide more detail on the processes it involves, the forms it can take, and the lived experiences of displaced groups (Weller & Van Hulten, 2012). Such experiences are important to consider both to add nuance to understandings of gentrification and to take the perspectives of those most affected by urban change into account in drawing conclusions (Parizeau, 2017).

Weller and Van Hulten's (2012) qualitative analysis of the housing crisis in Melbourne, for example, extended the findings of their quantitative analysis by showing how gentrification affected low-income families, as well as the processes that create their displacement and how they struggled to re-establish themselves. Similarly, Newman and Wyly (2006) demonstrated, through a qualitative and quantitative analysis of gentrification and displacement in New York, how quantifiable displacement serves as an indicator of deepening class inequality in urban housing markets. Qualitatively, their analysis demonstrated the political salience of displacement for community residents and organisers, who simultaneously welcomed long-awaited investment into their neighbourhoods and opposed the resultant market changes that forced them to move (Newman & Wyly, 2006).

A growing body of qualitative literature documents further psychological, political, and symbolic components of displacement. One significant feature reported in these studies is that low-income tenants experience being mistreated by landlords in gentrifying contexts. An ethnographic study in Istanbul (Sakizlioğlu, 2014), and interview studies in Melbourne (Atkinson, 2015) and New York (Newman & Wyly, 2006), have shown how landlords in these gentrifying areas decreased their investment in the maintenance and renewal of their buildings, creating deteriorating and hazardous conditions. Landlords also instituted significant rent increases during interviewees' tenancy, to accelerate their displacement and replace them with tenants who could afford higher rents (Atkinson, 2015; Newman & Wyly, 2006).

In these contexts, conditions were also created that negatively impacted residents' abilities to protect themselves from this mistreatment. For example, municipalities and landlords would intimidate, threaten, and harass residents before evicting them (often illegally), which created uncertainty and fear (Newman & Wyly, 2006; Sakizlioğlu, 2014). In New York, residents were intimidated away from complaining to their landlords or other authorities, on the grounds that there was no more affordable accommodation to which they could move in the area if they were evicted (Newman & Wyly, 2006). In Istanbul, a lack of communication leading to an extended period of anxious waiting led residents to feel powerless to protect themselves and additionally, demolitions of buildings near residents' homes triggered fear and anxiety (Sakizlioğlu, 2014). Psychological and practical barriers that accompanied mistreatment therefore hindered residents' resistance to displacement or utilisation of resources or structures that could combat the illegal actions of landlords.

Even when gentrification did not result in physical displacement of low-income residents, it operated as a spatial manifestation of intersecting structural power dynamics, in that dominant groups have greater place-making abilities, which causes the reciprocal loss of place, materially and emotionally, among marginalised groups (Valli, 2015). Qualitative interviews and participatory photography studies with long-term residents of gentrifying areas in New York (Pearsall, 2012; Valli, 2015) and Melbourne (Atkinson, 2015; Shaw & Hagemans, 2015) illustrated how they felt othered by the influx of wealthier newcomers into their neighbourhood, and out of place as the social, economic, and cultural nature of the environment changed. In Melbourne, for example, changes in the symbolic spatial and social form of the neighbourhood, of new codes of dress, social activities, and establishments, combined with a general sense of feeling unwelcome and witnessing familiar places slowly

changing or being demolished, unsettled lower-income residents' relationship to place (Atkinson, 2015).

An influx of wealthier residents also emphasised the experience of social inequality or marginalisation for low-income groups (Valli, 2015). In Melbourne, the loss of low-cost shops and meeting places led long-term residents to question their value and to feel actively excluded from new establishments (Shaw & Hagemans, 2015). In addition, the decreased provision of social services made low-income community members feel neglected, diminishing their sense of belonging in the area (Shaw & Hagemans, 2015). Changes in the class identity of neighbourhoods were therefore shown to produce a loss of sense of place, or the loss of familiarity, of entitlement to be there, and of stability, accompanied by changes to place identity which led feelings of loss and grief (Atkinson, 2015; Shaw & Hagemans, 2015). Atkinson (2015) describes a "wider sense of ontological unease" (p.384) in that displaced residents felt their homes, as places which reflect their identities, slowly being diminished and becoming unrecognisable.

Being excluded and devalued in places identified as home further negatively impacted residents' subjectivities and identities. In New York, the relative deprivation of investment alongside disinvestment brought a sense of betrayal, in that low-income residents felt they were not given what they deserved and were hyperaware of how little public investment they received, due to their proximity to wealth (Cahill, 2006). Low-income residents simultaneously represented themselves as proud survivors of disinvestment, as victims of its injustice, and as being ashamed of what they lacked in comparison to their new neighbours (Cahill, 2006). Valli's (2015) findings also showed that long-time residents were angered by the fact that the newcomers seemed to be more valued by landlords and others by their relative position in social space as, for example, renovations would take place after long-term residents had moved out, rather than for them. Given the relational nature of identity and subjectivity, and their located-ness, these encounters were sometimes harmful to personal identity, causing a sense of anger (Valli, 2015). These studies demonstrate that displacement can take a variety of forms and have far-reaching psychological effects, impacting place identity, feelings of power, sense of place, belonging, and personal identity.

## **2.4 Resistance to Displacement**

To consider only the impact of displacement on working-class residents would undermine the powerful roles they play in resisting gentrification. In Cahill's (2006) study in New York, for example, her participants, all young African American women, formed a group called the "Fed Up Honeys" and resisted their displacement through the politics of

representation, developing stickers that challenge stereotyped representations of them and placing these throughout their gentrifying neighbourhood. They began the work of developing an alternative imagination of themselves and (and in) the city, based on justice and inclusion rather than wealth, whiteness, and exclusion (Cahill, 2007).

Similarly, Newman and Wyly (2006) examined not only how low-income tenants in gentrifying New York were pressured or forced to move, but also the innovative strategies they employed to be able to stay put in the face of a gentrifying property market, a decrease in affordable housing initiatives, and gradually declining rent control regulations. Strategies employed by long-term residents to adapt to the increasingly expensive living conditions in gentrifying areas of New York were also specifically studied by Pearsall (2012) through interviews with these residents. In both studies, residents employed economic strategies such as accepting poor housing quality or excessive rental costs and sharing or overcrowding housing to pay increased rent (Newman & Wyly, 2006; Pearsall, 2012). Some tenants used an informal housing market, in which landlords knew them and charged them affordable rent for good quality housing, although this was vulnerable to changes in the broader property market and relationships with single landlords (Newman & Wyly, 2006). Others used economic strategies of buying property when prices were low, or finding rent-stabilised units or public housing (Pearsall, 2012). In both studies, community organisations were established to challenge unfair landlord practices, campaign for affordable housing (Newman & Wyly, 2006), protest eviction, and find alternative solutions to gentrification (Pearsall, 2012), although Pearsall explains that resilience to gentrification still manifested most strongly at an individual and household level through the strategies mentioned.

The reliance on predominantly individual- and household-level strategies of resistance and resilience to gentrification illustrates how gentrification disrupts communities and diminishes broader-scale resistance (Pearsall, 2012). While these smaller-scale strategies are important, they effectively resist only the effects of gentrification, rather than disrupting harmful gentrification systems and replacing them with more socially-just urban development. This is a complex task. Accordingly, Pearsall (2012) calls for research to understand whether resilient individuals and households can mobilise and organise communities to disrupt gentrification at a broader level.

A body of critical academic work and accompanying activism takes this further to call for spatial justice and the restructuring of cities to meet human needs rather than only economic needs (Brenner, Marcuse, & Mayer, 2009). *Spatial justice* refers to the relationship of reciprocal construction between space and social processes, such that justice characterises

both (Marcuse, 2009; Soja, 2009). The occurrences of inequality, exclusion, and discrimination in both the social and spatial landscapes, most frequently along lines of race, class, and gender, can be characterised as forms of spatial injustice (Soja, 2009).

It can be argued that the neoliberal market sets up an unavoidable state of inequality in cities, as rights to property ownership and profit override other individual rights and social needs (Harvey, 2003). Such critiques generally find their roots in sociologist and Marxist philosopher Henri Lefebvre's concept of "the right to the city", which argues for cities focused less on individual consumer needs and more on social needs (Lefebvre, 1996). This requires the transformation of urban life, led by the working class, in ways that disrupt existing power structures to address social inequality and afford every person equal urban participation and inclusion in the city (Lefebvre, 1996). The right to the city can be considered a right to shape a new city, rather than just to participate in the city defined by property owners and others with economic power (Harvey, 2003). Such a right not only allows for the development of new urban spaces, but also the reciprocal reformation of the self and the social collective (Harvey, 2003).

Accordingly, displaced groups often employ grassroots resistance practices that challenge the status quo in pursuit of spatial justice. Miraftab (2004), drawing from feminist scholarship, described the concept of mutually constitutive *invited* and *invented* spaces of citizenship. Invited spaces are those in which grassroots organisations participate, but which are legitimised by donors and government initiatives (Miraftab, 2004). Initiatives in such spaces are those that will assist people to cope with a marginalising status quo and participate more fully in the society defined by authority figures, while invented spaces are those in which such organisations confront authorities and disrupt or challenge the status quo (Miraftab, 2004). Invented spaces facilitate action that promotes broader societal change to structurally empower those who are marginalised (Miraftab, 2004). The Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign, for example, is a grassroots movement that resists eviction in the peripheral informal settlements of Cape Town by asserting the constitutional rights of evicted people (Miraftab & Wills, 2005). However, where this fails or where their conceptualisations of justice extend beyond the current law, they turn to innovative strategies, or invented spaces, including protests and land invasions, as well as restoring services cut off by the municipality and returning to homes from which they were evicted by means of breaking locks (Miraftab & Wills, 2005).

Holston (2009) in particular uses the term *insurgent citizenship* to describe how marginalised communities organise collectively to assert their rights in ways that subvert the

marginalising activities of the neoliberal state and their manifestation in urban space, policies, or daily life. Insurgent citizenship refers to citizens simultaneously asserting their citizenship and challenging the marginalised forms of citizenship imposed upon them (Holston, 1998). Unlike the actions of recognised political and civil society organisations, insurgent assertions of citizenship are often constructed in opposition to healthy democracy. However, such practices can rather be seen as challenging the inadequate citizenships imposed on marginalised communities that restrict their realisation of their legal rights, and allowing their construction of alternative citizenships that can make more just structural and spatial realities possible (Holston, 1998). This and similar frameworks have been used to interpret resistance to displacement and urban exclusion in various contexts (Abellán, Sequera, & Janoschka, 2012; Berglund & Peipinen, 2018; De Carli & Frediani, 2016; Earle, 2012; Garcia-Lamarca, 2017; Janoschka, 2015; Miraftab & Wills, 2005).

One particular form of invented or insurgent resistance that has garnered attention is “squatting” or “occupation”. This refers to the illegal occupation of or residence in public space or private property, usually condemned by authorities caught between protecting rights to housing and protecting private property from illegal occupation (Aguilera, 2013). Squatting movements face various internal and external challenges. Externally, there is a tension between the invited spaces in which state-sponsored activism occurs and the invented spaces which squatters’ movements claim. Both in Spain (Abellán et al., 2012) and Finland (Berglund & Peipinen, 2017, 2018), it was noted that governments were particularly friendly to grassroots activism and public participation controlled by or in collaboration with the state; however, occupation movements were considered to be illegitimate, and sometimes faced violent removal.

Studies of resistance to gentrification stand to adjust the deficit focus of research on displaced groups that only describes their loss and suffering or coping with displacement, by focusing on their positive achievements. Research on occupations has found that they achieved certain goals. By providing housing for vulnerable people and evicted low-income families, they challenged housing shortages and exclusionary policies (Abellán et al., 2012; Aguilera, 2013; De Carli & Frediani, 2016). They produced an experimental site for the practice of alternative housing, showing that housing for marginalised groups was possible in the inner city (Abellán et al., 2012; De Carli & Frediani, 2016). In doing so, they constituted a symbolic re-appropriation of public space, challenging neoliberal privatisation of space (Abellán et al., 2012) and gentrification (De Carli & Frediani, 2016). This was particularly valuable for marginalised groups who were unable to lawfully occupy inner-city space, as

they instead took up space through organised occupation as a means of advancing otherwise neglected agendas (Aguilera, 2013; De Carli & Frediani, 2016). Occupation therefore constituted a form of organising not only to cope with the effects of gentrification at an individual and household level as in Pearsall's (2012) study, but to disrupt gentrification on a broader scale through the collective reclaiming of public space and the creation of a political symbol of marginalised groups' visibility and belonging in the inner city.

Occupations thereby challenge the neoliberal notion of cities as places for private property, consumption, and concentrated wealth, and maintain a critical political focus in urban activism absent from government-favoured initiatives (Abellán et al., 2012; Berglund & Peipinen, 2018). The enactment of this in public urban space, rather than the invisible urban peripheries, brings such questions and conversations firmly into the public eye (Berglund & Peipinen, 2018) and makes visible the struggles and solutions of those facing urban exclusion (De Carli & Frediani, 2016). In challenging imposed individualist, capitalist, and entrepreneurial notions of citizens and their belonging in the city, occupation movements open spaces for redefinition of cities as places where low-income residents can be included (Berglund & Peipinen, 2018).

Occupations are argued also to affect subjectivity. Lancione (2017) describes how an evicted community in Bucharest resisted their displacement by erecting tents and shacks on the street in protest for social housing. By disrupting the familiarity of the "evicted subject" whose political agency is often limited to appealing to and relying on others for assistance, they challenged the publicly preferred image of low-income groups as being helpless and destitute (Lancione, 2017). Instead, those evicted asserted an autonomous, charged political subject, "uncanny" in the context of political repression (Lancione, 2017). This allowed them to experience a sense of possibility beyond the status quo. Similarly, De Carli and Frediani (2016) examined in more detail the social aspects of an occupation in São Paulo, Brazil. They argue that in operating as both a personal resource and a collective political tool, the occupation, named the *Ocupação Marconi*, produced new forms of political belonging and membership in society through an enhanced access to services and opportunities and the building of solidarity and collective responsibility (De Carli & Frediani, 2016). The interaction of different lives, identities, and aspirations within the collective and carefully regulated space of the occupation gave personal lives collective and political meaning to develop new political subjectivities (De Carli & Frediani, 2016).

Paterniani (2018) describes how occupations can provide space not just for a present solution to eviction but also for a *prefiguring* or reimagination of the future. The *Ocupação*

*Mauá*, a long-standing occupation of an empty former hotel in central São Paulo, is made up of 237 predominantly black low-income families and has lasted for more than 10 years through strong collective organising. Paterniani (2018) describes how their struggle is not characterised simply by a lack of dignified housing, but is rather made up of processes of resisting, reclaiming, and prefiguring. Through organisation, occupation, and protest, residents resist gentrification and the eviction of black residents from the city and reclaim public policy from the government, by enforcing Brazil's constitutional clause stating that buildings must fulfil a social function (Paterniani, 2018). While living in the occupation, they additionally prefigure or imagine their future by creating the type of lives they want, surrounded by the community they want, in a particular desired area of the inner-city that is beyond their current affordability. Their struggle is orientated not just towards addressing the injustices of the past and present, and also to shaping a desired and just future reality of dignified housing.

## **2.5 Rationale for Study**

The case of São Paulo is particularly relevant to Cape Town for its similar peripheralisation of black low-income groups, reinforced by public and private sector urban renewal efforts. Reclaim the City's occupations were accordingly inspired by similar occupations in São Paulo. While occupations and "squats" have previously existed in South Africa, RTC's large-scale occupation of government-owned buildings in two such prominent and central city areas in Cape Town, the extensively organised movement and ideology behind them, and the prominence of these in the public sphere, constitute a remarkable challenge to spatial apartheid in the post-apartheid era. However, given the relative recency of these occupations and Reclaim the City's existence in general, there is not yet any published research on the movement and particularly on the lived experiences of displacement and strategies of resistance and occupation within it.

In fact, while the literature converges on certain psychological, political, spatial, and symbolic components of displacement, a similar consideration of the roles of identity, community, power, meaning, and place in resistance to displacement is not as direct or prominent, particularly in South Africa. Additionally, while the studies centred in this literature review largely sought to understand the experiences of gentrification and resistance from the first-hand perspective of displaced groups, it appeared common in the broader literature to assess the merits of gentrification using a more overarching theoretical or economic approach. However, the first-hand perspectives of those experiencing urban change can provide crucial insights into its effects and realities (Parizeau, 2017). The ways in which

Reclaim the City's insurgent understandings and actions are developed within their context of marginalisation are significant as they reinforce how displaced residents, often viewed as victims, can be powerful actors in achieving broader spatial justice (Holston, 2009).

Understanding the psychological and social strategies and insurgent understandings that activists collectively and individually employ to resist displacement can shed light on the realities of post-apartheid gentrification and the meanings missing from the formal project of spatial redress in Cape Town.

The rise of Reclaim the City in Woodstock therefore presents an opportunity for a consideration of the experiential context of displacement in post-apartheid South Africa, as well as the insurgent utilisation of place in ways that develop new meanings and subjectivities. Mobilising the understandings offered by the interdisciplinary literature above, this study examines both displacement in Woodstock and resistance to displacement by Reclaim the City, using Participatory Action Research and critical psychology. It examines how particular notions of place, identity, and power are developed within the context of Reclaim the City and inform resistance to displacement. This study adds to the growing body of qualitative research on displacement by documenting how low-income residents of Woodstock are externally and internally affected by gentrification. It further provides an account of the strategies employed by Reclaim the City to resist gentrification and their significance, and this account is situated in a South African context and history.

## **2.6 Aims and Research Questions**

The objective of this study is to investigate how Reclaim the City activists experience displacement from gentrifying Woodstock in post-apartheid South Africa, and how they, as individuals and as a movement, resist this displacement. This study aims to build on the literature above by examining constructs linked to the lived experiences of displacement and resistance in the South African context of Reclaim the City. It intends to expand our knowledge of the psychological processes that constitute resistance in the face of the psychological damage caused by displacement. It further aims to highlight the insurgent identities and understandings that underlie this activism, expanding our knowledge of the roles, experiences, and significance of movements working towards spatial justice in South Africa.

### **2.6.1 Research questions.**

1. How do black, low-income Reclaim the City activists experience their displacement from Woodstock in post-apartheid South Africa?
2. What kinds of mechanisms to cope with and resist displacement do they employ?

3. What are the roles of identity, space, place, and belonging or exclusion in their experiences of displacement and resistance?
4. How do the experiences of Reclaim the City activists relate to their structural, spatial, and historical context in South Africa and particularly in Cape Town?
5. How can photovoice, as a participatory approach to research, contribute to our understanding of these experiences?

### **Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology**

This study is situated within the interpretivist and transformative paradigms. The interpretivist paradigm aims to understand the world through the multiple realities of subjective human experience, justifying qualitative methods grounded in understanding meaning through interaction and interpretation (Terre Blanche, Kelly, & Durrheim, 2006). The transformative paradigm takes this further to centre marginalised groups' experiences of oppression and their resistance to it, contextualising this within political and social systems (Creswell, 2014; Mertens, 2010). Such research is orientated towards participant empowerment and action towards social justice, embracing a collaborative design so as to avoid further marginalising participants (Creswell, 2014; Mertens, 2010). Accordingly, I drew on a theoretical framework of critical psychology in combination with a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach to collect and triangulate data from photovoice, participant observation, and key informant interviews, which were then analysed using thematic analysis. This chapter will provide a rationale for the use of this research design and methodology and discuss considerations related to ethics and reflexivity.

#### **3.1 Reclaim the City's Structure**

A brief understanding of Reclaim the City's structure is necessary to contextualise the rest of this chapter. At the time of this study, RTC had formal chapters in Woodstock and Sea Point, both areas of Cape Town undergoing gentrification, however, new chapters and partnerships with like-minded organisations are developing. Each chapter is led by a Chapter Committee, which is responsible for, among other things, holding regular meetings, planning chapter events and actions, and enforcing discipline among members (Reclaim the City, 2018b). House Committees are elected to lead the occupations, with responsibilities related to convening house meetings, enforcing discipline, and managing the intake and day-to-day activities of the house (Reclaim the City, 2018b). Intake into the occupation follows a careful process: a waiting list of those needing a room is interviewed by an intake committee of house leaders and external leaders, and if they are deemed to need housing, they are allocated an available room. Occupiers have to agree to a strict code of discipline, which includes sobriety, limited visiting hours, attendance at all Reclaim the City meetings and events, non-violence, and in many cases, the assumptions of house responsibilities such as security duties. The House and Chapter Committees, as well as elected members of Operational Support Groups, form the Coordinating Committee, the highest decision-making structure in Reclaim the City (Reclaim the City, 2018b). All leadership bodies are elected via democratic

processes and bear the responsibility for collective decision-making in collaboration with members of the organisation.

Chapters host weekly public Advice Assemblies in Sea Point and Woodstock, which are two-hour evening meetings that provide an interactive lesson on tenants' rights followed by a more open session that invites tenants to ask one another and facilitators for advice on eviction matters. Weekly Chapter Meetings are also held to plan political interventions and neighbourhood-level action in pursuit of the organisation's goals of increasing centrally-located affordable housing and ending evictions of low-income tenants from gentrifying areas. Occupiers also meet weekly for house meetings to discuss issues related to the allocation of shared duties and responsibilities in the occupation and weekly leadership meetings also take place for the various leadership groups. General political interventions are regularly carried out by the movement and these include protests and demonstrations, open letters and public statements, and regular social media activity.

### **3.2 Theoretical Framework: Critical Psychology**

Rather than one theory, critical psychology is an orientation that encompasses a developing collection of theoretical resources, contextual considerations, and tools for practice that extend and challenge traditional psychology (Fox, Prilleltensky, & Austin, 2009; Hook, 2004a; Parker, 1999). It arose to critique psychology's historical role in forming conclusions about the nature of individuals which were classified as objective and scientific but which were influenced by context and ideology (Foster, 2004; Hook, 2004a). Such conclusions have often been well-aligned with oppressive colonial and apartheid systems, and, as traditional psychology produces knowledge that aims to universally explain selves, this has influenced subjectivity (Mama, 1995). Particularly, it has constructed women, "poor" people, and Africans, as well as other marginalised groups, as objects of study rather than subjects (Mama, 1995).

Critical psychological research challenges traditional psychology's individualisation of issues and universalisation of knowledge, by examining how power, ideology, and context influence self-knowledge, subjectivity, and social behaviour (Hook, 2004a). This requires a particular, explicit standpoint in analysis, geared towards an overriding value of social justice, rather than presenting findings as neutral, objective, or scientific (Hook, 2004a; Mama, 1995). New tools and perspectives, drawn from Marxism, feminism, post-structuralism, and postcolonial and decolonial theory, among others, are used to this end (Hook, 2004a; Parker, 1999). I will highlight three critical psychological perspectives that have been influential in guiding the multifaceted focus of this research project on the

psychological, social, political, and spatial realms of experiences of displacement and resistance.

**3.2.1 Power and subjectivity.** While traditional psychology aims to develop knowledge about individuals that omits or controls the influence of their political context, critical psychology rather focuses on the reciprocal relationship between psychology and politics. The concept of *psychopolitics* initiates a focus on the power drawn from mutually constitutive psychological and political sources and how this influences oppression and liberation (Prilleltensky, 2008). Psychopolitics describes how oppressive political structures and power relations can be internalised by individuals, creating forms of psychological oppression that reinforce political systems (Hook, 2004b). Adding to this is *intersectionality*, the argument that different forms of identity can intersect to create experiences of multiple forms of oppression (Crenshaw, 1995).

Drawing particularly on how colonialism has shaped black groups' internalisation of racist identities, subjectivities, and inferiority complexes, Hook (2004b) describes how a political perspective can be brought into the examination of psychological phenomena, such as identity and subjectivity, and also how psychological concepts can be used to critique oppressive political systems. Mama (1995), in research on black women's subjectivities, argues that oppressive political systems are not simply internalised but can be continually negotiated and resisted. Psychological and social realms are therefore continually interacting to create subjectivities that are dynamic, fluid, and located within collective history (Mama, 1995). In this study, the roles of power and history, particularly the legacies of colonialism and apartheid and the current context of gentrification in South Africa, are considered important in constituting subjectivities, which are in turn considered for how they reinforce and challenge these systems.

**3.2.2 Place and identity.** Subjectivity is also linked to place. In the critical psychology literature, Foster (2004) argues that there is a significant spatial dimension to subjugation, whether in physical space, through the mapping of identity onto binaries of up-down, centre-periphery, and public-private, and or in the imagination of spaces' existence. Place has occupied a prominent position in the social sciences and human geography, and is widely considered to be a politicised realm in the critical literature (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000). As introduced in Chapter Two, place is considered distinct from but related to physical space. In human and cultural geographic literature, place has been defined as something fluid that arises from how one exists in and experiences physical space, as something socially constructed, and as something that gives meaning to and arises from social processes

(Withers, 2009). In critical and feminist geography, place is seen as a politicised realm which is linked to identities of class, race, gender, and sexuality, and in political geography, place is used in understanding citizenship processes and power (Paasi, 2003). These are not necessarily distinct conceptualisations. Psychogeography additionally involves the mapping and description of personal and emotional features embedded in urban environments and structures and consideration of how they interact to affect people and everyday life (Smith, 2010). In environmental psychology, place is often considered for how it becomes part of or influences an individual's identity (Proshansky et al., 1983) through processes of attachment and meaning-making at the individual and collective levels (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). However, traditional and even some critical psychological investigations often ignore our located-ness, or where we are in space and the meaning this holds for psychological processes (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000).

While the contributions of the geographic and social science literature to understanding place, identity, and displacement must be recognised and considered (for a recent review of region and identity in the human geographical literature, see Tomaney, 2015), this study predominantly draws on a more critical psychological conceptualisation of place identity, as advanced by Dixon and Durrheim (2000). Dixon and Durrheim (2000) introduce place identity as socially constructed and political. This conceptualisation of place identity refers to how identity and subjectivity are located in space and intertwined with place (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000). It describes how identities are individually and collectively constructed in relation to space and are situated within a context of power, history, and ideology (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000).

Accordingly, group identities of place can have implications for who is considered in place and out of place in certain areas, serving to include or exclude, and privilege or marginalise, certain groups and individuals (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000). This can also then have implications for the construction of subjectivity, such that a sense of self is lost when places change, and that people might be more motivated to find or create places that align with their sense of self (Dixon & Durrheim, 2004). In this study, the roles of physical space, the meaning and power dynamics of place, and place identity are considered in interpreting participants' experiences of displacement and resistance.

**3.2.3 Liberation psychology and critical consciousness.** In its focus on housing activism, this study did not only examine experiences of displacement and oppression, but also how these are resisted. Liberation psychology is a branch of critical psychology that examines psychological liberation from oppression. Particularly, liberation psychology

critiques the traditional psychological paradigm of individual suffering and instead looks at how this suffering is located in communities, in histories of systemic oppression such as colonialism, and in place (Watkins & Shulman, 2008). These approaches examine the internalisation of structural conditions in psychological determinations of self-worth, and the effects of marginalising conditions in fostering psychological and social complexes of inferiority, low self-efficacy and self-esteem, and the erosion of community (Moane, 2003).

Particularly, it considers subjectivity not just as something impacted by oppressive systems, but as something that can be re-constituted by the oppressed to facilitate their own liberation (Watkins & Shulman, 2008). Liberation psychology calls for the development of critical consciousness, or an understanding of how structural factors and power dynamics influence personal circumstances and psychological conditions (Freire, 1970; Martín-Baró, 1996; Montero, 2009). Through collective dialogue around everyday events, accepted understandings are problematised and critiqued according to the assumption and agenda they are advancing (Freire, 1970; Montero, 2009). With this critique, new historically-, spatially-, and politically-situated understandings of oneself, one's community, and the world can be created that serve empowering rather than marginalising agendas (Montero, 2009). In examining an activism context, liberation psychology is applicable to understanding the filtration of ideology into everyday practices around place and identity, how this affects internalisation and subjectivity in relation to broader power structures, and the negotiations of place and subjectivity that allow marginalised groups to challenge their marginalisation.

### **3.3 Research Design**

The use of a critical psychological framework calls for research methods that align with a political, historical, and located perspective of subjectivity (Teo, 2009). Of importance is that such methods should have not just practical but also social or emancipatory relevance, in other words, they should prompt action that challenges oppressive systems and promotes social justice (Teo, 2009). Critical psychological methods should therefore be action-orientated and aimed at transforming rather than just describing the status quo (Teo, 2009). They should also seek to capture the complex nature of human subjectivity, cognition, and experience within its socio-historical, political, and spatial context (Teo, 2009).

Accordingly, this study drew on a Participatory Action Research (PAR) design. PAR refers to a developing range of methodologies that differ in practical terms but share certain core values that re-orientate traditional psychological research (Watkins & Shulman, 2008). PAR destabilises the relationship between researchers and participants such that researchers are no longer viewed as experts, but rather as collaborators with participants who are

considered experts on their own experiences (Watkins & Shulman, 2008). In doing so, PAR approaches recognise that the best way to learn about marginalised groups is to centre their voices in articulating their own knowledge and experiences in research, in ways which will ultimately benefit them (Watkins & Shulman, 2008). PAR is described as “action research” because the research is intended to serve emancipatory and socially-just purposes (Watkins & Shulman, 2008). It is expected to embody these values in practice, and facilitate action towards these goals as part of the research process, in addition to providing critical insights on how power and history influence subjectivity (Watkins & Shulman, 2008). Critical understanding and reflection inform action, and action furthers critical understanding (Watkins & Shulman, 2008). This means that PAR seeks not necessarily to discover knowledge, but to create spaces for the generation of new understandings, building on socially-located knowledge and experiences, that can assist in transforming the daily realities of marginalised communities (Watkins & Shulman, 2008).

This study drew on photovoice, a PAR method, as a primary method of data collection. This method produced a variety of different forms of data from the same participants, and participant observation and key informant interviews were additionally employed during the photovoice project to contribute data from different participants. *Triangulation* was used in analysing these, which involves the use of multiple perspectives to examine a research issue and can be applied to data, investigators, theories, or methodologies (Denzin, 1978; Flick, 2004). It is not to be understood here within the positivist paradigm of ensuring reliability and validity of results by providing a convergent account of a phenomenon (Flick, 2004). Rather, in line with the interpretivist focus of this study, triangulation provides a more complex, in-depth, and complete understanding of the issue under investigation, producing knowledge of a higher quality (Adami, 2005; Denzin, 2012). This study accordingly employed methodological triangulation, namely between-method triangulation, in that it compared multiple qualitative methods in examining the same phenomenon (Denzin, 1978). This was so as to capture the multifaceted experiences of displacement and resistance in Reclaim the City, while centring the experiences of its community members.

**3.3.1 Photovoice.** Photovoice can be broadly classified as a Participatory Action Research (PAR) method that combines Freirian critical consciousness, feminist theory, and documentary photography (Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001). This recognises that those who are able to participate in decisions and shape the telling of history have more power (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001). It also acknowledges that critical

consciousness of one's social reality can be developed through dialogue to promote social action (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001). Last, it considers photography a suitable tool for both subverting power dynamics and promoting critical consciousness (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001).

Photovoice employs a flexible method, run by a facilitator in collaboration with the community (Wang & Burris, 1997). Projects generally follow certain phases, namely, an initial focus group discussion takes place to establish a topic for photography; participants are trained in photography and have time to take photographs; these photographs are discussed to develop themes; and an exhibition is planned (Catalani & Minkler, 2009; Wang & Burris, 1997; Castleden, Garvin, & First Nation, 2008; Delgado, 2015; Palibroda, Krieg, Murdock, & Havelock, 2009). In this process, photovoice explicitly recognises the power disparity between researchers and participants and aims to address this by engage participants as co-researchers and experts on their own lives and experiences (Castleden, Garvin, & First Nation, 2008; Wang, Morrel-Samuels, Hutchison, Bell, & Pestronk, 2004). Photovoice is often used to represent community issues, showcase community strengths and weaknesses, or produce new shared knowledge and art to reach policy-makers (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001). Producing stories and images, and the critical dialogues that follow, can stimulate action towards social justice (Delgado, 2015; Wang & Burris, 1997).

Photovoice requires a more in-depth and extended involvement than interviews and focus groups, which provide a snapshot into the lives of participants, and expands the range of stories participants can tell. It therefore does not constrain participants to answering specific questions in one context but rather allows for the collection of information beyond the research context, in community settings (Wang & Burris, 1997). By allowing participants to represent themselves rather than being passive subjects to research, which can reinforce marginalising representations of their community, photovoice creates multi-dimensional representations of experiences (Wang & Burris, 1997). In this way, photovoice can create new empowering social representations of participants and their communities (Kessi, 2011).

Perhaps for these reasons, photovoice has been argued to be effective in research with hard-to-reach, marginalised or criminalised urban populations (Oliveira & Vearey, 2015). Photovoice has been used in marginalised or vulnerable populations that, while not the same as this study's unique population, share similar characteristics. It has been used in research with homeless groups (Feen-Calligan, Washington, & Moxley, 2010; Wang, Cash, & Powers, 2000), for issues of housing affordability for homeless women in New Zealand (Bukowski, 2009), to investigate the creation of home by refugees in Western Australia (Fozdar &

Hartley, 2013) and to examine the relationship between place, race and class, and the multiple identities of working-class women in Northern Ireland (McIntyre, 2003).

Photovoice aligns well with the aims, theoretical framework, approach, and context of this study. Its goals and values, through its employment of Freirian principles, align closely with those of liberation psychology, emphasising critical consciousness and the active participation of people in their own conscientisation (Montero, 2009). It also provides links between subjectivity and experience and the external physical, social, spatial, and political environment, through the collection of photographs as data. These features allowed for exploration of the research questions of place and displacement, as well as the activities of RTC, as participants could document events, spaces, and people outside the study to illustrate the stories they wanted to tell. Lastly, in using this method not just with a marginalised population, but with a community actively resisting their marginalisation, this study has reinforced the applicability of the method for use with activist movements. In this context, it built on activists' existing processes of conscientisation, allowed participants maximum agency in research, and provided materials for their activism.

**3.3.2 Participant observation.** Participant observation was employed before, during, and after the completion of the photovoice project. This method involves observing a community while participating to some extent in its activities, in order to understand aspects of the context and culture (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994; Musante & DeWalt, 2010; Spradley, 2016). In such unfamiliar settings, researchers are forced to challenge their own assumptions with the new information and understandings learnt when being exposed to the full context and acclimatising to the new environment as a participant (Musante & DeWalt, 2010; Spradley, 2016). While photovoice allows research participants to tell their own stories, participant observation adds to this in that it enables a researcher to collect first-hand contextualising information during the regular activities of a community, bringing into focus the interactions between people, organisational norms and culture, and group behaviours that might not otherwise have been noted (Musante & DeWalt, 2010). This aids in understanding tacit and nonverbal aspects of the social setting, particularly when more formal methods are made difficult by contextual factors (Musante & DeWalt, 2010).

Participant observation, when employed carefully and reflexively, can align well with the democratising focus of PAR research. In immersing the researcher as a participant in a setting in which participants are experts, it can allow researchers and participants to work together as collaborators and build trust and understanding in this relationship. However, it is necessary to gain sufficient permission and to acknowledge the complexity and power

dynamics of this relationship. This is discussed further later in the chapter. Practically, the inclusion of this method assisted me in understanding the day-to-day operations of Reclaim the City and its members as well as how their protest actions and activities were planned and executed. It lent a needed context to the stories that arose during the photovoice project and also exposed me to a wider range of perspectives and group interactions in the organisation than those of the photovoice group.

**3.3.3 Key informant interviews.** Semi-structured interviews were held with key informants somewhat external to Reclaim the City. Key informant interviews are commonly associated with participatory and community-centred approaches. In these approaches, certain people are assumed to hold access to certain information and to be able to provide in-depth expert knowledge, in relation to research questions that are problem- and action-orientated (McKenna & Main, 2013). Key informant interviews are also helpful to get a sense of the dominant discourses that circulate in institutions or powerful communities. However, McKenna and Main (2013) caution that in community-based participatory research, such informants are likely to be outsiders to the main community and as such, the constraints to their “insider” knowledge need to be acknowledged. Using such “experts” might also undermine the positioning of participants as experts on their own experiences in photovoice studies (McKenna & Main, 2013). To frame the expertise of key informants as overriding that of participants because of neoliberal notions of qualification, such as education status, contradicts the aims of photovoice (McKenna & Main, 2013). Morris (2009) further critiques the notion that such “experts” be relied on to provide objective truths, particularly within studies such as this one which adopt a more interpretivist paradigm and look for meaning without assuming an objective truth exists.

Rather, community-based researchers should look to these informants only for specific knowledge based on their social positions and roles, recognising that these affect the information they provide (McKenna & Main, 2013). This should add to rather than override the lived experiences of community members, in line with the values of PAR (Watkins & Shulman, 2008). Accordingly, I used key informant interviews only to provide specific information which was required during the study, focusing on the political context of Reclaim the City and the organisation’s structure and activities, rather than to represent its members and their lived experiences. This information was intended to situate and contextualise the experiences of photovoice participants and meeting attendees, who were insiders to the research population. This approach was used to bring convergent and divergent data from more distanced stakeholders into this study so as to increase the complexity of the

triangulated findings, which still reflect a centring on the experiences of Reclaim the City members. Key informants are described in the next section.

### 3.4 Participants

**3.4.1 Photovoice.** I used a purposive sampling strategy to recruit participants. First, I provided Reclaim the City leaders with information on the project with the opportunity for elaboration and discussion (Palibroda et al., 2009). They invited me to attend Reclaim the City's weekly Advice Assemblies in Woodstock and directed me to immerse myself there, navigating the necessary class and race dynamics, and build relationships. After two months, I was given permission to advertise the study at a Woodstock Chapter meeting by speaking to attendees. From this meeting and the later word-of-mouth communication, five participants were able to join the project and four remained after the first focus group, as one participant had insufficient time available to continue. The four participants in this project were respectively well-positioned, as long-term occupiers, house leaders, and beneficiaries of RTC's assistance, with diverse backgrounds, to develop meaningful insights into displacement and resistance in the movement as a group and as individuals. Table 1 describes some information about the participants, although I have omitted specific identifying details.

Table 1

#### *Description of Photovoice Participants*

Pseudonym	Age range <sup>1</sup>	Residential status	Self-identified race and nationality <sup>2</sup>	Gender <sup>2</sup>	Employment status	Position in RTC
Yonela	30-39	Occupier at CGH	Black South African	Female	Employed	House Leader
Helena	50-59	Occupier at CGH	Coloured South African	Female	Employed	House Leader
Junaid	40-49	Occupier at CGH	Indian South African	Male	Unemployed	Member
Opopo	40-49	Facing eviction in Woodstock	Black African national	Male	Employed (freelance)	Member
Carol <sup>3</sup>	30-39	Occupier at CGH	Coloured South African	Female	Unknown	Member

<sup>1</sup> Although I know the specific ages of my participants, I have opted to give a range to protect their privacy.

<sup>2</sup> Race, nationality, and gender are included for the purposes of historicising and contextualising participants' experiences as reported in the findings of this study.

<sup>3</sup> Carol only joined the study for one focus group but consented to her data being used.

There is no specific number of participants required to run a photovoice project, although Wang (1999) recommends a group size of seven to 10 participants to encourage in-depth conversation while maintaining intimacy. While fewer than Wang's (1999) recommendation, the small size of this group still allowed for intimacy in discussion as well as in-depth analysis of the phenomena under study, particularly in combination with multiple methods. RTC members' multiple conflicting commitments relating to the concurrent nature of their evictions, the high-pressure activism environment, the often near-daily frequency of RTC events and meetings, combined with regular work and family commitments, additionally meant that regular meetings with a larger group would not have been possible in this context.

**3.4.2 Key informant interviews.** Key informants were selected as needed during the study using a purposive sampling strategy. Selection followed McKenna and Main's (2013) recommendation to rely on these sources only for specific information based on their positions, rather than to represent a community as an "expert" in PAR studies, where participants are considered to be experts on their own lives. Accordingly, key informants were chosen given their abilities to provide specifically required information in response to questions that arose during the study. Their accounts were used to complement and complexify those of Reclaim the City members, rather than to override them. Combined with other methods, they assisted towards this study's aim of providing deep insights into the experiences of the small but growing Reclaim the City community in Woodstock.

Specifically, interviews were held with City Councillor and Mayoral Committee (MayCo) member for Transport and Urban Planning, Brett Herron (since resigned) and Nkosikhona Swartbooi, the Head Organiser at Ndifuna Ukwazi. Brett Herron, as the MayCo member with the largest involvement in the housing issues that form Reclaim the City's focus, was selected for an interview before the photovoice project began, to understand first-hand the City of Cape Town's plans for housing and their stance on Reclaim the City. This helped to gain insight into official constructions of the political and structural context in which (and often against which) RTC was operating. Nkosikhona Swartbooi, in turn, played a substantial role in starting the Reclaim the City campaign and both occupations and continues to play an influential role in community organising and leadership in the movement as part of Ndifuna Ukwazi. He grew up in an informal settlement on the periphery of Cape Town and describes his work as deeply personal. He assisted in answering questions that had formed during the Photovoice project, specifically elaborating on the history and founding ideology of the movement, on its relationship to Ndifuna Ukwazi, on conflict in the movement, on

successes and challenges they had faced, and on the relationships and comparisons between the Sea Point and Woodstock chapters.

### 3.5 Data Collection Procedure

**3.5.1 Participant observation.** Meetings central to the movement's operations that formed the participant observation component of this study are described in Table 2. I chose to focus on observing these meetings, predominantly in Woodstock, as this is often where RTC members interacted around the organisation's goals and vision, shared and discussed stories of displacement, planned actions towards resistance, and facilitated education. I also spent time in less formal settings to which I was invited, such as participants' living areas in the occupation and a family business. Notes taken during meetings and more detailed field notes compiled after each meeting provided the materials for analysis. I initially made descriptive observations to answer basic questions about the meetings' structure, attendees, and activities (Spradley, 2016). Once I had generated preliminary themes and codes from the field notes and Photovoice data, I made more focused observations (Spradley, 2016).

Table 2

#### *Prominent Events Included in Participant Observation*

Meeting or event	Description	Attendance
Advice Assembly	Weekly public evening workshop on tenants' rights, hosted by Reclaim the City and Ndifuna Ukwazi.	Regularly from January to July 2018
Woodstock Chapter meeting	Weekly planning meeting for chapter activities and political organising, hosted by Reclaim the City's Woodstock Chapter Leadership Committee.	Irregularly from January to November 2018
Woodstock Residents' Association meeting	Hosted by Woodstock Residents' Association to discuss affordable housing and elect a new leadership committee.	March 2018
Reclaim the City hosts City Councillors	Hosted by Reclaim the City to provide councillors with a chance to update the movement on plans for affordable housing and Temporary Relocation Areas.	May 2018
Councillor Brett Herron in Woodstock	Hosted by Brett Herron to update Woodstock residents and members of the public on affordable housing plans.	July 2018

Reclaim the City First Annual Congress	Event to celebrate Reclaim the City's progress, adopt its interim constitution, and elect new leadership.	August 2018
Reclaim the City Heritage Walk	Heritage Day event held where evicted residents told their stories of eviction outside former or current residences.	September 2018
Site B Occupation meeting	Day-long occupation of an inner-city site to protest its sale by the Cape Town government to a private company.	December 2018

### 3.5.2 Photovoice.

**Activity 1: Introduction and focus group.** An information session and focus group were held in mid-March 2018 to establish the project and develop preliminary themes for photography. All meetings took place in Cissie Gool House, as all participants were familiar with it or lived there. Focus groups allow the exploration of intersubjectivity (Kelly, 2006) and interactions between participants (Willig, 2013), and this was useful for prompting exploration of shared experiences of displacement and resistance and conscientising participants to others' experiences. I created and used a semi-structured focus group guide (see Appendix A) and recorded and transcribed the discussion.

**Activity 2: Photography.** Participants attended a two-hour workshop run by a professional photojournalist with photovoice experience to learn the basics of photography and photo-storytelling. This was followed by a photography expedition in Woodstock to practice these new skills. Participants were loaned small digital cameras from the UCT Psychology Department. They agreed on a one-week initial photography period to take photographs to tell their story, focusing on themes of displacement and resistance discussed in the first focus group. We met and discussed their experiences and after a second week of taking photographs, participants were satisfied with their selections and returned their cameras. They then presented their photographs and stories to the group. This introduced the idea of writing photo-stories through the more familiar practice of oral storytelling, allowed the sharing of stories, and assisted participants in narrowing their photograph selections.

**Activity 3: Individual interviews.** Individual semi-structured interviews were held to gain a more in-depth perspective into each participant's life and background (Willig, 2013) and to answer questions not addressed in focus groups (see Appendix B for the interview guide). These interviews allowed participants to speak in more detail about their widely different personal histories and backgrounds, which informed their experiences of displacement and resistance. Interviews were held at CGH or the University of Cape Town

Psychology Department, depending on their preferences, and lasted between 45 minutes and two hours. Each interview was recorded and transcribed. I noted salient points and raised them in subsequent group discussions, if appropriate, for conscientisation purposes.

**Activity 4: Participatory analysis.** Starting in the previous group discussions, participants selected eight to 10 photographs with individual and collective significance (Wang & Burris, 1997). I asked participants to then choose between five and 10 of these final photographs and write down their stories using paper and pens provided. This somewhat followed the SHOWeD method (Wang, 1999), where I asked them to think about:

1. What do you See here?
2. What is really Happening here?
3. How does this relate to Our lives?
4. Why does this situation, concern, or strength Exist?
5. What can we Do about it?

However, I emphasised that participants could deviate from these questions to tell their story, given McIntyre's (2003) finding that they can be too restrictive. Participants generally preferred to write freely about what the photographs meant to them. They then circulated their photographs and written captions so that each group member could read them and worked together to identify common themes (Wang & Burris, 1997). These are presented in Table 3 and illustrate the insights participants developed as a group in these discussions.

Table 3

*Preliminary Themes Identified in Participatory Analysis*

Category	Themes	Description
Our Struggle	Human element	People with power and property do not see poor tenants and homeless people as human.
	The struggle	People are suffering and staying on the streets. Many people have this struggle. There is a lot of anger and pain.
	Legal aspects	There is intimidation of low-income people in the legal system and lack of legal knowledge, causing unequal access to justice.
	The city doesn't work for us. Injustice	Informal networks help, rather than formal government structures. It is like still living in the apartheid era. The struggle is not individual; it is borne of injustice.
Having a place	Security	Having a place that you can call home is important because it provides safety and security.
	Having a place; being somebody	Having a place lets you feel like you have achieved something, and you are somebody. It makes you feel you are not alone.
	Interpretation of place	Different people can understand the same place differently. What one person feels is a home, another might not see the same way.
Resistance	Solidarity and support	It is important to support each other to show that the inner-city belongs to poor people.
	Letting it out	It is important to speak about what is troubling you, because otherwise issues can eat you up. RTC and this project provided a space to talk and heal from shared and individual struggles.
	Connection and relating	Being able to relate to one another's experiences allows healing and learning from each other. Having empathy keeps us human.
	Hope	Reclaim the City gives us hope, because it allows us to move forward with people who share our struggles.

**Activity 5: Exhibition.** Three exhibitions of participants' work have been held to date. The first formed part of a broader RTC event called the "Open House" in October 2018 (see Appendix C for the Open House flyer). Given the negative representations of the movement in some sectors of the public, the Open House invited the public to participate in guided tours around Cissie Gool House, showcasing the living conditions of occupiers and displaying photographic exhibitions that reframed the movement's identity in more positive ways. This was part of a broader Open Streets event, in which the main road of Woodstock was closed to

traffic and the neighbourhood was invited to run activities and open stalls to make use of the public space. Participants' exhibition, which they named "Hope" in relation to the themes in Table 3, was put on display at Cissie Gool House (Photograph 1), together with an exhibition of portraits of occupiers taken by Ndifuna Ukwazi's videographer.

Photograph 1: *Open House Exhibition*



*Photograph 1.* Participants' photo-stories on display at Cissie Gool House.

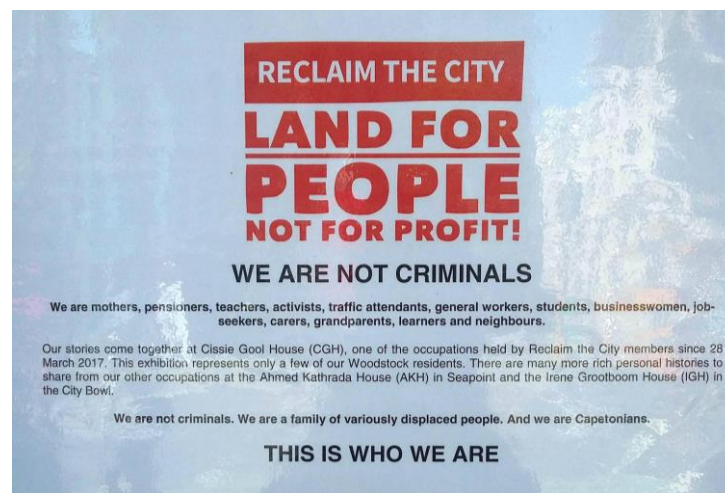
Unfortunately, the Open House was interdicted by the City of Cape Town in the High Court, as it was incorrectly claimed to be a front for moving more occupiers into the building. The exhibition was therefore not opened to the public but remained on display for several weeks and was viewed by occupiers, allied visitors, and members of Ndifuna Ukwazi and the media. It was also reportedly used for educational events at CGH.

A second exhibition took place during the final Woodstock Chapter meeting of 2018. Participants chose to facilitate this as an oral and visual storytelling event and to present it to fellow Reclaim the City members so that their community could experience their exhibition before the public. Participants each told their stories of displacement and resistance while presenting their photographs. These stories mostly affirmed their commitment to RTC but in some cases described their struggles within the movement. Those who were house leaders, for example, described the stress and difficulty associated with their positions and asked for greater recognition of this and respect from members. They also described feeling undermined within RTC leadership structures. Participants used powerful representations of themselves in the telling of their photo-stories to remind fellow members and leaders alike of their shared humanity in ways that could shape the movement to better achieve its

humanising agenda. Their stories were very well-received, and it was a powerful and moving event which demonstrated the conscientising and emboldening effect of photovoice, in its generation of representations that were empowering to participants and the collective. Reclaim the City leaders expressed support for the project, emphasised the importance of continuing to exhibit it and suggested holding further photovoice projects.

Our third exhibition took place at another Open Streets event in central Cape Town in January 2019. Open Streets events take place once a month in different suburbs of Cape Town, ranging from central to more peripheral areas, and aim to create public spaces for social interaction that assist in bridging social and spatial divisions. Accordingly, Reclaim the City participates often in Open Streets, usually with activities that raise awareness of their cause. Participants' photo-stories were exhibited among RTC's growing collection of portraits of occupiers under the title *We are not criminals*, which drew the exhibitions together to challenge negative representations of occupiers and reframe them in more positive, human ways (Photographs 2 and 3). Participants in attendance enjoyed the event and the substantial engagement from the public.

Photograph 2: Description of *We are not criminals*



Photograph 2. The description of the exhibition at Open Streets.

Photograph 3: Exhibiting *We are not criminals*



*Photograph 3: Visitors to the exhibition reading Junaid's story.*

**3.5.3 Key informant interviews.** Key informant interviews were held with Brett Herron in January 2018 at his office at Cape Town Civic Centre and with Nkosikhona Swartboo in April 2018 at the Ndifuna Ukwazi office. After obtaining informed consent, in which both emphatically opted not to remain anonymous in this report, I interviewed them using semi-structured interview schedules (Appendix D) and recorded and transcribed these with permission.

### **3.6 Thematic Analysis**

The final analysis was conducted on participants' photo-stories, individual interview transcripts, the initial focus group transcript, field notes from participant observation, and key informant interview transcripts. The data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidelines for thematic analysis, chosen for its flexibility in working with and triangulating varied types of data. Using this framework, thematic ideas, patterns, and interesting features were noted throughout the study, particularly during data collection and transcription (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After I transcribed my data, I read it while searching for patterns and then coded interesting features across the entire dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I combined these codes into themes and revised and refined these according to how much they covered the variety of meanings in the data and answered the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I refined, defined and named these themes to identify their central meanings and compiled these into the argument presented in Chapters Four and Five (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### **3.7 Ethical Considerations**

This study was granted ethical approval from the UCT Psychology Department Ethics Committee in September 2017. Certain ethical considerations were addressed throughout the study's duration, as described below.

**3.7.1 Informed consent.** I obtained informed consent from all photovoice participants before beginning the project, after an initial information session, and again before their individual interviews (American Psychological Association [APA], 2017). I also obtained informed consent from key informants prior to beginning their interviews. Informed consent forms for these three components can be found in Appendices E, F, and G respectively. For the photovoice component, I gave an overview of the study as a story-telling research project centred around photography and presented it as including five necessary meetings, two activity phases of taking photographs and having an interview or writing stories, and optional phases for further action and exhibition planning thereafter. This did not presume what kind of action participants would later decide on or force participants who were uncomfortable with writing to write their stories. Each change to the initial phases and timeline was decided in consultation with participants.

Photovoice participants and key informants were informed of the purpose, risks and benefits of the study and that they could withdraw from the study at any time, although they were encouraged to participate all the way through. Participants were informed that their interviews and conversations would be recorded and gave additional consent to this. I explained the planned duration and phases of the study as a flexible rather than set timeline. Before and after signing the forms, participants were given the chance to ask questions. All participants signed the informed consent forms after I had thoroughly explained it and allowed time to read it and ask questions. Before each phase of the study, I reminded participants of relevant clauses of informed consent.

**3.7.2 Privacy and confidentiality.** All photographs, stories, interview recordings, and transcripts were kept in offline and online password-protected accounts. While I maintained participants' anonymity in this report, I facilitated a collective decision-making process over whether to include their names in the exhibition. This is in line with Watkins and Shulman's (2008) argument that maintaining participants' anonymity without consultation can be disempowering, in that it suggests that the final work is a construction of the author alone. In addition, participants were proud of their photographs, and as activists, wanted their names to be associated with them as a show of standing up for what they believe in. With consultation on these issues, photovoice participants asked to retain their own identities in the exhibition,

and I have used pseudonyms in this dissertation in line with the APA Ethics code. Key informants, as mentioned, opted to be named in this report.

**3.7.3 Ethical issues related to secondary participants.** In the photography training session, participants were asked to obtain explicit verbal consent from subjects of their photographs and to inform them about the nature of the project, and practical examples of how to go about doing this were given. It was agreed that participants would ask parents of minors for permission to take their photographs and would avoid taking any harmful or defamatory images. I have blurred the faces of minors in photographs in this dissertation.

**3.7.4 Risks and benefits.** Minimal risk was posed to participants, in that the study was not associated with more risk of harm than they would face in their everyday lives, being activists and engaging in regular illegal and legal protest actions. In terms of benefits, it was clarified to participants that the cameras would be loaned to them, and they were returned at a pre-determined date. Print copies of photographs were given to participants as requested and it has been made clear that Reclaim the City may continue to exhibit this work freely in their activism with participants' involvement and my continued support.

**3.7.5 Expanding notions of ethics.** Given that this is a novel project, with a unique context and set of challenges, I aimed not simply to fulfil APA ethical protocols, but also to look beyond these to consider critical values of social justice and liberation, and participatory values of collaboration and empowerment. Photovoice and PAR aim to address several of these principles and dimensions, as they constitute research towards justice, draw on a collaborative partnership between researcher and research population, and aim to bring about social value. However, power disparities between researcher and participants were also considered (Visser, 2001; Watkins & Shulman, 2008).

In particular, I followed Tuck and Wayne Yang's (2014) work, which speaks of three axioms of social science research that perpetuate a settler colonial gaze. The first of these is that the social sciences focuses almost exclusively on the pain or broken-ness of marginalised populations. This results in a damage-centred research that only legitimises their voices in relation to their representation of pain and specifies solutions in the form of assimilation into whiteness, wealth, or Western-ness (Tuck & Wayne Yang, 2014). Second, research that perpetuates injustice and exploitation, that benefits researchers while disadvantaging communities, or that disturbs the trust of participants, should be avoided (Tuck & Wayne Yang, 2014). Lastly, academic research and publication might not be the intervention needed to assist a community (Tuck & Wayne Yang, 2014).

My research questions and approach therefore focused not only on displacement, but also on resistance, centring photovoice participants as multifaceted individuals with agency. I have also chosen to exclude some stories unrelated to the area of investigation that were shared in research and non-research interactions as a result of the trust that formed between myself and my participants rather than the research contract, particularly those that might compromise their safety, dignity, or privacy. Lastly, my research allows for non-academic communication of results by my participants themselves, in the exhibitions and in any other form that they or we collaboratively choose to pursue.

### **3.8 Reflexivity**

In conducting this qualitative, participatory research project, I acknowledge that the end product has been co-constructed by myself and my participants (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). It is important for any researcher, and particularly for those conducting interpretive and participatory research, to consider questions of identity, positionality, and intersectionality, and how these relate to power (Muhammad et al., 2015; Watkins & Shulman, 2008). Rather than generating universalised knowledge, a reflexive consideration of the research makes its social locations visible (Watkins & Shulman, 2008) Whether a researcher is an insider or an outsider to the participant community, and the disparities in power and identity this entails, can have a substantial impact on how the data are co-constructed, in what participants feel comfortable to say and in how their experiences are framed (Muhammad et al., 2015). However, identity and power can be multifaceted, shifting, and contradictory (Crenshaw, 1995).

At most times, I felt like a distinct outsider given my identity as a young, white, upper-middle-class postgraduate student, and non-Woodstock resident. This had both internalised and external effects. Externally, it likely affected how comfortable gatekeepers and participants were to join the study initially, as well as the responses given and how they were framed in interviews and focus group discussions. For example, participants did not seem to be comfortable, at most times, to discuss race explicitly given my white identity, and referred rather to nationality or class as markers of difference. It can be seen in the findings section that references to race are sometimes subtle and implicit.

In addition, my observations in meetings and interpretations of data are likely influenced by my positionality and experiences in society. I drew on methodologies intended to mediate the potentially marginalising effects of being a researcher in a position of structural power, and to maximise participants' voices and influence. Particularly, photovoice and participant observation intentionally centre participants' voices, while not

omitting the influence of researcher power and positionality on the research. Preceding my thematic analysis with a participatory analysis also assisted in challenging the influence of my own experiences and assumptions on the findings of this study.

Internally, I attempted to be mindful of my whiteness, class status, and position as a researcher and avoided intruding on meetings and events where my attendance would be inappropriate. However, my participants asked me to attend general meetings as a fellow supporter, rather than to act as an aloof and distant researcher. Being present at meetings is a large part of membership and trust in Reclaim the City and I maintained attendance of more general meetings during the course of the study.

I also felt pressure to avoid falling into the position of the othering researcher, by emphasising the participation and agency of my participants. This pressure to be different was not entirely internal. For example, in our interview, Opopo asked me what I would do with this research.

*If you are like in the position and you finish your project – what will you do to actually contribute to change the narrative of the psychological impact, the negative impact on people who are being evicted or the working class. What will be your take on that?*

(Opopo, Interview)

This indicated his awareness of my outsider status, whiteness, and privileged education and class status. He seemed to be assessing whether I was allied with the status quo of whiteness and property power, or with the struggles of the working class. While he appreciated the research approach and framework, he also posed a challenge to me to use my own power and platform to produce knowledge that accurately represents and empowers displaced people, rather than reinforcing negative representations of these groups.

*I think what you're doing, coming to AA, is progressive in its own form... because there is, sometimes there is this high horse way of doing things, this top-bottom approach and people sitting there comfortable and they're trying to zoom into the problem, but when you go into the field, it's a different dynamic, you see things differently. And you'll be able to influence decision that you've been there, you've seen this... Information is power. But if you got that power, how do you use it in a positive way? Because you can have the information and use it in a negative way?*

(Opopo, Interview)

In response, I made it clear that my aim was to produce knowledge that would benefit them as participants, but that they also had the power to share the information and influence the research project in ways that they thought would be beneficial.

I experienced my identity as an outsider changing in occupying the “space between” (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Ergun & Erdemir, 2010). This refers to the notion that one can be both similar and different to one’s participants and their community depending on the person and context, thereby reducing the overly-simplistic nature of an insider-outside dichotomy (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). At times, aspects of my identity positioned me as an insider in relation to shared outsiders, such as being a woman and speaking about men. In addition, while we were different in many ways, we converged on a mutual participation in Reclaim the City meetings, which did not omit the influences of identity and positionality but did create spaces for more collaborative interaction. I interacted with participants in familiar spaces, within Cissie Gool House and within the context of the organisation, where they were part of a collective and were largely in leadership positions.

My extended involvement in the organisation also assisted in building trusting relationships, which made participants more comfortable discussing a wide range of political and personal topics. I considered the environments in which our interactions occurred, with nearly all interactions planned to occur in the familiar environment of CGH. My status as being both inside and outside the organisation opened up additional spaces for conversation that would likely not have happened had I been a fellow insider in the organisation, nor if I had been a complete outsider. This was largely due to the supportive and trusting relationships we developed during the project and I was careful not take advantage of the information that was then shared.

In summary, this chapter has outlined the methodology and design of this project, particularly how photovoice, participant observation, and key informant interviews were triangulated as part of a PAR approach within a critical psychology framework. Participant recruitment and demographic characteristics have been discussed, as well as the procedures of data collection and thematic analysis used. Considerations relating to ethics and reflexivity have also been described.

## Chapter Four: Experiences of Displacement in Woodstock

In this chapter and the chapter that follows, I present and discuss the findings of this research study. This chapter describes themes related to participants' experiences of displacement in Woodstock and lays the foundations for understanding Reclaim the City's resistance, described in Chapter Five. Findings are triangulated from the sources mentioned in the previous chapter and the source of each quotation or extract is referenced in parentheses. A transcription key can be found in Appendix H. The term "poor" is used throughout these chapters due to its adoption in participants' own discourse. However, it is presented in quotation marks to problematise it as an imposed description, due to its link to negative representations of being lazy, undeserving, or helpless, and its construction of poverty or social class as something located in the individual, rather than something systemic that intersects with race, nationality, and power (Bullock & Limbert, 2009).

This chapter specifically examines two themes and their related sub-themes and considers how they maintain an apartheid spatial imaginary, a concept which will be explained in more detail in the discussion at the end of the chapter. The table below briefly describes the organisation and content of these themes, by way of introduction to the sections that follow.

Table 4

### *Themes Relating to Experiences of Displacement*

Theme	Sub-themes	Description
The "Thingification" of people	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mistreatment by landlords.</li> <li>2. Displacement from centres to peripheries.</li> <li>3. Becoming invisible residents.</li> <li>4. Internalisation and individualisation.</li> </ol>	As "poor" black tenants, participants felt that they are treated as objects rather than people. They are often moved to the urban periphery or hidden in city space. This "thingification" can be internalised and individualised, reinforcing their marginalisation. In various ways, people also individually challenged unfair treatment in order to assert their humanity.
Differential Vulnerability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "You strike a woman, you strike a rock"</li> <li>2. "Precisely the word they use is <i>makwerekwere</i>"</li> </ol>	Displacement and its related structural, social, and psychological facets were exacerbated for intersectionally-marginalised groups, such as women and African migrants.

## 4.1 The “Thingification” of People

Being treated as “things” rather than people was a prominent theme across participants’ experiences of displacement. This interacted with space in that having a home and being able specifically to reside in well-located and well-resourced areas were linked to dignity and humanity, and “thingification” describes how participants were considered and moved as “things” in space. Participants described how, as low-income tenants, they were seen or treated as objects by the government, property owners, landlords, and the courts, who evaluated their humanity against their market value, leaving them vulnerable to undignified or powerless situations. Nkosikhona introduced the term “thingifying” to illustrate how “poor” people’s lives are commodified and devalued. He argued that in decisions related to city space, “poor” people are considered to be objects to be moved around by people in positions of power. In being barred from exerting their own agency, they are treated as less valuable or human than people with enough wealth to access human rights and dignity.

*I’m not sure if there’s a term for this, this thingifying of people, making people to look like things, um, to limit people’s dignity like that, to say- you see people- you see things, it’s them and us... that you don’t see that person as a human being because of their socioeconomic status.*

(Nkosikhona, KI Interview)

In this sense, “thingification” closely relates to *dehumanisation* as described in postcolonial or decolonial branches of critical psychology. Dehumanisation is often interpreted both as the consideration of oppressed groups as less human by their oppressors (Foster, 2004) and, from the work of Frantz Fanon, as an alienation from the humanity of one’s own self, identity, and community under conditions of oppression (Hook, 2004b). “Thingification” and its dehumanising effects in relation to displacement were prevalent in talk of evictions throughout meetings, interviews, and photo-stories.

**4.1.1 Mistreatment by landlords.** A key theme of “thingification” was that participants were ill-treated by their landlords, resulting in intimidation and instability that exacerbated their disempowerment as tenants. Landlords were reported to take varied measures to pressure or threaten low-income tenants to make way for tenants who could pay higher rents, for example, by allowing their properties to become dilapidated and then renovating them and renting them for amounts that current tenants could not afford. Attendees at almost every Advice Assembly shared experiences of mistreatment. One tenant described how his landlord had increased his rent by R500 every fortnight so that he would be forced to leave. Another elderly tenant told of how his landlord tried to use gang members

to intimidate him into leaving the house, and several had experienced sudden unjustified rent increases and illegal constructive evictions<sup>4</sup>, or had their belongings stolen or removed. This made the properties uninhabitable or unsafe for tenants, who then faced pressure to move. Such mistreatment by landlords echoes similar findings of other studies of gentrification-related displacement (Atkinson, 2015; Newman & Wyly, 2006; Sakizlioglu, 2014).

One experience that was particularly salient among participants' accounts was being illegally evicted and having their landlords throw their belongings out of their homes. Both Yonela and Helena described how their illegal evictions, in the sense that a court process was not followed, were accompanied by threatening and destructive behaviour by the landlord. Yonela's story contrasts the humanising picture of a home created by being imbued with meaning and filled with possessions over time, with her eviction as a sudden, harsh process through which this home was disregarded and ejected from the landlord's property.

Photograph 4: *No Title*



*Caption: To me this picture reminds me where I'm coming from and what I pass through. This is the house I called home some years ago where I was living with my Aunt, then I was 17 years old. We lived in this house for 9 years and then my Aunt passed away, but before she passed away we were evicted by the landlord and our clothes and furniture were thrown out in the road.*

(Yonela, Photo-story 1)

Helena, in turn, compared the experience of a tenant being evicted with her own experiences in the past, highlighting the lack of a fair legal process for both.

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<sup>4</sup> Constructive evictions refer to illegal attempts by landlords to force tenants to vacate their property by rendering it uninhabitable, generally by interfering with the structures or services of the property.

Photograph 5: *No Title*



*Caption: This photo, it reminds me how I was evicted because I did not have a place to go, like those people. They did not receive any court order; they just throw their things outside. This is the same situation that happened to me.*

(Helena, Photo-story 1)

Both Yonela and Helena’s stories draw attention to the experience of being “thrown out” as something unjust, Yonela through contrasting the innocent picture of her family life with the disproportionately violent eviction, and Helena by describing the lack of adherence to legal procedures. For both, their displacement took the form not only of an ejection from space, but the abrupt destruction of place such that it could no longer exist or be returned to.

Without owning their homes and, in some cases, being provided with only a verbal rather than written lease agreement, participants like Yonela and Helena were vulnerable at any time to this treatment. They had little recourse to defend themselves without adequate support or knowledge of the law at the time. In removing all of a tenant’s belongings from the property, landlords further decreased their physical ability to stay and resist an illegal eviction and signalled a threat to their safety if they did somehow move back in. Having their possessions “thrown out” was degrading in that it disregarded their economic and personal value. With little recourse to stay put and resist their displacement, such illegal evictions displaced participants into homelessness, precarious living situations, or the urban periphery.

Participants did not simply describe a physical loss of space or property as mistreatment by landlords, but also referenced the psychological degradation that occurred when they were made to feel powerless, intimidated, out of place, or undeserving of their homes. This was often supported by negative representations of their personhood and

belonging. For example, Opopo described his landlord's comments during one of his eviction hearings, after the landlord had attempted to illegally constructively evict him by renovating the flat while he was living in it. He highlights how his landlord, a powerful white lawyer, mistreated, intimidated, and demeaned his African tenants.

*On the stand, he made a statement that was very painful... he said that he wanna renovate the place and give it to "decent" people- so it was, for me, it was really painful and I say what do you mean, decent people, explain. He said it's not a charity organisation, so I said, I've never said you were a charity organisation, but at least, there's some difficulties that, uh, we've stayed here for this long, and I've explained to you that this is it, but I make sure that I pay the rent- even if yes, the accumulation is there, I'm working double hours, just to pay the accumulated... But he was constantly terrorising me and given the fact that he's a lawyer, he got a firm, he keeps on telling me, uh, that he will make my life a living hell. So this was the process of negotiating, or I mean, having a "meaningful dialogue" with him. But he kept on that track. I think he deals with a lot of Africans that are always afraid of him...*

(Opopo, Interview)

The landlord's characterisation of "decency" seemingly infers the value of one's personhood from one's wealth, such that wealthy people who could pay more rent are "decent" and those who struggle to pay higher rent are undesirable "charity cases". This echoes discourses found to be used by white wealthy South African interviewees to legitimise their wealth and black groups' poverty in a study by Wale and Foster (2007), which associate wealth with hard work and poverty with laziness. Judgements of "decency" in reference to belonging in urban neighbourhoods also bear long associations to race and class in South Africa. As mentioned in Chapter One and Two, belonging in cities has long been policed by colonial discourses that define the respectability of tenants of different races in relation to a construction of cities as "civilised" and black people as "uncivilised" (Miraftab, 2012; Nahnsen, 2006).

Opopo's comment accordingly demonstrates a struggle to represent himself and his home outside of the powerful, demeaning gaze of his landlord. To be classified as a "charity case" and as "not decent" was painful for its assumption of character seemingly based on race and class, which ignored Opopo's efforts to engage on a more human level and have a "meaningful dialogue", describing his hard work, his struggles, and the long time he had lived there. The landlord's refusal to recognise this representation contributed to the negative impact of the aggression and intimidation that was pressuring him to move.

Junaid similarly described his landlord as lacking humanity, in the face of a trauma that he had some responsibility towards creating. When a faulty electric box in the flat caused

a fire that destroyed their family home, killed his brother, and rendered them homeless, the landlord did not seem to recognise the scale of this trauma or to be affected by it. In the aftermath of this tragedy, Junaid experienced his landlord's handling his loss of a home and his brother's life, and his attempt to resolve it with a transactional exchange of money and dishes, as cold and unempathetic.

*Junaid: From what I know, uh, my sister always contacted him, to come sort out the electric box, as well as, at the back of the yard, to sort out the wiring, um, but he did send some guys, um, but I think they did a bad job, so ja.*

*Ruth: What happened- what was the response afterwards?*

*Junaid: [Takes deep breath] Uh, okay, apparently, um, we, my sister phoned him that morning, to tell him that the place was burnt, and we lost a brother, as well, and he didn't have any feelings at all, he um, he just contacted his family in Cape Town, um, to say um, give them some dishes, and R1000, um, but then this actually person, I don't think he's have a heart, you know, um, us all, we didn't have a place to sleep even, you know, where must we cook?*

(Junaid, Interview)

Participants' accounts respectively highlighted how they experienced being treated as things rather than people in being "thrown out", having their value assessed through notions of "decency", and having their loss of life met with a transactional exchange of money and objects. Chasing higher rentals and lower maintenance costs, landlords were constructed as callous and unempathetic. Junaid's conceptualisation of his landlord as not having a heart is reminiscent of a conceptualisation of oppression as dialogical, whereby the superiority of the oppressor requires the inferiority of the oppressed (Foster, 2004). The oppressed are therefore dehumanised by the oppressor, and oppressors are dehumanised by their inability to recognise the oppressed as human or have empathy for them (Foster, 2004).

Helena and Opopo explicitly described ways in which they disrupted mistreatment by landlords before joining Reclaim the City. Helena spoke about how she maintained her dignity and humanity when she was offered terms of service that would require her both to pay rent and to work for no pay in a family house.

*We did have a agreement... the first time when I move in there, then I said for them, I will work here by yours. They asked me, can you work for us, and you must pay your rent. I said no, it don't work like that by me. If you want me to work here, you's gonna pay me, because, no matter if I'm stay here, then I'm like a servant girl, and I don't want to be like that. I can rather pay your rent and I feel more safer on my side...*

(Helena, Interview)

Helena still took on the responsibilities asked of her, but not in place of paying rent.

*I was look after the old man. Without asking money, nothing. Clean the old man, wash him, do his laundry, do the kitchen, clean, make for him porridge in the morning – I never ask a thing for them. I still did pay the rent at the end of the month, I still paid R1000 because I still working for [other employer]. And when I'm off, then I help them in the house... to be good. Just to let them also see now I'm a human being, I'm not an animal. But I'm still doing what you asked me to do. But after that when the old man died, they start to treat me- ill-treat me. They start to be fighting with me, and- and I said okay. I give it up now, I move out of the house.*

(Helena, Interview)

Helena's refusal of conditions of residence that would make her feel like "a servant girl" demonstrates how resistance can take the form of parallel or alternative contracts. In refusing an exploitative contract of working and paying for residence that would place her into a role of servanthood, she replaced it with a contract between a paying tenant and landlord, thereby shifting the balance of power on either side. Rather than exploited labour, her helping them with the work they had requested became an act of service which reaffirmed rather than diminished her humanity in the face of being treated as sub-human.

Similarly, Opopo described how he would pay more rent to his landlord because his landlord was increasing the rent by less than the benchmark of 10%. In terms of the commodification of tenants, this was a way of increasing his worth and proving his "decency". However, when he realised that his landlord was not similarly altering the social contract to recognise this worth, he stopped engaging in this behaviour.

*This house has never been renovated. It had a problem with the geyser, it took some time before the geyser was changed, finally it was done, then in terms of like, renovating and renovation and stuff, the 8% kept on increasing. But sometimes I gave more than that because I felt that um, it was still less than the common 10%. So, then when I realised I came back to the 8%.*

(Opopo, Interview)

These forms of individual resistance highlight how people are not simply victims of "thingification" as discussed above. Rather, participants described how they challenged mistreatment that maintained "thingification" by altering dehumanising social contracts towards more humanising ends.

**4.1.2 Displacement from centres to peripheries.** Space was notably salient in participants' descriptions of displacement and particularly, the pattern of movement from centres to peripheries. Again, the language of disposal characterised these descriptions. The "dumping" of "poor" people on the city's periphery, far from developments that would

otherwise benefit them, echoed descriptions of being “thrown out”. Junaid and Helena described how they are being excluded from the influx of business and development in Woodstock and are rather being put into camps outside the city to remain “poor”. Their narratives of this process were distinctly reminiscent of colonial processes, with people “coming from overseas” to put “poor” black people in camps and informal settlements far from the centre, in order to claim their land and build on it.

Junaid: *And, if you look around, people I mean, look, are evicted from there-*

Helena: *Ja-*

Junaid: *-you know, and, why? Because people are coming from overseas, to come and build, you know, developers coming to build, uh, apartment blocks here, businesses come and kicking the people out that does not have any finance, any money, so-*

Helena: *That’s why they put them in Blikkiesdorp. And Wolwerivier.*

(Focus Group)

Similarly to Newman and Wyly’s (2006) study of gentrification in New York, this highlights the political salience of displacement for displaced residents, who simultaneously welcome long-awaited investment into their neighbourhoods, but oppose the resultant market changes that force them to move. This exclusion from development was echoed in Opopo’s classification of the periphery, or Wolwerivier and Blikkiesdorp specifically, as a dumping ground where “poor” residents disappeared when no longer considered to be worthy of living in the city. Being sent to the periphery is described as a permanent move which, in creating immovable barriers to re-entering the city, transforms city residents into waste products of urban development.

*Because like now, in Blikkiesdorp, you see that it’s a temporary settlement, but people have been staying there for years, and uh, it means their life doesn’t really matter. Uh, the policies legally shapes their life... uh, as soon as those are, they aren’t good to stay around here, they should dump them there- they have been dumped, because there are no conditions there for them to come to town, just people who are struggling to live on a daily basis, just calculate their transport...*

(Opopo, Focus Group)

These experiences characterise gentrification not as including “poor” people in new developments, but as disposing of them outside of developments. Nkosikhona expanded on this in describing how “poor” black people are not recognised to exist in the city as human

beings, but rather as providers of services. Despite bringing life to the city, they are excluded from living in it.

*That we can only be, exist in town, to only offer a service, and after that- be in a tall building in Cape Town at 6, and you'll see people moving out of the city like ants. And see the same thing happening in the morning: The city is dead in the evening. And during the day it's active and there's a lot of people.*

(Nkosikhona, KI Interview)

This extractive framing of “poor” black people displays similarities to the migrant labour system of apartheid and suggests an intentionality to the maintenance of their marginalisation. Participants similarly evoked apartheid imagery, as well as pain and anger, in their characterisation of displacement to the periphery. They described it as a strategic disposal of “poor” black people by the current government and property developers, to places cut off from their communities, amenities, and urban participation, rather than a coincidence of “urban renewal” and gentrification. The classification of centres as places where people are treated as human beings, and peripheries as places not fit for humans, highlights the significance of place identities in the experience of displacement, and how personal and place identity interact (Dixon & Durrheim, 2004).

Junaid: *And, it's like, they [evictees] got no support from the government, you know, like example, the government can say, can- we're gonna maybe build flats,*

Helena: *Yes, more accommodation-*

Junaid: *No more-*

Helena: *Evictions-*

Junaid: *Ja. But no, they're allowed to, they rather take people away from the place they live, they grew up, and put them somewhere where there is no schools, hospitals, no police stations,*

Helena: *There's not even a drain in that place!*

Junaid: *How can you put people-*

Helena: *Yes I did see that place-*

Junaid: *They are human beings.*

(Focus Group)

In being excluded from belonging in the city and moved to peripheries constructed as not fit for humans, participants were “thingified”. Despite their existence in Woodstock as

tenants, as people with homes and families, and as people who work to contribute to the city's economy, they experienced their violent displacement being normalised as a casualty of development, rather than benefiting from developments. In describing this dehumanisation, participants resisted it, asserting their status as human beings.

**4.1.3 Displacement by invisibility.** Being excluded from full participation in the city in ways mentioned renders residents somewhat invisible. Even within Woodstock, a fairly central area, participants described how they were becoming peripheral residents. For example, Junaid captured homeless people being removed from visible public space by police, demonstrating how this left them with no place to go. He relates this to his own story and frames their presence from something criminal to something human, thereby resisting their displacement by police.

Photograph 6: *No Title*



*Caption: The police were moving these people out by the town hall. They don't want them to sleep there. So where do they go? It's unfair to them. They are human beings too. It reminds me of me sleeping there as well. I slept out, and I experienced a lot of love from them.*

(Junaid, Photo-story 1)

Helena's photo-story similarly illustrated how "poor" residents were slowly being pushed into *hokkies* (colloquial Cape Afrikaans term for small living structure or space) in central areas. She highlights how little space they were taking up, and how thoroughly the landlord sought to get rid of them, even evicting a pet.

Photograph 7: *No Title*



*Caption: This is a place where they have evicted the people. They were living in a small hok. They did not evict the people only, they also evicted the dog, which makes me worried so much. Where are they going to stay? People need shelter. Also the law must fight for poor people not only the rich or the one who own the property.*

(Helena, Photo-story 2)

Her story suggests that while “poor” tenants are allowed to exist in city areas, they are slowly being pushed into small or crowded co-living situations as rents rise in the area, even before being pushed to the urban periphery. Both her and Junaid’s stories consider how those occupying such small spaces are left with no alternative place to go when evicted.

While accepting lower quality accommodation or sharing properties can be considered a form of resistance to displacement (Newman & Wyly, 2006; Pearsall, 2012), such living conditions limit residents’ visibility and power in the neighbourhood. Councillor Herron recounted the fears of wealthier residents whenever the idea of introducing social housing into Woodstock and Salt River had been raised. “Poor” black neighbours were constructed as an influx of outsiders, demonstrating how the peripheralisation of these residents to the social and spatial margins of the neighbourhood impacts their visibility.

*People assume that this [affordable housing] means that there’s gonna be an influx of um, people into areas, and um, as I’ve explained to many people in the Woodstock area, people that are gonna be living in these units, already live in Woodstock. They live in flats where they’re going to be evicted, or they live in, where they can’t afford the rent, where there’s three or four families sharing a unit, they live in the backyard of a house, in a Wendy house mostly. So, it’s not new people, these are already your neighbours. You just don’t know how they live.*

(Cllr Herron, KI Interview)

The gentrification of Woodstock means “poor” black and coloured residents are increasingly being hidden in *hokkies* or moved out of the inner city through rising property prices and evictions. This diminishes their physical presence the area and their ability to be considered part of the neighbourhood. Despite being long-time residents of Woodstock, their existence in the area is not seen or recognised as legitimate. They are not considered to be residents by property owners and those working towards gentrification initiatives that will shift Woodstock’s place identity to one of middle- and upper-class residence. This shift is also not a natural result of the elevation of existing residents’ socioeconomic statuses, but rather a result of privileging those that can afford higher rents and hiding or removing those that cannot.

**4.1.4 Internalisation and power.** Given the intimidating environment and potential consequences of resisting eviction, of having one’s possessions destroyed or being displaced to the periphery, it is not surprising that across interviews, photo-stories, and meetings, tenants described simply moving out when they received a notice of motion or were told that they were evicted. Such actions allowed them more control over where they moved to, and more safety in the process of moving. However, moving out without being legally evicted was also reported in Advice Assemblies to have occurred even when there was some negotiation with the landlord and when tenants were not threatened, intimidated, or constructively evicted, and did not have their belongings removed.

Participants described how these patterns had been facilitated not necessarily by a strategic avoidance of negative consequences, but also by a lack of awareness of their rights as tenants. Being a member of Reclaim the City had improved this awareness. Eviction law in South Africa stipulates that even illegal occupants (such as those whose leases have been cancelled) are entitled to a fair court process and the provision of alternative accommodation if evicted.

*Me and my family used to stay by [landmark], and we were evicted there. And we didn’t know our rights, so we just left, found another place. We moved to [name of different street].*

(Carol, Focus Group)

*... that we didn’t have this knowledge from Reclaim the City, that if it is sold, how to still continue your staying in the property, and the lease has to be respected. But not knowing that, and these are some of the things that are going on, we had to leave.*

(Opopo, Interview)

Without targeted interventions, low-income tenants were unable to access the legal knowledge that would allow them a fair eviction, including knowledge on how to access free or low-cost legal services. In Advice Assemblies, several attendees were unaware that constructive evictions were illegal, for example, or that they could bring disputes to the Rental Housing Tribunal. Being unable to access such knowledge is both legally disempowering and personally disempowering, in the sense that the injustice of mistreatment is not validated by a knowledge of its illegality, leading participants in some cases to normalise rather than question this treatment and act in accordance with it. Foster (2004) provides a critical historical perspective to this internalisation and disempowerment. Through the propagation of racist and classist social norms and discourses of personhood over centuries of colonialism and apartheid, and more recent neoliberalism, much of the self-knowledge available to those who are black and coloured and “poor” in constituting their subjectivities dictates that they are powerless (Foster, 2004). When norms propagated by hegemonic ideologies to oppress certain groups are not easily questioned or challenged, this knowledge can be reinforced to prompt compliance with a marginalising status quo (Foster, 2004).

Yonela similarly described how she and others had adopted the notion that as tenants, they are never entitled to defend their lawful occupation of someone else’s space.

*Because there’s some things we didn’t know before- if they come to you and said, I need to you to be out this week, even they say tomorrow, we will be having that in mind that this house not belongs to me, it’s for her or for him, so we have to be out. We won’t wait for court, we won’t go and wait for the eviction letter, we won’t wait for anything, we just move out. But now I know that no-one can tell me that, say, “Go”. Even if it’s his house, he can’t tell me that. He’ll wait for me until I get the place, and I’ll wait until I get the letter from them- you understand. So now I can say I know something.*

(Yonela, Interview)

Yonela describes two processes that reinforce one another. First, the structural power disparity between those who own property (landlords) and those who do not (tenants) facilitates a pattern of compliance with unlawful and unjust eviction. Second, tenants *internalise* an inferiority to property owners, landlords, and wealthier tenants by having it in mind that they do not own the property. Internalisation is a significant component of oppression, exemplifying the ways in which social or political and psychological oppressions are interlinked (Hook, 2004b; Moane, 2003). In marginalising social conditions, psychological patterns such as internalised inferiority are learned, disempowering oppressed

groups through their own self-perceptions and creating internal barriers to resistance of oppression (Moane, 2003). This internalised oppression can impede resistance to external oppression, thereby reinforcing it (Hook, 2004b; Moane, 2003).

Nkosikhona used the example of black domestic workers working for white families in Sea Point to argue similarly that apartheid has disempowered black people through their own self-perceptions. To him, the exploitation faced by black low-income tenants was also a symptom of this internalised racism, perpetuated over decades.

*We have to start changing that mentality. People should see each other as equals, people that interact with you should see you as a person, beyond being white. So that's where you start... you're trying to undo exploitation of decades, because there are people in Sea Point that cannot refer to people as Helen, or James, or Michael, they refer to them as Madam, and Sir. They can't- and they have to look down when they're speaking to white people. How are they supposed to defend themselves when they're being exploited? How are they supposed to fight for their rights, you know?*

(Nkosikhona, KI Interview)

External, structural inequalities in power and access to knowledge and resources exist between property owners and low-income tenants. Historic internalised notions of a lack of power and agency are reinforced when “poor” black tenants are continually considered out of place, mistreated by landlords, moved to hidden parts of the city, and the landlord’s right to make decisions over their property overshadows their right to have a home. This prompts patterns of compliant behaviour which further disempower “poor” tenants and give landlords more power. However, it is evident that, as members of Reclaim the City, participants’ stories challenged rather than complied with the internalisation of this marginalisation and mistreatment. Their stories indicate how the normalisation of their marginalisation had influenced their own behaviour and highlight the power of transforming identity and knowledge, as described in Chapter Five.

#### **4.2 Differential Vulnerability**

Certain identity characteristics are salient in the power disparity between landlords and “poor” black tenants described above. This disparity is exaggerated by the intersection of various forms of systematic oppression. *Intersectionality* describes how identities interact with one another such that one person can experience multiple oppressions as a result of holding multiple structurally oppressed identities (Crenshaw, 1995). Even a short excerpt from Helena’s interview highlights how her experience of eviction was compounded by her disability at the time.

*Because I was cripple in my leg and that woman did throw me out. I had a boot on. And she did throw me out.*

(Helena, Interview)

Features like age and ability clearly compound the vulnerability of evicted tenants, but in the context of this study, gender and nationality arose most prominently.

**4.2.1 “You strike a woman, you strike a rock”.** Two women hosted Reclaim the City’s Annual Congress on Women’s Day (9 August 2018) and, in their opening comments, said, “Thank you to the men who are not afraid to be led by women for coming today” and that “mostly women are at the forefront of this movement”. They mentioned the high rate of gender-based violence and its continued presence in the movement. One host called out to the crowd, “You strike a woman, you strike a rock,” a reference to the apartheid struggle song *Wathint’ Abafazi, Wathint’ Imbokodo* sung by black women in their 1956 march to the Union Buildings in protest of apartheid pass laws (South African History Archive [SAHA], 2018). This was a rallying cry not only for women, but also a reminder to men of the power and role of women in activism, preventing their invisibility in the broader struggle for housing. Helena emphasised this in her photo-story.

Photograph 8: *No Title*



*Caption: This photo means a lot for me. This is women and children who are fighting for our organisation, which is Reclaim the City. That day we were going for the march in the city.*

(Helena, Photo-story 3)

The strong presence of women in the movement is understandable given their disproportionate vulnerability to evictions, and to the effects of precarious housing,

homelessness, or living on the periphery. Regardless of race, women in South Africa are less likely to be in paid or higher-level employment than men and are more likely to be in households of the two lowest income quintiles than men (Statistics South Africa [StatsSA], 2011) and could be considered more likely to be economically vulnerable to eviction. The Prevention of Illegal Eviction From and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act (1998, p. 6) states:

*... a court may grant an order for eviction if it is of the opinion that it is just and equitable to do so, after considering all the relevant circumstances, including the rights and needs of the elderly, children, disabled persons and households headed by women.*

However, the experiences of women in the movement indicated that these considerations were rarely used. Cases often did not even make it into court, due to the aforementioned processes of people being forcefully evicted or moving out without a court order. People's experiences, voiced in meetings, indicated that elderly people, women, and families with children were still often evicted into homelessness or into Blikkiesdorp or Wolwerivier, peripheral areas without access to adequate amenities or schooling and associated with high levels of crime, even sometimes when a court process was followed.

Crime in Woodstock was constructed as sporadic and isolated in comparison to peripheral areas, where crime, especially against women, was constructed as organised and unavoidable.

*Helena: In Mitchell's Plain, people are suffering also. It's not like Woodstock, because in Woodstock I can go to my neighbour, and go stand and go talk to her. In Mitchell's Plain, no-*

*Junaid: And not only that, uh, we must remember in those areas, the violence-*

*Carol: Yes*

*Helena: Yes*

(Focus Group)

This sentiment arose strongly in Reclaim the City's meetings. Woodstock was particularly associated with benefits such as schools and greater safety for children and women.

*Ja me I would prefer to stay in Woodstock. It's close to Cape Town, close to children's schools, all the places-*

(Carol, Focus Group)

*Here I can walk at night-time. I'm safe in the night.*

(Helena, Focus Group)

The experience of crime is widely recognised as a gendered phenomenon which can be distinguished in public and private places (Meth, 2016). South Africa has one of the highest rates of femicide in the world, which in 2009 was measured at 5 times the global rate (Abrahams, Mathews, Martin, Lombard, & Jewkes, 2013). In addition, an analysis of 30 South African police stations reporting the highest number of rape cases from 1 April to 31 September 2016 showed that 98.9% of victims of rape were female, and 49.6% aged 19 years or below (South African Police Service [SAPS], 2017). Almost half of the cases occurred in public with offenders who were total strangers, and slightly more were known to the victims and occurred in a private residence (SAPS, 2017).

This offers a snapshot of similar trends reported for sexual assault and demonstrates that women are vulnerable to sexual violence in both the public and private spheres, with possible pockets of safety in each (Meth, 2016). What distinguishes the experience of women in vulnerable housing situations, is the blurring of the public and private in ways that compound the experiences of fear of violence in both, with no pockets of safety. For example, in one Advice Assembly, a tenant told the story of how her landlord gave her a notice to vacate and then intimidated her by telling her to make one room empty so someone else could stay there. This was in spite of this tenant always paying her rent, albeit sometimes being late. She described how as a woman living alone with children, speculating about the possibility of an unfamiliar male tenant filled her with fear. The tenant's house effectively became a "public" area, as the home was under threat of being opened to strangers. While living with strangers is inconvenient and in contravention of lease agreements for most people, the experience of women in these conditions is compounded by the high rates of violence against women in South Africa, in both public and private places.

In Helena's interview, she described how an eviction that occurred unlawfully just after she had paid a full month's rent rendered her homeless and with few options but to sleep on the street. A friend of hers offered her his empty car to sleep in, this being safer than the street. However, one night, she narrowly escaped a group of male strangers who tried to rape her while she was sleeping in the car.

*Then [friend's name], he said for me, come sleep in the car... if anything happen to you, I know that you are safe. Cos I know you got nowhere to go. So I, and from that car, one night they tried to rape me...*

(Helena, Interview)

Helena's experience is both a form of public violence, given its occurrence outside the home, and a form of private violence given its occurrence in her temporary home, the car in which she was living. Her story indicates the merging of public and private violence for women who are precariously, informally, or illegally housed, as this making of private space does not safeguard them from the violence of public space.

This is intensified by the notion of *hyper-permeable space*, which is prone to access in a multitude of ways (Meth, 2016). Backyard dwellings, informal dwellings, cars, and rooms in other people's houses are not completely secure, however, they offer more security than being homeless, with no protection. This is partially due to their violation of certain environmental principles shown in a well-cited systematic review to be fairly effective at preventing crime (Cozens, Saville, & Hillier, 2005). Namely, the creation of private-in-public spaces does not allow for territoriality, or markers of ownership of the space to fully distinguish them as private, such as fences and walls, or adequate access control and surveillance (Cozens et al., 2005).

While occupied buildings offered some respite from the dangers of hyper-permeable public spaces, the experience of occupation and living in a space that was both public and private was not the same for everyone. For example, at RTC's annual congress, a leader from the Sea Point chapter stated that it's not easy to be an occupier, "as a woman with your children you're living in fear – we have no electricity". While Cissie Gool House did have electricity, Nkosikhona explained at the Annual Congress how the vulnerabilities people experience in society are brought with them into the occupation, such as gender-based violence and intimate partner violence. These are issues that the movement is taking steps to overcome, particularly in the adoption of their constitution and establishment of a Non-violence Task Team. However, it still affects the experiences of woman who are occupiers, particularly those who face intimate partner violence in the occupation but whose alternative accommodation would require living on the street.

As such, women's experiences of vulnerability in precarious housing, peripheral settlements, and homelessness can differ from those of men, in part due to the high rate of violence against women in South Africa. While issues of hyper-permeability, susceptibility to public and private violence, and the general instability of precarious housing will affect those of all genders, this increases fears and experiences of public violence for women and decreases their shelter from private violence, with fewer safe places to turn.

**4.2.2 "... Precisely the word that they use is makwerekwere".** Similarly, Opopo's photo-story highlighted how being African, as a non-South African, left him vulnerable to

intimidation by his landlord. His photo-stories described how his landlord facilitated an illegal constructive eviction, chipping away at the floors and ceiling, ruining his belongings, and littering the flat with building materials.

Photograph 9: *Notice of Motion (Eviction Papers)*



*Caption: This photo now the focus of the legal process of eviction. These are court papers and it is not easy as a kwerekwere or as “we” are referred to as “Foreigners,” it’s very intimidating. Others will just pack their things and leave the house, as they won’t have time to go through the courts. “Notice of Motion” Section 4(2) notice. Formal or official start of eviction by getting the above summons. At face value it is traumatising just getting it served to you. To me, the rental issues and arrears, which is explainable, led to the present scenario. We need more stories to be told about the callous treatment of landlord to tenants. Tenants have got to speak out the abuses, but also look at how justly and equitably this can be handled.*

(Opopo, Photo-story 1)

This photograph, of a half-closed door bearing a notice of motion for eviction and a South African flag in the background, seems to illustrate the contradiction between the ideals of the South African constitution, and the way it treats “poor” black people, particularly African immigrants.

Having moved to South Africa from another African country as a refugee after apartheid, being a “foreigner” meant being one who is already out of place in relation to a place identity interlinked with South African nationality. In fact, several studies have examined South African xenophobia, noting that migrants face intolerance and abuse by citizens (Crush, 2001). Particularly, Harris (2002) related xenophobic attitudes and violence to South Africa’s culture of violence and its process of exclusionary post-apartheid nation-building, which have served to violently other African nationals. Fanon (1991) argued that

violence against “foreigners” in post-independence African states was a continuation of the colonial order’s hatred of Africans into the present. Post-colonial African nationalism emphasised indigeneity, while post-apartheid nationalism emphasised South African citizenship (Harris, 2002; Neocosmos, 2008). Both serve to other African nationals through their construction of blackness in relation to whiteness, and not in relation to Africa (Neocosmos, 2008).

While low-income South African groups can revert to their rights to space and fair process, African nationals also face increased barriers to this process. Palmary (2003) demonstrates how governmental responsibility for realising the rights of refugees to basic services in South Africa is unclear. Opopo similarly described how he falls through the gaps of acquiring citizenship or even permanent residency, leaving him on shaky ground to resist eviction and follow court proceedings. While others were displaced from certain areas due to histories of colonialism and apartheid (Miraftab, 2012), as a black African, he faced both being made to feel unwelcome in those same areas and being made to feel unwelcome by the nation as a whole, as he faced xenophobic attacks and discrimination by its legal structures. Opopo’s story thereby spoke to the construction of Africans as “foreign” due to the present-day policing of colonial-era borders (Klotz, 2016), and the displacement of Africans from their own countries and within other African countries that occurs as a result.

*I feel deeply that I’ve done something in the community of South Africa, though, I’m not begging for recognition, but after all this contribution that I’ve done in the community, I still have a problem because, I’m still considered a refugee, after close to 18 years, I have to still go and renew my paper and stuff.*

(Opopo, Interview)

Eviction to peripheral areas contains an associated threat of xenophobic violence, which is not often experienced as directly in the city in Cape Town. While there was crime in Woodstock, its diversity and proximity to the city, as well as the defensibility of more formal rented properties, offered various buffers to xenophobic violence such as that which occurred in peripheral informal settlements in 2008. The vulnerability of African immigrants is therefore also compounded in eviction to the periphery of the city.

#### **4.3 Discussion: Maintaining an Apartheid Spatial Imaginary**

Despite Woodstock’s diverse working-class population under apartheid, its identity began to shift to one that is increasingly middle-class from the 1980s (Garside, 1993). Today, low-income residents are slowly finding themselves subsumed and displaced by gentrification and the middle-class, young, “hipster” place identity created by an influx of

creative professionals, tourists, and students into the area. While working-class black residents are physically displaced from centres to peripheries, operating within this is a logic of peripheralisation, dehumanisation, and the deprivation of their rights that maintains racialised and classed place identities in different areas, or an *apartheid spatial imaginary*.

The term “spatial imaginary” here is drawn from Lipsitz (2007) and a more recent collection of essays called *Race and Spatial Imaginary: Planning Otherwise* (Bates et al., 2018). Lipsitz (2007) demonstrates how race, place, and power are connected by cultural ideals and moral geographies. He uses the term “white spatial imaginary” in reference to whiteness as a structural privileging of white people due to historical racist systems (Lipsitz, 2007). A “white spatial imaginary” prioritises property ownership as a primary means of participation in space and society. Within this, houses become assets rather than just homes, to be constantly improved upon in order to maintain the exclusionary wealth of the neighbourhood (Lipsitz, 2007). In addition, a “white spatial imaginary”, finding its place in areas in which racial segregation in space has historically been enforced, pursues an ideal of “purity” in space through exclusivity and the removal of “undesirable” bodies.

The concept of the white spatial imaginary therefore converges with Nahnsen’s (2006) and Miraftab’s (2012) analyses of spatial and social patterns in South Africa, which demonstrate the persevering maintenance of the exclusionary “sanitation discourse” and the association of property ownership and rights in Cape Town from colonialism to the present day, which largely have privileged white and property-owning groups in urban spaces. The white spatial imaginary has been embraced in the neoliberal mainstream, maintaining its links between race, space, and power (Lipsitz, 2007). As such, Bates and colleagues (2018) call for urban planners and others invested in urban space to “imagine otherwise” by decolonising and reimagining space away from any existing frameworks.

The apartheid spatial imaginary, in turn, is introduced here in reference to a series of norms that preserve salient psychological, social, and spatial features associated with apartheid in physical space, and constrain our imaginations. This includes tenants’ mistreatment by landlords, their invisibility in central urban neighbourhoods, and their government-endorsed removals to peripheries, all of which were prevalent features of the apartheid era and which this chapter has shown still occur in the present dispensation. Notions of property owners having more power and rights, the privatisation of space rather than its fulfilment of public good, and the linking of urban belonging to racialised and classed notions of “decency” are supported by this imaginary. It is important that this is not reduced to a consideration of white landlords and black tenants, but rather conceptualised as the logic

of areas being reserved for people of a certain race or socioeconomic status, of forced movement of marginalised groups from centres to peripheries, and of people with property power marginalising those without ownership of property. This is inextricable from an intersectional consideration of both race and class (and gender and nationality, as mentioned above).

In Sea Point, for example, this is clearly exemplified by present-day body corporate rules that limit the rights and freedoms of domestic workers and security guards staying in designated small flatlets or rooms. Such rules dictate that black domestic workers residing in these “maid’s quarters” are considered the same way they were in this white group area during apartheid, in being given as little space and facilities for living as possible. They are “allowed” to reside in someone else’s space, rather than having ownership over their space by making it a home. In “poor” black people being hidden from white areas or gentrifying areas through minimal occupancy of space, a restriction of activity, or removal through eviction, their being “out of place” in these areas is normalised.

*For someone earning below R2400, and you can’t cook, and Sea Point being the third most expensive suburb in South Africa, you have to live off take-out, and how am I supposed to live...*

(Nkosikhona, KI Interview)

The apartheid spatial imaginary refers to both the social and individual imagination. Evictions from Woodstock were accordingly individually and collectively experienced as a form of forced removal. They designated to participants an imposed and somewhat internalised identity of being objects rather than people, subtly legitimising their treatment of being hidden and disposed of to peripheries in relation to their market value. Similarly, Nkosikhona linked modern-day evictions to the forced removals of apartheid.

*So, this is not a legacy of apartheid... It can’t be legacy when the same thing that was done during apartheid is being done today... We are actually undoing the very fine details of apartheid, that are hidden in these places like Sea Point and Woodstock, that still, the black and coloured majority, um, people of this country and this province are being excluded, economically, and socially, and otherwise, that you can’t be staying in these places.*

(Nkosikhona, KI Interview)

Despite these unlawful evictions being incongruent with the laws of the present dispensation, being “hidden” and excluded from staying in certain places by landlords with unmitigated power is not a new state, but a continuation of an old one, and “poor” black

groups' movement in accordance with unjust evictions is perhaps a continuation of this spatial imaginary into the present day. Accordingly, Opopo described what he perceived as a government-led exclusion of black people in Cape Town, comparing slogans of post-apartheid South Africa and Cape Town specifically to the spatial and social reality of social exclusion. His words require little interpretation in demonstrating his experiences of spatial and social transformation in post-apartheid South Africa.

*... then if you want to segregate that there's a particular people who have to live in the city, for me, that is then visiting the dark past of apartheid. To live in the city sometimes is very expensive for the poor to afford but, I feel that a city should be friendly. And then, there is this slogan in Cape Town that keeps puzzling me, that says, "The City Works for You". How does the city work for you when people in the inner city, through private developers or landlords, keep on evicting people and sending them at the periphery of the city, so how does the city work for you? And coming also into issue to say, "Where you live matters" and it seems if you want to live around the city, now you have to be this richer foreign people... indeed, the so-called "Rainbow" nature of this country should be accommodated- although I also have a problem with the word Rainbow, because if you wanna look at it- with the colours that there are in a rainbow, there's no black in rainbow.*

(Opopo, Interview)

Summarising the findings presented in this chapter, participants experienced a type of "thingification" as low-income black and coloured tenants in the inner city of Cape Town, incorporating aspects of dehumanisation, objectification, and commodification. This was linked to mistreatment by landlords and poor living conditions which undermined the dignity and ability of "poor" black and coloured tenants to create a home in rented space in Woodstock. Spatial patterns of movement from centres to peripheries imbued significance on the process of eviction as a "disposal" and as a mechanism through which tenants were devalued and forcibly removed to areas not fit for human beings. Additionally, being gradually moved into *hokkies* and smaller areas in Woodstock undermined residents' power and visibility in the area and left them with no place to go. Importantly, certain notions of being without rights as tenants were internalised, combining with threatening mistreatment and intimidation to pressure people to move out of their homes without being legally evicted.

These factors operated within the logic of an apartheid spatial imaginary and contributed to patterns of displacement of these tenants from centres to *hokkies* to peripheries. This caused anger, pain, and fear for their safety and particularly affected those with intersectional vulnerabilities, such as women and African immigrants. However, it was also resisted individually, and dehumanisation and its internalisation, as well as this spatial and

social status quo, were challenged in participants' stories. With the organisation that being part of Reclaim the City offered, this resistance intensified. This is discussed further in Chapter Five.

## Chapter Five: Reclaiming the Spatial Imaginary

This chapter will discuss how participants resisted their displacement as members of Reclaim the City. Three themes will be presented and are described briefly in Table 5 below. By renegotiating identity and subjectivity in history and space, resisting the logic of apartheid while maintaining a collective memory of its history, and creating spaces for the imagination and realisation of more liberating practices, these themes show how Reclaim the City reimagines space and themselves beyond an apartheid spatial imaginary.

Table 5

### *Themes Relating to Resistance to Displacement*

Theme	Sub-themes	Description
Building new identities and subjectivities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disrupting the internalisation of “thingification”.</li> <li>2. Negotiating collective identities.</li> <li>3. Reframing exclusionary place identities.</li> </ol>	Reclaim the City disrupted the internalisation of oppression through conscientisation. Activists reframed their identities and place identities in ways which legitimised and empowered their collective resistance to displacement. Challenges were faced in this process.
Challenging the apartheid spatial imaginary	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Making it visible: Bringing history into the present.</li> <li>2. “Fighting for our rights”</li> <li>3. Invented spaces of resistance.</li> </ol>	By bringing apartheid memories and historical trauma into the present, participants made the apartheid spatial imaginary visible. They used talk of rights to draw a boundary between past and present, and disrupted the status quo with extra-legal resistance.
Constructing Cissie Gool House	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. “The only provider of emergency housing”</li> <li>2. Creating a home.</li> <li>3. Negotiating the collective and the individual.</li> </ol>	The occupation of “Cissie Gool House” arose as a construction with multifaceted meanings, functioning predominantly as a physical space for the expansion of participants’ imaginations.

### 5.1 Building New Identities and Subjectivities

Being a member of Reclaim the City challenges the “thingification” of displaced people in Woodstock by developing identities that facilitate resistance to displacement. This notion of identity being something that can be re-built to facilitate liberation from oppression

occupies a prominent position in liberation psychology (Foster, 2004; Moane, 2003; Montero, 2007). The development of new social identities is argued to challenge oppressed groups' internalised assumptions of their diminished capabilities (Montero, 2007). Building strengths disrupts internalised oppression at a personal level, and making social connections undoes the colonial fracturing of united resistance at an interpersonal level, borne of internalised notions of inferiority and competition among oppressed groups (Hook, 2005; Moane, 2003). These psychological changes can increase capacity to affect political change towards empowerment (Moane, 2003), which in turn feeds back into psychological identity. Extending this, this section considers not only personal and collective identities, but also how these intersect with place and history to facilitate notions of belonging in space. These identities, rather than being static, oscillate between the individual and the collective, and between being victims and powerful agents, and are interlinked with urban space.

**5.1.1 Disrupting the internalisation of “thingification”.** As discussed in the previous chapter, without considering the social and economic factors shaping one's displacement, “thingification” can be individualised and internalised, causing eviction to be experienced with shame or inadequacy and dampening its resistance. Reclaim the City disrupts this disempowering internalisation to build identities that can disrupt the status quo. This occurs mainly through education and solidarity-building initiatives, such as Advice Assemblies. These meetings provide members with rights-based education and encourage mutual support and assistance to draw links between members' personal experiences, frame them more collectively, and highlight the structural features underlying them.

Nkosikhona described this as an intentional form of “conscientisation” aimed at challenging the neoliberal notion of homelessness as being a personal failure to succeed in the market and reframing it rather as an outcome of systemic histories of racialised dispossession and segregation. Making meaning of eviction as part of a bigger system of gentrification and identifying shared experiences of government treatment in comparison to wealthy people goes some way towards redefining “poor” identity and subjectivity in empowering rather than disempowering ways.

*So it's a long process that we take on. We take one person, when they're fit enough to stand for their rights, they can then take the other people through the same cycle, and that's what you're trying to do, to make sure that, everyone in Woodstock and Sea Point, is politically conscientised, and then is politically aware, of what makes him to be homeless, and what makes people to um struggle for housing, in, in these two areas.*

(Nkosikhona, KI Interview)

Nkosikhona's comment highlights the congruence of the movement's philosophy and the notion of conscientisation advanced by liberation psychology theorists. Conscientisation refers to the critical process of understanding the impact of social injustice, history, and structural oppression on one's own situation, to produce new understandings of oneself in time and space that facilitate resistance (Montero, 2009). In meetings, Reclaim the City organisers constantly reminded people of the scale of their eviction issues, reframing them collectively. Meeting facilitators often responded to advice-seekers' stories by asking the room to share similar experiences and what they had learnt from them, and members were constantly asked for their suggestions for political action to address issues at scale.

This *problematization*, or the doubting or rejecting of essential truths about the world that have been taken for granted (Freire, 1970), required organisers to call for people to speak to each other, to share stories and find their common experiences, and to think about these in new ways. This prompted conversation and dialogue around aspects of daily life, such as eviction and poor treatment by landlords, to make underlying assumptions visible (Freire, 1970). Montero (2007) argues that in being made visible and questioned, these common experiences and understandings are no longer naturalised as the only way for things to be, and this disruption paves the way for other, more critical ways of thinking. Through the collective organising that can arise from this, marginalised people are able to challenge their invisibility and mobilise their potential to improve their own lives (Foster, 2004; Montero, 2007).

Opopo accordingly described how the support and information he received in Advice Assemblies made him feel like he could have confronted his landlord and stood up for the tenants that he was mistreating, rather than accepting poor treatment even before his eviction.

*...given the fact that if I actually knew about, about Reclaim the City and Ndifuna Ukwazi, more, and had that knowledge, I think I would have confronted him more. I would have informed... I could have formed an argument that I should uh, know what to do, what to ask and what not to do.*

(Opopo, Interview)

This illustrates how the Advice Assemblies increased people's knowledge and confidence in their abilities to resist unfair displacement and unlawful treatment. They also assist in constructing landlords not as people with infinite power, but as humans equally bound by law and justice.

Helena's story is a further example of how knowing one's rights, being conscientised to political processes, and working collectively to build power, assisted in building a more

powerful individual identity that disrupted the internalisation of “thingification”. Helena described a sense of pride in being able to fight for the value of “land for people, not for profit”, a shared principle that unites the working classes.

*That’s why we stand as Reclaim the City, land for people not for profit. That’s why, we fight for this... That’s why I like to run in the front. To show the people, here we come, we fight- now we come for that fight. What you think you can do to us, you don’t do it with the people who got it. You don’t do this to rich people, why you do it with the people who are poor?*

(Helena, Interview)

Her comments show a clear problematisation of eviction, not just as something that had happened to her, but as something broader that was being done to poor people. In seeing her experiences as part of a collective, and herself as a leader, Helena additionally re-framed her identity to one that allowed her to claim her part of a collective power. This was continued in her photo-story, which showed her pride at being able to define herself as a leader and member of a movement of evicted people and to stand for its principles, representing herself as visible, loud, and powerful. This photograph is included with her permission.

Photograph 10: *No Title*



*Caption: This is me, Helena, in the march for the government to stop eviction, also not selling our land to rich people. I also one of the people who likes to be supportive for our organisation. I always want to lead our people. I am also one of the evicted person.*

(Helena, Photo-story 4)

The disruption of the internalisation of structural oppression was therefore powerful. This seemed to shape people’s self-perceptions such that they did not accept being moved

like an object, mistreated, or hidden, but rather felt pride in being visible and fighting for their rights as part of a collective, on the premise that they were just as human as people with property power.

**5.1.2 Negotiating collective identities.** This conscientisation to collective and structural features of displacement also went some way towards building the collective identity of the movement in relation to “people’s power”. Nkosikhona described their intentional efforts to build a collective working-class identity across black and coloured groups through conscientisation.

*So we try to make sure that the struggle of the working class is always united, you know, that the working class cannot say that we’re coloured or black. We’re fucking facing the same thing. It doesn’t matter whether you’re white or you’re black, or whatever race you are, um, whether you’re not from this country, if you’re struggling for housing, we should each see each other as comrades, if we agree on certain principles, that we’ve created for this movement.*

(Nkosikhona, KI Interview)

This is fitting as systems of oppression have some of their most enduring effects in how communities are destroyed and different marginalised groups are pitted against one other, preventing their united resistance (Hook, 2005; Moane, 2003). It constitutes a further disruption of internalisation in its aim to maintain a humanising focus on the struggles of working-class people, rather than the dehumanising competitive racial and national logic of colonialism and apartheid.

Yonela expressed a similar urgency for her comrades to resist the maintenance of apartheid-era competition between black and coloured groups, with her reference to shared systemic experiences of displacement by property owners and developers implying certain intersections between race and class. She explained that it was important to her that admission to the occupation be granted on the basis of human need and shared humanity, rather than race, home neighbourhood, or nationality. The subtle favouring of South African and certain racial identities to reside in the occupation was at one point a matter of contention among leadership.

*There are some they reject, there are some they say they can't accommodate, and they will say, these people are not in need of a place. Remember, in Woodstock the rent is high now. So even if you are working, sometimes you won't afford the rent. There's an occupation, why can't they take people to put in the occupation! Because that's what is happening now, people are selling their houses to the... white people, white people who come and renovate and then higher the rent, so people can't afford it.*

(Yonela, Interview)

This selling of property to “white people” can be tied to the systemic impact of capitalist markets, which leads owners to sell their properties or raise rents at the prospect of making a profit. Giving their properties up for developments that foster gentrification can then marginalise less well-off tenants and owners, including their neighbours and fellow community members.

Opopo echoed Yonela's concerns, making explicit his belief that to be divided in this way was to uphold colonial systems.

*At the end of the day, I'm a comrade, an injury to one is an injury to all... So yes, some things has come to push us, to make us... fighting among ourself, because today we hear about xenophobia or afrophobia, people fighting among themselves. And these are some of the deliberate effects of colonisation, you know, slavery, apartheid.*

(Opopo, Focus Group)

His criticisms echo Pan-African ideals of a unified black African identity and consciousness that can defeat the legacies of colonialism and its construction of identity and belonging along racial, geographic, cultural, and national lines (Fanon, 2017; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Neocosmos, 2008; Nyamnjoh & Shoro, 2011). For Opopo, as for others, building a powerful movement required not just common experience, but an intentional unity marked by resisting the pervasively divisive and dehumanising effects of historical racist systems.

While conscientisation has the potential to build powerful collective identities to facilitate resistance, this is complicated in practice by the diversity of group identities within Reclaim the City. Participants mentioned how the internalisation of the colonial and apartheid logic of group identities served to pervasively divide various groups within the movement, creating challenges to overcome in building a strong collective identity in line with the movement's humanising principles.

**5.1.3 Reframing exclusionary place identities.** Along with collective and individual identities, place identities were also reframed in ways that both echoed and disrupted the logic of an apartheid spatial imaginary. Many participants resisted racialised or classed place identities of Woodstock that excluded them by highlighting their historical imprint on and memories of the area in ways that challenged their invisibility. For example, Junaid used his photo-story predominantly to tell the story of the death of his brother when his family home was burnt in a fire. Even when this home was lost, his story and the image of a spray-painted tribute to his brother demonstrate a sense of ownership over the ruins, and an imprinting of personal memory onto this now public space in defiance of being forgotten.

Photograph 11: *No Title*



*Caption: My late brother Rashied was a graffiti tour guide. One of the artists that came from USA did the above artwork in memory of my brother. He is surely resting in peace. According to Islam, when a person dies by fire or drowning they go straight to Heaven, and my beloved brother was a great, kind, loving, caring, fun-loving guy, always a smile on his face, even when his health wasn't good. So Heaven is the best place for him.*

(Junaid, Photo-story 2)

Similarly, Opopo chose to include a photograph of the first flat he stayed in when he moved to Woodstock, also demonstrating his history in the area. His photo-story frames Woodstock as a multi-national African area, and a site of refuge and comradeship for those who had faced various struggles, challenging the identities of Woodstock as either a place for South Africans or a place for non-African international visitors and businesses.

Photograph 12: “*First home in SA*” (Cape Town)



*Caption: Altona, 196 Victoria Road, Woodstock, is the first place I stayed when I arrived in Cape Town. I will call it a cosmopolitan hub of a home. As the Landlord/Lady had a “Portuguese” and “Coloured” background. So many Angolans, DRCs, Namibians, Cameroun, Southern Cameroons, Rwandans, Burundi, local South Africans, and Nigerians. As rough and tough as Woodstock was in the early 2000s, non-locals always walked in groups to protect themselves from attacks. Accessibility to town and to work was fine and more so to walk to Home Affairs and the Foreshore to get legal powers to make one’s stay in SA legal. This home taught me to be streetwise and also to embrace diversity. I left Cameroon due to political persecution and met other comrades from DRC, Angola, Rwanda who were going through worse circumstances, made me to learn from their struggle tactics, to face life’s realities in another African setting. I’ve been in the spirit of Ubuntu. It shows I wasn’t alone, collectively we can fight to break stereotypes and taboos.*

(Opopo, Photo-story 2)

Opopo’s narrative constructed a place identity of Woodstock as a historically-linked “cosmopolitan hub,” or rather, a hub for African residents, resisting its identity as a place only for South Africans. This telling of history serves as a powerful way of reframing exclusionary place identities by constructing places in ways that are interlinked with selves. Both Junaid and Opopo showed how, while spaces can change - homes can be destroyed and rents can rise to exclude working-class people - their memories and histories of places cannot. Repeating these histories reaffirms their belonging in the area, as people who have always existed there and are being pushed out, rather than people who were foreign in some way to the area. In this way, they make themselves visible, challenging the ways in which dominant place identities render them invisible. Participants challenged their exclusion from Woodstock through emphasising their inclusion and history in space.

These processes of meaning-making also served to construct Woodstock as a collective home, in which “poor” black and coloured families have existed before the most recent wave of gentrification. The following focus group extract from one of our first meetings demonstrates how Woodstock was defiantly defended by participants, drawing on terms like “our place” and “our home,” clearly indicating ownership and belonging rather than being out of place.

Junaid: *You see, those were the days but, looking now this is 2018, what’s gonna happen in 10 years, 5 years’ time to Woodstock? So we need to fight for Woodstock.*

Helena: *Ja, we fight for our Woodstock. This is our place.*

Junaid: *We need to fight for Woodstock. This is our home.*

Helena: *This is my hometown.*

Carol: *I’m not leaving Woodstock*

Junaid: *I’m not living in Delft. They’ll have to put me in a body bag and take me out of Woodstock.*

(Focus Group)

However, within this conceptualisation, different groups of people had different sub-identities of place. This was something that Yonela commented on explicitly in her interview, describing how in spite of living in Woodstock for 19 years, people would construct her as out of place in Woodstock as a black person given the area’s traditional coloured and white identity, and associate her instead with “black” areas such as Khayelitsha.

*You know, for example, I’m 19 years in Woodstock. People must say I’m not in, from Woodstock. My whole life I spent in Woodstock. I can visit Khayelitsha, I can visit wherever I want to visit, but my life is there by Woodstock. It won’t be easy for me to move out from Woodstock. It’s like my home, let me put it that way. But their mentality it’s like, so, people who are, people from Woodstock and Salt River are coloured people. It’s just not like that.*

(Yonela, Interview)

This is not necessarily a recent trend either. While Woodstock has always held an identity of being a multiracial working-class area, only white and coloured residents were able to live there during apartheid, while black residents were relegated to the peripheries (Garside, 1993). In fact, one white area was even rezoned as coloured under the Group Areas Act. Census 2011 data shows that recently in Woodstock, 50.94% of people are coloured

while only 29.06% are black (Frith, 2011). A map created from this same census data illustrates how Woodstock and the Bo-Kaap are the only areas of fairly concentrated coloured residence in the inner-city area, with no such areas for black people (Frith, 2011).

Woodstock's coloured heritage is still observable today, although the next census will provide some insight into the impact of evictions on the long-standing coloured population.

Woodstock currently faces the erasure of its coloured and working-class identities in the face of displacement and gentrification, as increasing numbers of white and middle-class residents enter the suburb. However, to resist this by re-asserting a coloured place identity serves to erase and exclude black residents who live in the suburb. Yonela's experience complexifies the defiant unity in the earlier focus group extract by illustrating how, while constructing Woodstock's place identity as that of a home to each person's history, these histories might operate in competition rather than in harmony. For Yonela, resisting spatial apartheid comes from reframing place identities such that everyone belongs, rather than using the apartheid logic of homogenous racialised place identities.

## 5.2 Challenging the Apartheid Spatial Imaginary

Building on more empowering assertions of identity and subjectivity, participants mobilised a number of active strategies towards challenging an apartheid spatial imaginary. Namely, they made it visible, made it unacceptable, and formed alternatives to it. Their resistance was therefore targeted both at disempowering images of the self and disempowering hegemonic orders of society (Foster, 2004).

**5.2.1 Making it visible: Bringing history into the present.** The maintenance of spatial apartheid is commonly challenged by comparing the present urban form to the past. Even Councillor Herron acknowledged the maintenance of apartheid structures in physical space in Cape Town, framing it as an accidental effect of well-intentioned efforts to build housing.

*...we have a national commitment and a national housing plan, and policy that requires us to try and address the under-provision or the historic deprivation of decent housing, um and as a city, and not unlike other cities, we have thrown grant funding at building as many houses as we can, and, in the process I think we have entrenched... the... apartheid spatial plan, and legacy, because we have bought, and built houses on cheap available land on the outskirts of the city...*

(Cllr Herron, KI Interview)

However, participants' stories and activists' interactions in public meetings demonstrated an attempt to push further than this pragmatic understanding, towards a public

conscientisation to the assumptions underlying these choices and how their lives as “poor” black people had not changed since apartheid.

Participants brought historical trauma and memory into their telling of present stories, interlinking them in ways that made the apartheid spatial imaginary’s persistence into the present day visible. Mainly, their activism was framed as a struggle that was ongoing from apartheid. For example, Helena’s sombre caption below is a sharp contrast to the cheerful photograph she took of young learners participating in Reclaim the City’s Land March on Human Rights Day. Rather than a story of black children being liberated after apartheid, she highlighted the similarities between the apartheid struggle she lived through, where the police shot her brother during a housing-related apartheid riot in Bishop Lavis, and the continuing struggle of young black children for dignified housing,

Photograph 13: *No Title*



*Caption: It is not only adults who are fighting for the land also the school children for the benefit of their future. They also want to stay in the houses not in shacks. I took this picture in town because it reminds me of the time when my brother was being shot to save me. I was with my bag and my school clothes, also a grey dress on, and they shot my brother. It’s not happy actually, what happy happy is. Look at them, they are also fighting for the people that haven’t got places.*

(Helena, Photo-story 5)

Opopo similarly used his photo-story to show how children are part of the struggle for housing. In his photo (in which I have blurred the faces of minors), their signs read “Dispossessed in 1652 1913 1950” and “Dispossessed in 2018”, showing the connection of the current housing struggle to the legacy of apartheid. As a non-South African, Opopo still

experiences the housing struggle as a legacy of apartheid, with “poor” black people not yet seeing a qualitative change in their lives.

Photograph 14: “Land March” (Political Action)



*Caption: Freedom Day characterised the massive march to the City of Cape Town. Comrades, activists, social movements, NGOs, civil society, protesting about the land and housing conditions. As an activist being directly affected, coupled with thousands of others, we marched to demand better housing/land reforms. This situation exists because of the negative legacies of apartheid. The vast inequalities is still very visible after 24 years of democracy. More class actions by the working class to transform the balance of power. Continuous engaging and workshops and roundtables to educate the poorest of the poor to demand what is rightfully theirs.*

(Opopo, Photo-story 3)

These stories linked current struggles to the apartheid-era legitimisation of undignified living conditions and lack of land and housing for “poor” black people. Meetings with city councillors often turned combative in language and response, as community members used the available platform to confront politicians with their rage and their humanity. “How would you feel if your kid had to watch you shit in a bucket?” one man angrily asked the Ward Councillor at a public meeting of Woodstock residents, before leaving the room for a few moments. He had described how his house had burned down in a fire, and the councillor had done nothing to support them. At the same meeting, a Sea Point resident and domestic worker who was facing eviction explained to the councillors that she did not believe that it was fair to be evicted away from her CBD, concluding that, “It’s because of our energy and our lives and our hands that that CBD is that CBD today” which was met with enormous applause from the crowd. Later on, in response to another question about Wolwerivier, she called out, “It’s because we’re black and poor, that’s why they put us in the bush,” to which the people sitting around her voiced agreement.

The two encounters in the meeting, the first, a coloured man confronting a white man in power with his suffering in undignified conditions, and the second, a black woman likening modern-day spatial patterns to extractive and racist apartheid-era policies, made visible the interweaving of current experiences of evictions with the trauma of apartheid spatial violence. By refusing to keep these hidden, members of Reclaim the City made the apartheid spatial imaginary visible and used it to confront those who they saw as upholding it, expanding their critical consciousness into the public imagination and forcing people in power to problematise their own assumptions.

**5.2.2 “Fighting for our rights”.** At the core of challenging displacement was the mobilisation of rights. The fight for rights specifically frames behaviour from landlords as a form of legal injustice, drawing the boundary between the past, when there were no such rights, and the present day, where the same behaviour is now in violation of a set of rights and freedoms which they are owed. Reframing their experiences in terms of rights and belonging in ways that challenged apartheid logic was a powerful tool used by participants to resist marginalisation.

This was evident in Advice Assemblies, where a common occurrence was the repetition of the “Golden Rule”. During the question and answer session, attendees would often describe interactions with their landlords where they were told to vacate the property or received a notice of motion, asking for advice with the assumption that they needed to be off the property as soon as possible. The facilitator would solicit opinions from the crowd, asking for the “Golden Rule”, and people would respond in unison, “No eviction without a court order!” This simple, powerful practice of sharing experiences and knowledge of this most fundamental principle of legal evictions in South Africa fulfilled an important need for basic legal knowledge.

The isolation of people with no legal knowledge or access to lawyers leaves them vulnerable to discriminatory legal treatment. As a result of knowledge gained in the Advice Assemblies, Opopo decided to take his constructive eviction matter to court. Opopo’s description of NGOs assisting poor black tenants highlights how being able to challenge this structural marginalisation of poor black people by increasing their access to the legal system is a way of “fighting the system.”

Photograph 15: “Magistrate’s court” (*Just and Equitable*)



*Caption: This shows a system well-structured to handle matters arising from disagreements. My case of eviction was held in this court, which is the regional court. Court 22 was precisely where the matter was first heard. The structural settings of the court is very intimidating to say the least. Courts are to regulate our society, if not, the constant marginalisation of the majority by the minority rich will be massive. But it still favours the wealthy. Affordability of court are again for the rich. Lawyers/advocates are expensive to hire to defend you. But there are some few NGOs that truly assist to fight the system with their legal centres to assist the poor comrades to get justice on their side, if you are active in your community. We have to educate our communities how the court system works.*

(Opopo, Photo-story 4)

Opopo’s experience also shows how the assumption that courts are just and equitable ignores poor people’s qualitative experiences of intimidation. This was mentioned by a number of Advice Assembly attendees, particularly prompted by the vulnerability of not having access to legal knowledge or lawyers. Attendees spoke of experiences of landlords’ lawyers trying to get them to drop their cases when they did not have a lawyer, of their lawyers dropping their cases by stating that it was futile, of the Rental Housing Tribunal turning people away before they had even filled in a complaint form, and of magistrates immediately ruling in favour of eviction when tenants were unable to attend their court date. In addition, stories about the courts in these communities as being structures that consistently rule in favour of eviction and often evict neighbours into homelessness or Temporary Relocation Camps like Blikkiesdorp, gives them a reputation as being anti-black and anti-poor, increasing the psychological barrier to engaging in a legal court eviction process. Sharing these stories aided in collective conscientisation.

In addition to the knowledge and support provided by Advice Assemblies and Ndifuna Ukwazi lawyers, Reclaim the City coordinated groups of volunteers to attend members' court dates and monitor the courts by sitting in on sessions once a week. They aimed to make their presence felt and use this "people power" to hold the court and lawyers accountable. Legal knowledge, legal assistance, and people's power serve as reminders of the new dispensation and empower "poor" black people to act on the rights and treatment that they are owed, rather than that which they receive.

This challenge to the apartheid spatial imaginary occurred not only in court settings, but also in everyday life and the activities of the movement. In Helena's story and interview, she illustrated how despite having formal rights granted by the Constitution, these are limited to some extent by the pervasiveness of apartheid institutional cultures in formal structures. Helena took the photo below during a march for land on Freedom Day and in her photo-story, pointed out how the police are hiding under the bridge, almost like an animal waiting to pounce on the protesters, despite them being there legally and acting on principles of justice. In discussing their photographs, Yonela mentioned that she had taken almost exactly the same photograph, for the same reason.

Photograph 16: *No Title*



*Caption: You see how the people is standing there? The way the people is and how they're walking, and how the cops is standing waiting for them. We must just pass them and then they're gonna do something. We are not afraid for them. We reclaim our land because this is our place where we belong.*

(Helena, Photo-story 6)

In many ways, Helena's stories of her life in post-apartheid South Africa were indistinguishable from those of her life during apartheid. What did distinguish these time periods was the focus on rights, freedoms, and belonging in making meaning of post-apartheid South Africa. Despite the police criminalising black bodies in central public space, Helena refused to allow this to influence her self-perception and experience, rather drawing on talk of defiance, ownership, and belonging to illustrate how it is the police's and not the protestors' behaviour that is incorrect or out of place. This behaviour challenged how oppressive norms, conditions, and discourses are internalised, leading oppressed groups to govern themselves in ways that comply with oppression (Foster, 2004), by making those norms visible and asserting rights and identities that contradict them. In defying these occurrences by refusing to internalise them, Helena challenged the apartheid spatial imaginary, and made it visible by bringing the past into the present.

**5.2.3 Invented spaces of resistance.** Reclaim the City's constitution commits to resisting unjust rather than simply unlawful evictions. This important distinction introduces what RTC terms "extra-legal" resistance, one of the more unique ways in which they challenge displacement. It means that the existing structures, procedures, and laws are not regarded finitely, but rather as elements flexible to change when they no longer serve the people. In one public meeting, one RTC leader explained that, "laws evolve and there is nothing that's cast in stone that the city can't change". To cheers and applause, he argued that laws were what allowed apartheid to happen, so people should not be complacent and regard laws as a moral standard, but rather, should evaluate laws against the needs of the people. Rights were experienced as a vessel for demanding moral behaviour, rather than the moral standard for behaviour itself and were therefore seen as able to be changed to align better with activists' moral codes.

Extra-legal resistance was therefore characterised as resistance not necessarily to illegality, but to practices that were not considered fair, equal, moral, or just. While activists experienced much of their resistance to occur in formal, legal, or otherwise government-supported "invited" spaces, such as the court, what distinguished their extra-legal resistance was their activism in "invented" spaces (Miraftab, 2004). While actions in invited spaces assist marginalised people in coping with the neoliberal system that is marginalising them, actions in invented spaces aim to disrupt and challenge the status quo (Miraftab, 2004). Nkosikhona described this merging of legal and extra-legal resistance clearly, in describing how both unlawful and lawful evictions are resisted when they are judged as immoral by RTC members.

*We are not addressing the legacy of apartheid. We actually are addressing the fine details of apartheid, that we still have to live with, in Cape Town currently. So that's basically our job, whether we build that through the Advice Assembly, where we educate people about their rights, and make them familiar with the courts, assist them in the court, administrative, kind of side. And making sure that the people power that we are talking about is also resisting a sheriff when they come to evict one unlawfully, even if they follow the law, a lawful eviction that would result in someone being homeless, that's, that for me is morally not acceptable. It cannot be that as a judge you will say this person should be evicted into homelessness, you know, or should be evicted to be sent to Wolwerivier...*

(Nkosikhona, KI Interview)

The example he described is a prominent feature of Reclaim the City's extra-legal resistance to eviction. When evictions and intimidation by landlords were taking place, and also when legal evictions were taking place that would result in homelessness, Reclaim the City members would receive word and show up to the location to resist. Junaid described how this increased their visibility as poor people, often necessitating opposing official structures like the court and police.

*Like if you is supporting Opopo - we support people who are evicted - we go to their homes. We don't compromise easily with the police. You know, we go to court, we stand there, we try to give our support so they can see.*

(Junaid, Interview)

Nkosikhona's description of the work of Ndifuna Ukwazi, RTC's partner organisation, further makes it clear that their extra-legal work, or work in invented spaces, which he terms "political organising", is just as important to the organisation as its work in legal or invited spaces, namely its research and litigation. In other words, Reclaim the City simultaneously aims to work within and disrupt the spatial status quo.

*So, last year in March, I was given this opportunity to head the political organising unit, which is... causing kak and shit across the city, which you might have noticed [laughs]. The occupations, is the work of this unit, the escraches, morning escrache's that we have outside Helen Zille's house, outside politician's houses, that will be the work of this unit. So at NU, we are an organisation that's trying to combine research, litigation, and political organising to try and achieve spatial justice.*

(Nkosikhona, KI Interview)

During the course of our project, Reclaim the City held a morning *escrache* outside Brett Herron's house to make him answer their questions about the city's plans for Temporary Relocation Area. The event was creative, in itself an invented space for housing

activism. Members woke him up at 5am to a table set up outside his home with coffee and *koesisters* (Cape Malay doughnuts), to ask him questions about his plans for affordable housing. Yonela described this experience in her interview.

Ruth: *What was that like, going to his house?*

Yonela: *Eish, first of all, I won't lie, I was scared, because I was thinking of, maybe, since it's a suburb place, so they can call the police for us. Eish, it was so stressful, dealing with that, we- at five we got there, we just waited, he was sleeping, and he didn't give us any problem, just came outside, we talked to him, he answered us... We didn't have any problem of police interrupting us cos he didn't call- it was just a quiet march and then, we just, we wanted to show him that we can do this, we aren't saying, "relax" because we are not happy outside. You're a councillor, you must do something.*

(Yonela, Interview)

This display of power and assertiveness holds politicians accountable to extra-legal requirements of justice, in this case, in opposing the eviction of inner-city residents to peripheral Temporary Relocation Areas for how this upholds an apartheid displacement logic. Councillor Herron's cooperation and earnest engagement was unexpected, but as she explains, to hear his answers was not the only purpose of their action. They also wanted to disrupt his comfort by making him face their situation as "poor" black people. As a group, they brought their identities and their experiences into an area that is somewhat of a white or middle-to-upper class enclave, where she felt distinctly out of place. With this, they challenged not only the accountability of politicians like Brett Herron, but spatial apartheid itself and the way it allows politicians to retreat from their most vulnerable constituents. Her experience brought into question both why politicians need to be unreachable and why exclusionary place identities, such as that of his home in the largely white, middle- to upper-class suburb of Newlands, are enough to shield them from their constituents. As she mentioned, "we are not happy outside".

Such extra-legal resistance poses more of a personal risk than legal resistance. In other cases, such as when I attended RTC's occupation of a site sold at a controversially-low price to a private company, we were met with police and a threatening private security team. At the same time, however, disruption on many fronts is empowering to activists, who cut through bureaucracy and in numbers, assert their right to the city and notions of justice that humanise rather than "thingify" them. It also allows for the problematisation (Freire, 1970) of the restriction of rights associated with the apartheid spatial imaginary, prompting imagination beyond its confines. This aligns well with Holston's (2009) notion of insurgent

citizenship. Like other housing movements before them (Abellán et al., 2012; Berglund & Peipinen, 2017, 2018; De Carli & Frediani, 2016; Earle, 2012; Holston, 2009b; Miraftab & Wills, 2005), RTC's insurgent citizenship expands upon the marginalising citizenships available to them within the current limitations of the law, to develop citizenships that allow them to take up space and influence policy in Woodstock, despite not being able to afford gentrified rents.

It was interesting how this disruption of the status quo facilitated breaks with formality in ways that affected even interactions with city councillors. On a number of occasions, Councillor Herron had described how the existence of Blikkiesdorp and Wolwerivier as the only options for temporary relocation made him deeply uncomfortable, instead advocating for a new plan based on the principle, "Where people live matters". In one public meeting, an organiser from Reclaim the City addressed him, calling for the release of firmer plans in relation to this, by warning, "You can no longer be paralysed by your uncomfortability" emphasising that the current situation was an emergency, and that his discomfort with it does not compare to suffering in Wolwerivier and Blikkiesdorp. In response, Herron addressed the speaker personally and somewhat emotionally. He explained that he had found that comment hurtful, and to have his efforts dismissed as paralysis was not fair, saying, "I've worked damn hard". He mentioned how his family barely sees him and described how even at their 5am *escrache*, he had engaged earnestly with them. In cutting through the bureaucracy of government by addressing him directly, the speaker had forced him to answer to his constituents not just as a city official, but as a person speaking to fellow people.

Effectively, actions such as these both make visible and disrupt the status quo, whereby a court room is a fear-inducing and intimidating place, landlords are in positions of unchallenged power, "poor" black people are too easily displaced to the periphery, and politicians are only reachable in limited ways through layers of bureaucracy, or perhaps are constructed as structures of bureaucracy rather than humans themselves. In this way, Reclaim the City challenges and expands the imagination of its members and the public through humanistic principles of the power, living conditions, and rights they could have.

### **5.3 Constructing Cissie Gool House**

The occupation, as a reclaiming of city centres, an action that veers distinctly into the extra-legal, and a notable disruption to the spatial order, combines the psychological and spatial elements of resistance in a distinct way. Like other occupations, the occupation of the

Woodstock Hospital began as a symbol of people's power, challenging government inertia in providing housing by reclaiming public space to serve its social need, as Yonela describes.

*Now, there in RTC... it's been decided that we will occupy all the government buildings. It's when we started the occupation in Woodstock and Sea Point. So now, because of our- like I stay for 19 year in Woodstock. So now, we're like okay, as we are Woodstock and Salt River and everyone who's being evicted now, we have to secure the, all the government buildings for them to know what we are serious and we need houses. Because these houses you can be in the waiting list for more than 25 and 30 years... other people, they even die since they were waiting for their houses.*

(Yonela, Interview)

This act of reclaiming a building in Woodstock, naming it “Cissie Gool House” and filling it with black low-income residents who are being evicted is a statement that they do exist in the area, despite attempts to push them out. The occupation gives their identities a prominent, visible place in which to reside, in contrast to their hidden status in *hokkies*, homelessness, backyard dwellings, and evictions to the city's periphery. In other words, it brings them firmly into the centre, rather than the peripheries.

Such occupations constitute a symbolic re-appropriation of public space and its politicisation in use and symbolisation, in contrast to the neoliberal privatisation of space (Abellán et al., 2012) and its related process of gentrification (De Carli & Frediani, 2016). This is particularly valuable when those who are marginalised and unable to lawfully afford urban space take up space through squatting or occupation as means of advancing otherwise neglected agendas (De Carli & Frediani, 2016). Occupations thereby make visible the struggles and solutions of those facing urban exclusion (De Carli & Frediani, 2016). However, the occupation was more than just a symbol of resistance and also created a practice ground for realising Reclaim the City's vision and values in physical space.

**5.3.1 “The only provider of emergency housing...”** As Yonela explains above, you can die waiting for housing in South Africa. The process of waiting for housing has been characterised as one that recognises people as legitimate citizens but also forces them into precarious, illegal, or informal spaces where they must subvert the authority and rules of the state in order to have shelter (Oldfield & Greyling, 2015). However, the occupation of Cissie Gool House illustrates something beyond this. The occupation was not just a grey or informal area, but was legitimised as a form of citizenship in and of itself. Participants explained how the occupation operated as a structure for housing provision for low-income residents of Woodstock, operating both in parallel and as a challenge to the official structures of

government. In her photo-story, Yonela described how Reclaim the City provided her with a place when she was evicted, characterising this as a type of temporary emergency housing.

Photograph 17: *No Title*



*Caption: Finally, in August, I left the house to CGH where I joined the movement called Reclaim the City, where we are fighting for land. Now I can say my life is better though I'm still hoping of a better place because for now I have a roof over my head but it is temporary. I don't know what will happen tomorrow. Again I'm saying thank you to NU staff, without them there's no Reclaim the City, 'cause they helped us and assist us with whatever they have.*

(Yonela, Photo-story 2)

Similarly, Helena described how Reclaim the City provided accommodation to evictees who were left without a place to go, classifying the occupation as a provider of housing in the inner city and a necessary resource for evictees. In capturing the painful moment of their eviction, her photograph and description distinguish the character of Reclaim the City's "emergency housing" from that of government. While the government and courts are constructed as leaving low-income groups in this state, Reclaim the City instead accepts them and gives them a place to stay in Woodstock. Helena's sentiments here were echoed by a member of Ndifuna Ukwazi, who, in a public meeting, addressed Councillor Herron by declaring, "Currently Reclaim the City is the only provider of emergency housing in the inner city".

Photograph 18: *No Title*

*Caption: This is for one of our evictees who was being evicted and they did not have a place to go anyway. Thanks for our organisation, which provided accommodation for them. It also tells me how the court don't care for poor people.*

(Helena, Photo-story 7)

Rather than requiring people to pay rent or adopting the exclusionary logic of racialised place identities, occupiers were required to be in need of emergency housing, to contribute to their community by attending Reclaim the City meetings and activities, and to follow a number of house rules centred around respect, equality, sobriety, and non-violence. The intake process is structured, with those in need of a room being recorded on a waiting list. When one is available, they consult with the intake committee and will be allowed to stay there after agreeing to the house rules. Yonela described how it was agreed upon by leaders that anyone could stay in the building.

*... so is we said, in the meetings, that occupation is for everyone. It doesn't matter if you come from Congo, you know, Nigeria, Burundi, wherever, as long as you are evicted or as long as you have a problem.*

(Yonela, Interview)

The occupation thereby attempts to realise the inclusive working-class and pan-African values described by participants in previous sections in urban space. In claiming ownership over public space, Helena and Yonela demonstrated how it could be used to fulfil its social purpose with maximum inclusion, rather than standing empty while people are homeless. However, as mentioned in the previous chapter, issues of intake in the occupation

are still complicated by real dynamics of race, nationality, and class that need to be negotiated to maintain the occupation as a site for the realisation of these values.

Studies of occupations in Spain and Brazil similarly found that occupations firstly challenge housing shortages and policies that do not serve low-income groups, by providing housing for vulnerable people and evicted families (Abellán et al., 2012; De Carli & Frediani, 2016). They thereby produce an experimental site for the practice of alternative housing, showing that housing for marginalised groups is possible in the inner-city (Abellán et al., 2012; De Carli & Frediani, 2016). The occupation of Cissie Gool House expanded activists' imagination of what is possible by creating something that did not previously exist: inner-city emergency housing. This physically challenged formal structures and economic processes that marginalised and displaced them, to enable them to be recognised as people with a place to stay in the city. Helena explained how she believes politicians have something to learn from these ways in which Reclaim the City has re-purposed public space.

*So we gonna fight for it mos, we're gonna build, we must see other people also, that's why we said mos last time, what we gonna do with Helen Zille? We gonna tell her, come, have a look, and see what you can do, how many people is evicted here. And how many people is staying here. Come and have a look. Don't say you want to, you don't know, you don't see, because you never come have a look. So let's see maar, come and have a look for us. And how we took this place and how we did stay here. You see?*

(Helena, Interview)

The occupation therefore poses a challenge to displacement by creating a place where people who are being hidden and peripheralised are able to take up central space and remain visible in the area, and demonstrating in practice how public land and buildings could be used.

**5.3.2 Creating a home.** Occupiers seemed to uphold complex constructions of identity, being both with and without a place to call home. "Having a place" was linked to "being somebody" in meetings I observed, where people's stories suggested how, aside from the decrease in quality of life from being evicted onto the street or living in Blikkiesdorp or Wolwerivier, this would also cut them off from their homes and community and designate them to the peripheral status of not being human.

Helena explained how the occupied building is both a temporary or emergency housing structure and a type of home. Her comment illustrates the ownership felt over the building as a place shaped by its relationship to Reclaim the City, an organisation she felt part of and strongly connected to.

*But I know God will still see me, that I go into a place of my own. That is all set, then I will maybe get a heart attack that day, I will see and say, ahh thank you God. I'm dying in my own house. Not outside. But this is also like my own house. Here I'm fight for my right, to be one of Reclaim the City.*

(Helena, Interview)

Having a place, and more specifically, occupying central rather than peripheral city space and, furthermore, turning a peripheral space of an abandoned building into a centre of the movement, turned its occupants into occupiers, people with control over their space. This was similarly documented by De Carli (2016), who showed how the collective nature of an occupation in São Paulo provided an experience of belonging and membership in society, through the living out of personal lives in a collective political space, and through an enhanced access to services and opportunities. Paterniani (2018), in reference to the long-standing Occupation Mauá in São Paulo, describes a *prefiguring* or reimagining of the future occupiers are fighting for as a crucial dimension of the urban land struggle. This entailed housing activists constructing their lives as they believe they should be (Paterniani, 2018).

Activists' sense of place did not emerge from physical shelter itself. I visited the former empty Woodstock Hospital in 2017 to assist Reclaim the City briefly with cleaning out one of its rooms. It was filled with old furniture, debris, documents, and dust, still clearly an old hospital or abandoned building. Even when this was cleared out, it would be a long while before the building had this sense of place. When I began visiting Cissie Gool House regularly for meetings in 2018 and also spent time in the less public residential area, I noticed how residents had transformed the building into a residential block, a community centre, and a home, rather than an old hospital. The occupation is, as such, not just a taking of shelter, but a creation of place, constructed by the nature of the movement and the community that has developed around it. This challenged the loss of sense of place, documented across studies of gentrification and displacement (Atkinson, 2015; Shaw & Hagemans, 2015; Valli, 2015).

Accordingly, in our first focus group, Helena, Junaid, and Carol described how they found it hurtful that fellow community members would ask if they are staying in the "hospital". In its association to their staying in an abandoned building not intended for human residence, it identifies them as people without a place. It would seem to identify them as sub-human for living illegally in conditions not fit for respectable human habitation. In responding that it's no longer a hospital, that it's a roof over their heads, they rather identify themselves as people with a place, with a roof over their heads and a home in the inner city and additionally, with the ability to transform a hospital into a home by the fact of them

living there as people. The political practice of occupation was therefore linked not only to placelessness, but also the reclaiming of public space by imbuing personal and political meaning upon it.

Junaid: ... *I don't know if you've had the experience- they'll say, "Are you still staying at the hospital?"*

Helena: *Ja.*

Carol: *Ja, they do it.*

Junaid: *You know-*

Carol: *They always do it.*

Junaid: *And, I tell you what I was also thinking, you know what, it might be a hospital, but it's not longer, but it's a roof over my head. That's what I do, I just say that.*

Ruth: *How does it feel when people ask the question that way?*

Junaid: *It makes you, it makes you feel hurt. It's like-*

Carol: *It's the way they say it-*

Junaid: *You know, it's the way he say it... And then everybody will like look at you, you know, and it... it hurts in you. But in your mind you say, you know, it's a roof over my head. Am I right?*

Helena: *I just tell the people, no matter if I'm staying in the hospital, I can make it a home for myself. Nobody else, not even you, is going to give me a roof over my head. That is my roof over my head.*

(Focus Group)

Similar sentiments were expressed by a house leader of Ahmed Kathrada House in Sea Point at Reclaim the City's Annual Congress, when she introduced herself by saying, "I'm not an occupier, I'm a tenant!" to cheers from the crowd. While being an occupier is a powerful political identity in being able to identify the intentionality of claiming a building in the inner city, being a tenant demonstrates how the building has become at least a semi-permanent home.

More than simply securing these buildings and putting people in them, the occupied building is a site of meaning-making. In addition to a political act of defiance and insurgent citizenship, and a symbol of resistance, the Woodstock Hospital has been constructed into Cissie Gool House, no longer a hospital, but a place for low-income black groups to live near Cape Town's centre, rather than on the periphery. A community of over a hundred people,

some of them families with children, formed around this home and the resulting committees, leadership structures, and responsibilities that had to be filled to ensure successful co-habitation. As such, it is not simply the occupation of these two buildings that gives people of the movement power, but rather their transformation into a place and a home that hold significance and meaning for people and, in turn, facilitate their participation and belonging in the area.

**5.3.3 Negotiating the collective and the individual.** The movement has been able to control who is able to reside in the house and to prevent it from being taken away from them for nearly two years. Largely, this is due to the establishment of a collective ownership over the building. Establishing the occupation as a central part of the movement and building the movement's activities around it, holding regular meetings among house members, having leaders to enforce common rules and expectations, and mobilising a common occupier identity and purpose, creates a firm basis for establishing ownership of the house.

However, Yonela, as a house leader, described how it can be difficult to enforce house rules, because some people in the house are not committed to the common goal of fighting for houses and resisting evictions. She also explained how the lack of official ownership of the house called her authority into question when occupiers switched from a notion of it as a collective home to a public space. Under a common identity and common purpose, she would not need authority to enforce rules related to shared goals of the movement. However, people occupying the house for individual gain would frame her authority as an infringement of their personal freedom rather than a reminder of the collective struggle.

*Remember, the reason why we are there is because we are a movement and we are fighting for government to give us houses. But it's like now other people, they weren't there, they stayed there for their own reasons, not for what we are there for. That's the problem now. Because if you are there for the movement or for the struggle, we have to do what we must, understand? And if you say no this time, no is no. I don't want to see what we're gonna say if I did this- who is she to tell me this?*

(Yonela, Interview)

Nkosikhona expanded on the contradictions of a collective struggle for individual gain, and particularly, how the housing struggle can divide people due to its potential benefit to individuals.

*The housing struggle is different from all struggles because when we're fighting for toilets, you're not fighting for a toilet for yourself, you're fighting for a communal*

*thing that everyone will benefit. But in the housing struggle, there's something that you yourself can gain, as an individual, so you have now to deal with people pushing for that agenda, knowing that. And it's something that we try to change that you're not just fighting for yourself, you're also fighting for the people that you don't like.*

(Nkosikhona, KI Interview)

In a slightly different way, Councillor Herron raised the question of whether the building should just be used to house the people who are currently living in it, or whether it should become a part of a bigger affordable housing development, that could potentially house more people.

*So, the capturing of the building and the occupation have raised awareness, but there might be unintended consequences, in that it prevents one of the sites that is possibly the fastest that could be developed, from being developed.*

(Cllr Herron, KI Interview)

These comments emphasise the difficulty of maintaining the house as a place that is collectively owned, when each person has something to gain from having a place to live, and when the ability of the movement to create a more enduring and expansive housing project is limited. This is the paradox of the housing struggle, as Nkosikhona explained, where agendas are simultaneously collective and individual.

Conversely, participants also described how living in the house as a collective symbol of resistance sometimes undermined or limited their own individual freedoms. Yonela described the conflict and tension between occupiers and the external committee, where the external committee, as leaders not living in the house, sometimes lost sight of the needs and rights of occupiers in the pursuit of shielding the house from danger.

*For example, they are telling us that: No visitation. No visits allowed in the building. So, as for me, as Yonela, I find it very difficult because we do have families. We do have families and remember during the week, we are working. Then Saturdays is when we are free. So if we say no visitation, it's like now we are in prison. Even in prison there are visiting time- hours... they don't know how we feel as people who are staying inside in the house.*

(Yonela, Interview)

Comparing these restrictive rules to how domestic workers in Sea Point are treated in body corporate rules displays similarities.

*It's also in the body corporate rules that you're not allowed to have visitors, which basically means that if my mother is a domestic worker, you're not allowed to go and see, and spend time with her, um, in her room.*

(Nkosikhona, KI Interview)

While both sets of rules prevent residents considered legitimate by each respective governing body from having visitors, it is contextually clear that the former is an exclusionary rule that protects private property, while the latter might be to prevent strangers from being able to occupy or take over the house, in order to keep residents safe or to avoid the house, as a public representation of poor black and coloured people living in the inner-city, from being brought into disrepute. However, they ultimately have the same effect of restricting residents' freedoms. In the case of Cissie Gool House, this was resolved by limiting visiting hours to certain periods of the day.

Junaid similarly described how despite his commitment to Reclaim the City and willingness to devote much of his time and energy to it, he also needs to find a job for his future beyond the movement.

*And if I can get more involved with Reclaim the City, um, it will be great. But um, meanwhile, I need to also look at my future, you know, I need, I need to get me a job...*

(Junaid, Interview)

Occupiers experienced stress from the demands placed on them as guardians of a central space and symbol of the movement. In many senses, being an occupier was a full-time job, however, it was voluntary, and they still needed to work and have lives outside of the occupation. While not having visitors might be beneficial to the movement for being able to minimise the risk of the losing order and control in the building, in some ways it deprived people of their freedom and reduced them to a single identity of "occupier".

The occupation, as a reconstruction of public land into a symbol of political resistance and a parallel structure for affordable housing, required strict rules, roles, and responsibilities to be maintained. Living in Cissie Gool House simultaneously as an individual home and a site for collective struggle, required a negotiation of individual agendas and freedoms and the collective good. To negotiate these was to strike a fine balance.

#### **5.4 Discussion: Expanding Imagination**

Ruth: *Mm. And what does it mean to you-*

Helena: *-for me, it's everything*

Ruth: *-to Reclaim the City. What does that mean to you?*

Helena: *For me, it's everything. It's everything in my life. It's like, I don't know where to go and this is my only way out. You see. I fight for my rights, my darling. I need a place over my head. I need nothing else.*

(Helena, Interview)

Reclaim the City activated a resistance to displacement and eviction that extended the more individualistic forms of resistance described in Chapter Four. The organisation's activities combined the political, the psychological, the spatial, and the social in ways that operated to expand the imaginations of its constituents. It did this by building new identities: collective and personal identities that aimed to unite a fractured working-class social fabric and challenge the internalised maintenance of psychological oppression, and place identities that challenged notions of belonging and visibility in Cape Town. While these were not without conflict and contradiction, participants' narratives showed that they aided them in developing a critical consciousness and resisting and reimagining the status quo.

Drawing on these identities, participants challenged an apartheid spatial imaginary by making visible the interweaving of their historical trauma with the "forced removals" of the present day and challenging being treated as though they did not have rights and power by mobilising legal resources and "people's power". Significantly, Reclaim the City disrupted the apartheid spatial imaginary by developing insurgent citizenships (Holston, 2009a) and invented spaces (Miraftab, 2004) for extra-legal resistance, thereby expanding their imagination of new spatial and social orders. In creating spaces for the practice of new identities, the realisation of various rights, and the transformation of public space, Reclaim the City effectively "imagines otherwise" (Bates et al., 2018), seeing beyond an apartheid spatial imaginary by demonstrating how its defeat could look.

In constructing Cissie Gool House, these factors came together to create a political symbol which challenges the invisibility of low-income black and coloured residents displaced to peripheries by forced removals and gentrification. It also creates emergency housing that allowed displaced people to avoid homelessness or Temporary Relocation Areas, constructed as an experimental ground and example for the government to follow in putting public land to its social use. Importantly, Cissie Gool House also created a home for black low-income groups in the inner-city. The occupation thereby transformed Reclaim the City, a movement of displaced and "placeless" people, to a movement of people who have reclaimed not only physical space itself, but transformed it into a home, solidifying their place and belonging in the city. The occupation has been a powerful political and

psychological symbol in the movement and in the public. This reclaiming and re-imagining of public space was not perfect or without difficulty, particularly for its paradoxical engagement of collective and individual agendas. However, in this space, the movement was able to imagine and at least to some extent build their vision for new psycho-spatial orders founded on justice and on humanistic values of empathy, support, and equality.

Perhaps the biggest impact of Reclaim the City on the experiences not only of its constituents, but also of the public and people in power, is how it expands the imagination of alternate conditions and futures, such that working-class people are an immovable part of the city. In late 2017, 26 years after the repeal of the Group Areas Act, the City of Cape Town coined the slogan “Where people live matters” and announced that it would provide affordable housing, made up of social and transitional housing, in 11 sites near the city centre for the first time (Transport and Urban Development Agency, 2017). Social housing is state-subsidised housing for households who earn within a threshold not exceeding R15000, while transitional housing is temporary housing for families looking for a more permanent solution. This explicitly aims to address the consequences of both the availability of transitional housing only in Temporary Relocation Areas, and gentrification’s consequences of displacing people to the peripheries of the city in ways which exclude them from urban development, and reinforce spatial apartheid (Transport and Urban Development Agency, 2017). The City also committed to shutting Blikkiesdorp down by the end of 2021 (De Greef, 2017).

This was seen as a victory by members of Reclaim the City, whose occupations in Woodstock and Granger Bay, mass actions holding government to account, and several highly-publicised court cases pursued by allied groups of evictees recently conscientised to their rights, preceded this announcement. However, in late 2018, several events tested these successes. One site earmarked for affordable housing redevelopment is the Woodstock Hospital (Cissie Gool House), a development that would both meet Reclaim the City’s broader goals and displace its members. As mentioned, the Open House was also met by an interim interdict by the City of Cape Town in October 2018 and in January 2019 this was formalised into an interdict that prevents any new occupiers from moving into Cissie Gool House, demonstrating an increasing intolerance of the occupation.

Lastly, the collapse and changeover of the City of Cape Town’s leadership body in November 2018, particularly the resignation of Brett Herron as City Councillor and MayCo member for Transport and Urban Development, who had publicly been spearheading the “Where people live matters” campaign, made uncertain the future of the planned affordable housing initiative. His public resignation statement, titled *The DA has abandoned its own*

*values of Freedom, Fairness, Opportunity and Diversity* (Herron, 2018) contains accusations such as the following, on the removal of the approval of one affordable housing project from a council meeting agenda, presented here to reiterate the political context in which Reclaim the City is operating:

*It is clear that some in our party are clinging to the racial exclusivity of residential areas engineered by apartheid.*

(Herron, 2018, para. 10)

*A cabal of white DA councillors blocked the project... In the caucus on Monday last week this cabal raised some tenuous concerns at best... Some of these requests to my mind border on extortion, others are completely misinformed and demonstrate the clear purpose was to collapse the delivery of well-located affordable housing.*

(Herron, 2018, para. 17)

Whether true or not, this discourse of the “white cabal” is interesting for its signalling of political tension and dissent in the province’s ruling party along the lines of housing and urban planning ideologies. It has long been known that Cape Town’s spatial planning initiatives have not specifically disrupted the racialised city structure or white spatial imaginary developed by colonialism and apartheid, and have in many cases reinforced it (Miraftab, 2012; Nahnsen, 2006; Turok, 2001). “Where people live matters” in its seeming global humanism and rejection of economic justification for urban belonging, is a step towards changing this. Whether the City of Cape Town will commit to this principle or mobilise it only as a shallow slogan remains to be seen.

Regardless of their degree of support for well-located affordable housing initiatives, however, many politicians and property developers have opposed Reclaim the City’s occupations. Most recently, the Premier of the Western Cape published a letter describing how it is not a “white cabal” delaying affordable housing, but rather “land invasions” by “social justice activists’ pursuing their own agendas” and making public buildings “magnets for criminals, drug dealers and other social pathologies” (Zille, 2018). This is a familiar criticism of Reclaim the City and demonstrates the barriers they face in having their alternative spatial imaginaries recognised by people in power. This gives further context to the title of our third exhibition following these events, *We are not criminals*. Even in the City’s announcements or more informal communications of inner-city affordable housing initiatives, mention of Reclaim the City’s impact on the public awareness is notably absent

(Transport and Urban Development Agency, 2017), barring their classification as obstacles to the redevelopment of their occupied buildings.

The findings of this chapter therefore demonstrate how Reclaim the City has invented solutions to the disempowerment and eviction of low-income Woodstock residents and the hegemonic maintenance of an apartheid spatial imaginary. This required a deconstruction and reconsideration of the neoliberal principles and racialised apartheid and colonial legacies that have governed post-apartheid inner-city development, urban belonging, and their own identities and subjectivities. In spite of the work they have done towards expanding the imaginations of evictees and the public towards new spatial imaginaries, their operation from invented spaces largely delegitimises them in the eyes of those in power, who are committed to change only within the status quo.

## **Chapter Six: Conclusion**

This study investigated the ways in which Reclaim the City activists experience and resist their displacement from the gentrifying neighbourhood of Woodstock in post-apartheid South Africa. The findings suggest that displacement in Woodstock, and activists' experiences of this displacement, are interwoven with an apartheid spatial imaginary. In turn, their resistance to this displacement involved challenging the specific aspects of this spatial imaginary that marginalise them and restrict the imaginations of the public and people in power alike. This chapter will present a summary of these findings. It will highlight some key contributions and implications of this study, as well as its limitations. Lastly, it will provide some suggestions for future research.

### **6.1 Summary of Findings**

Findings of this study were presented in Chapters Four and Five and were drawn from an analysis of photo-stories, participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and a focus group discussion. Findings presented in Chapter Four described activists' experiences of displacement in Woodstock, demonstrating how these reinforced rather than challenged an apartheid spatial imaginary. Chapter Five then explored the strategies Reclaim the City employed in resisting displacement and the apartheid spatial imaginary, as well as the complications that arose, both within the movement and in the public sphere, in taking on this task.

**6.1.1 Experiences of displacement.** In their specific effects in incentivising evictions of low-income tenants and modifying neighbourhoods towards their exclusion, gentrification, low-cost housing shortages, and state-sponsored urban renewal have been shown to impact low-income tenants in psychological ways that extend beyond physical displacement (Atkinson, 2015; Cahill, 2006; Formoso et al., 2010; Newman & Wyly, 2006; Parizeau, 2017; Pearsall, 2012; Sakizlioğlu, 2014; Shaw & Hagemans, 2015; Valli, 2015). This is complicated in South Africa, and particularly in Cape Town, by “sanitation discourses” and associations of property ownership to additional rights and power that have been preserved since the colonial era to exclude low-income black and coloured people from belonging in urban areas (Miraftab, 2012; Nahnsen, 2006). Accordingly, this study reinforced the findings of previous studies that low-income tenants experience mistreatment by landlords in gentrifying neighbourhoods (Atkinson, 2015; Sakizlioğlu, 2014), negative representations by dominant groups (Cahill, 2006), symbolic impacts such as loss of place and identity (Atkinson, 2015; Valli, 2015) and that such tenants remain in these neighbourhoods through occupying smaller spaces within them (Newman & Wyly, 2006; Pearsall, 2012).

Participants highlighted the salience of three aspects of displacement that led them to feel as though people in power considered them to be “things” rather than humans. The first was mistreatment by landlords, which involved both the material neglect or destruction of their living environment, making it uninhabitable, and the degradation of their character or humanity in ways that undermined their belonging in the area and their power to defend themselves. Second, the spatial pattern of displacement from centres to peripheries was salient in making participants feel as though they were being “disposed of” by development, rather than being included in it. Third, in having to occupy smaller and smaller spaces in order to remain in “centres”, participants experienced becoming less powerful through being less visible as part of the neighbourhood. Participants described how before joining Reclaim the City, these processes were individualised and internalised, often leading them to comply with illegal or unjust evictions. These factors were compounded by the intersectional vulnerabilities of women and African migrants, respectively highlighting the additional significance of spatial features such as public versus private space, and displacement within and between nations.

The concept of the apartheid spatial imaginary was introduced to describe how these findings, while related to the body of international literature that precedes this study, are heavily intertwined with South Africa’s specific history. Particularly, this explains how the spatial and social logic of apartheid and colonisation are hegemonically preserved in ways that continue to marginalise low-income black tenants in Woodstock. Participants’ experiences demonstrate the extent to which apartheid and colonialism still figure in their present-day identities and imaginations, and how gentrification actively intimidates, displaces and traumatises low-income tenants in ways that continue apartheid’s legacy into the present. Beyond the lack of post-apartheid inner-city spatial redress in Cape Town, this study has highlighted that the spatial status quo is still actively marginalising in Woodstock. There is a notable incongruence between spatial justice and the neoliberal imperatives of urban renewal and gentrification. This study amplifies the call not only for the spatial transformation of urban areas in Cape Town, but for the development of new spatial imaginaries (Bates et al., 2018; Lipsitz, 2007).

**6.1.2 Resisting displacement.** In the context of failures to police mistreatment by landlords and its effects in creating a culture of fear and intimidation among low-income tenants in Woodstock, to consider how being made to be less visible impacts one’s belonging and power, to equalise the extreme disparities between the centre and periphery, and to consider internalised oppression, vulnerable tenants are left to fend for themselves in

preventing their displacement from the area. While in the past displacement may have been unavoidable, the introduction of Reclaim the City provided some recourse.

Reclaim the City developed new collective and individual identities that aimed to unify diverse groups to develop people's power in the absence of structural or property power and disrupted internalised objectification through conscientisation and mutual support. New place identities negotiated the relation of low-income tenants' identities to space, constructing their belonging in Woodstock rather than their being "out of place". This had the effect of challenging the "thingification" of low-income tenants through asserting their identities as informed and powerful actors in ways that allowed them to fight their marginalisation. However, it was not without complications, such as tensions between black and coloured groups and South African and Pan-African ideals.

Using these identities and a new critical consciousness, participants challenged the apartheid spatial imaginary by bringing history into the present in ways which made the present-day maintenance of spatial apartheid visible. They challenged it by learning about and mobilising rights not afforded to them during apartheid in order to better cope with the status quo. They further mobilised "extra-legal" resistance that disrupted the status quo in ways which disrupted their marginalisation by it, echoing Miraftab's (2012) notion of invented spaces, and Holston's (2009) concept of insurgent citizenship.

The occupation of Cissie Gool House additionally provided a space in which these alternative imaginations of the city could be negotiated. Cissie Gool House served as a symbolic re-appropriation of public space which brought their struggles and identities into the prominently visible centre, giving them power. In addition, it served as a practice site for emergency housing provision for Woodstock's evictees, making material the movement's alternative values that prioritise inclusion rather than exclusivity, and the social good over privatisation. Creating a home in Cissie Gool House further challenged activists' exclusion from Woodstock by creating space for their belonging. However, this alternative imagination required negotiation in being translated into practice at Cissie Gool House, where tensions arose between collective and individual needs, identities, and responsibilities, as well as conflicts between racial and national identities. This builds on the findings of other studies that demonstrated the symbolic, political, and personal effects of urban occupations on activists, in creating a home, creating an experimental site for affordable housing and prefiguring their futures (Paterniani, 2018), and symbolically and politically challenging the marginalisation of displacement by bringing low-income tenants into the centre (Abellán et al., 2012; Aguilera, 2013; De Carli & Frediani, 2016).

Reclaim the City therefore resists displacement from the inner-city by resisting the hegemony of an apartheid spatial imaginary and inventing new empowering identities and spaces for inclusion that begin the process of developing new spatial imaginaries. Such work is necessary for a genuine effort towards spatial transformation. However, classification of their efforts by people in power or in positions firmly grounded in the status quo often echoes the sanitation discourses and property-linked personhood of the apartheid spatial imaginary and undermines their legitimacy. As such, there are many challenges, both internal and external, to achieving their vision as a movement.

## **6.2 Contributions and Implications of the Study**

This study aimed to bring space into psychology, and psychology into space, by documenting the psychological, social, and spatial strategies members of Reclaim the City use to resist displacement on a grassroots level, so as to provide insight into the specific South African context, processes, and impacts of urban displacement and resistance. It has centred the voices of those who act to oppose displacement while experiencing it, both in its review of the interdisciplinary literature and its primary investigation. It has thereby contributed to an understanding of the story not often told in research on displacement: that of the people who both experience and resist it.

This study has demonstrated the benefits of participatory research, namely through its use of photovoice, triangulated with participant observation and individual interviews. These methods have provided a well-rounded insight into the complex phenomena of displacement and resistance, focusing on the individual and collective processes and impacts, grounded in context and space. Taking photographs and writing and discussing stories proved an effective medium of capturing and conveying the complex meanings embedded in space. The photovoice methodology, in particular, centred not only participants' voices, but provided a platform in which these voices could be heard through the development of three diverse exhibitions in various insurgent settings. The telling of stories provides a humanising account of displacement in Woodstock and has contributed to a growing collection of occupiers' stories now being collected by Reclaim the City to challenge damaging narratives of criminality that are used to characterise their resistance.

Individually as well, participants enjoyed the photovoice project and expressed pride in the exhibition that was produced. Over the course of the project, their connections as a group increased, thereby increasing their personal support base in the movement. Their sharing of stories individually and with one another seemed to build on the conscientisation set in motion by Reclaim the City to generate positive individual and collective

representations and affirm their commitment to their activism. The exhibition held at the Woodstock Chapter Meeting further created a space to voice their respective support and concerns in relation to their experiences in the movement, reaffirming its humanistic principles. It must be noted that the conscientisation and support from this study only complement those of the broader movement, which has had an immense impact on their lives. Nevertheless, this study demonstrated that photovoice is an effective method to use in research with activist movements, in that it is flexible and aligns with their goals of conscientisation and empowerment, producing materials that can further their activism.

This study has also illustrated the pressing need for the development and realisation of alternative spatial imaginaries. While Reclaim the City is imperfect, it represents a powerful attempt to look beyond the status quo to directly address the marginalising and disempowering effects of post-apartheid displacement and gentrification, on society, in space, and on subjectivity and identity. In light of the findings of this project, I would make the following recommendations to the City of Cape Town and provincial government:

1. Mistreatment by landlords and intimidation in legal structures should be investigated to determine their prevalence and implement strategies for prevention, given that tenants face barriers to independently reporting their landlords or legal professionals.
2. Eviction statistics of both illegal and legal evictions should be compiled by the government to track the negative impacts of gentrification, taking into account demographic characteristics like race, class, gender, and nationality, especially in areas like Woodstock, and these should be considered in new urban renewal initiatives.
3. Rather than being criminalised or delegitimised in favour of invited public participation, Reclaim the City's values and activities should be recognised by the City of Cape Town and property developers as articulations of alternative spatial imaginaries, that can guide and inform their introduction and management of more formal spatial transformation initiatives. Evictees and low-income residents should be consulted rather than excluded from these decisions.
4. In recognising the historical trauma that the centre-periphery disparity brings into the present, and its continuing destructive effect on the collective post-apartheid psyche and social fabric, efforts should increase to reduce this disparity through transport, affordable housing, and development in those areas.
5. Any future decision to re-develop the Woodstock Hospital should not involve a violent and unlawful eviction of its current occupiers, but rather an alternative plan

should be made between Reclaim the City and the City of Cape Town, in recognising that the current system left them with little other option to stay in the area.

Spatial transformation should therefore not be considered in isolation from the psycho-spatial patterns of marginalisation facilitated by apartheid, colonisation, and gentrification in the present dispensation. Rather than being capitalised upon for their effect in speeding up low-income tenants' displacement, large-scale efforts should be made to disrupt the mistreatment of tenants by landlords, their invisibility in urban space, their lack of knowledge of their rights and legal procedures, and the historical trauma that accompanies modern-day evictions.

### **6.3 Limitations of the Study**

This study was limited by its consideration of only Woodstock, its inclusion of only four photovoice participants and two key informants, and its formal occurrence over only one year. These respectively limit the contextual applicability, the diversity of perspectives, and the development of the organisation considered in this study. Triangulating findings from other sources, as well as several months spent familiarising myself with the organisation before this project started, somewhat aided in addressing these limitations. Participant observation, for example, demonstrated the similarities and differences of participants' experiences to those of other members of Reclaim the City. However, further research with other communities in Cape Town, as well as other cities, and over longer periods of time, would be needed to more holistically understand displacement and resistance.

A further significant limitation or perhaps complication of this study was the unpredictability of the research context, which limited the possible activities at different stages of research. Every stage was complicated by events beyond the control of either the researcher or Reclaim the City. These included various emergency situations that limited participant recruitment and the planning of the exhibition, such as when organised groups of people seeking housing entered the occupied building and attempted to take over control of it from Reclaim the City residents. This was in addition to almost nightly meetings and house responsibilities, some regular and some unplanned, which made planning meetings difficult; the introduction of a new constitution and house leadership team which led to the postponement of two previously planned exhibitions; and lastly, the City's last-minute interdict of the Open House which closed one of our exhibitions to the public. These are inevitable features of an activist context and particularly of a new occupation. Such features tested the resilience and inventiveness of the research approach, necessitating flexibility, and

using multiple methods of data collection was helpful to this end, particularly participant observation as it allowed the inclusion of these complications in the data.

#### **6.4 Suggestions for Further Research**

It is suggested that similar research of this nature be conducted in different cities and neighbourhoods, over longer time periods, and with more photovoice participants. This study demonstrated how photovoice can be used in a housing activism context to produce rich and detailed data about physical space and psychological experience. Any further studies would need to be resilient and flexible to the potential unpredictability of the research context. In its extended interaction with participants, participatory involvement in communities, and use of multiple methods, photovoice is a flexible method that can suit such contexts well.

Photovoice is also a particularly beneficial method as it not only produces information in relation to displacement and resistance, but as a participatory action research method, it can contribute to spatial justice activism in the public sphere and improve activism organisations themselves by creating spaces for members to share their experiences in the movement.

It would also be useful to explore the particular experiences of women and African migrants in Cape Town, as well as those with other intersectional vulnerabilities, in more detail to highlight more specific features of their displacement and resistance. In addition, more quantitative or mixed-method analyses could aim to fill the gaps in eviction statistics in Cape Town as mentioned, looking not just at court-ordered evictions, but also illegal evictions, and how these are stratified along lines of area, race, class, nationality, and gender, and reason for eviction. Lastly, it is also recommended that further research examine the corresponding spatial imaginaries of government and property developers, to highlight consistencies and complexities in how these operate.

In conclusion, this study has investigated the experiences of displacement and resistance to displacement among Reclaim the City activists in Woodstock, Cape Town. It has highlighted how their experiences are interwoven with an apartheid spatial imaginary, and how their resistance challenges this imaginary. This investigation suggests that a legitimate consideration of these insurgent spatial imaginaries might counter the inertia of inner-city spatial transformation and the pervasiveness of marginalising ideologies. Lastly, this study affirms the impact of Reclaim the City on strengthening the capacities of marginalised individuals to promote their collective urban belonging in the face of disempowering displacement.

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## Appendix A: Focus Group Guide

### Photovoice Focus Group 1

#### Warm up

- If you could live anywhere in Cape Town, where would you live?

The following questions should be used as topics arise in conversation, attempting to ensure that all areas are covered:

#### Place identity

- What is the best thing about living in Woodstock?
- What is the worst thing about living in Woodstock?
- How has Woodstock changed over the time that you've lived here?
- How could life in Woodstock be improved?
- What do you want people to know about life in Woodstock?
- How would you describe the identity of Cape Town and Woodstock?

#### Power and urban spatial form

- What does it mean to say “where people live matters”?
- How would you describe the differences between Blikkiesdorp, Wolwerivier, Woodstock, and Camps Bay?

#### Displacement

- Where do you feel the most at home?
- What are your experiences with eviction?

#### Right to the city

- Have you ever come across the term spatial justice?  
(if yes) What does it mean to you?  
(If no), what does a fair use of city space look like to you?
- Who makes decisions for your community?
- Whose responsibility is it to make decisions around what the city looks like?

### Reclaim the City/Resistance

- When did you start attending the Advice Assembly?
- What made you decide to be involved with Reclaim the City?
- How has the Advice Assembly affected your life?
- What does it mean to “Reclaim the City”?

## **Appendix B: Photovoice Participant Interview Guide**

**Introduction:** Reminder of informed consent, highlighting recording, anonymity, and withdrawal, and purpose of the interview. Allow opportunity for questions.

**Opening question:** Tell me a bit about where you have lived in Cape Town?

Follow-up questions:

- What kind of housing have you lived in?
- What are your experiences with eviction?
- How did you get involved with Reclaim the City?
- How has Reclaim the City affected your life?
- What does it mean to “Reclaim the city”?

Concluding questions:

- Any else that you would like to say?
- Anything you think I should have asked?
- Any questions for me?
- Is there anyone else you would recommend that I should speak to?

**Appendix C: Open House Flyer**

**THE RESIDENTS OF CISSIE GOOL HOUSE INVITE YOU TO  
OUR FIRST OPEN HOUSE DURING OPEN STREETS  
WOODSTOCK.  
TAKE A TOUR AND GET TO KNOW THE RESIDENTS.  
SUNDAY, 28 OCTOBER  
11:30 – 14:00  
WHERE: 77 MOUNTAIN ROAD  
MEET AT THE CORNER OF VICTORIA AND MOUNTAIN  
ROAD.  
WE LOOK FORWARD TO MEETING YOU AND SHARING OUR  
STORIES WITH YOU!**

**OPEN HOUSE**  
CALL US ON: 021 012 5094 OR VISIT  
[WWW.RECLAIMTHECITY.ORG.ZA](http://WWW.RECLAIMTHECITY.ORG.ZA)

## Appendix D: Key Informant Interview Guides

### Interview Guide: Nkosikhona Swartbooi

The aim of this interview is to gain insight into Reclaim the City and Ndifuna Ukwazi as broad organisations and the context in which they operate.

**Introduction:** Informed consent, highlighting recording, anonymity, and withdrawal, and purpose of the interview. Allow opportunity for questions.

**Opening question:** Please tell me a little bit about your position at Ndifuna Ukwazi and how you came to be involved in it.

- What is your role in RTC?
- Have you ever come across the term spatial justice?
  - (yes) What does it mean to you?
  - (no) What does a fair use of city space look like to you?
- What is RTC's role in achieving this? What is RTC's role in SA society?
- How did RTC start?
- What issues (internal and external) has RTC faced in this regard? Successes and areas to improve of RTC?
  - Effect of the occupation of buildings in Sea Point and Woodstock on the movement?
  - Differences and similarities between Sea Point and Woodstock chapters?
  - Tension between occupiers and outsiders?
  - Response from government, residents' associations, neighbours?

Concluding questions:

- Any else that you would like to say?
- Anything you think I should have asked?
- Any questions for me?
- Is there anyone else you would recommend that I should speak to?

Interview Guide: Cllr Brett Herron  
MayCo Member for Transport and Urban Development

The aim of this interview is to gain insight into the government-level narratives of spatial justice, displacement, place identity, and the right to the city, to complement and serve as context for the Photovoice component of this study.

**Introduction:** Informed consent, highlighting recording, anonymity, and withdrawal, and purpose of the interview. Allow opportunity for questions.

**Opening question:** Please tell me a little bit about your position and how you came to be in it.

Follow-up questions:

1. Please tell me a bit more about your plans for affordable housing and spatial transformation in Cape Town.
2. What is your vision for housing in Cape Town?
  - What successes have you achieved in your role?
  - What challenges do you face in your role?
3. What does spatial justice mean to you?
4. What are your views on gentrification?
5. How would you describe Cape Town's identity as a city?
6. What are the roles and responsibilities of Cape Town's citizens regarding housing?
7. How can people who don't own property influence housing decisions?
8. What is your opinion on Reclaim the City and Ndifuna Ukwazi, particularly their roles in spatial planning or public participation?
9. What is your opinion on protest that goes beyond the law to achieve a stated notion of justice?

Concluding questions:

- Any else that you would like to say?
- Anything you think I should have asked?
- Any questions for me?
- Is there anyone else you would recommend that I should speak to?

## Appendix E: Informed Consent Form for Photovoice

Informed Consent Form: Photovoice

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN



Department of Psychology

Reclaim the City

### Informed Consent Form: Photovoice

#### 1. Purpose

You are invited to take part in a project investigating how people living in Cape Town experience and resist displacement in post-apartheid South Africa. This forms part of a Master's degree in Psychological Research, and is supervised by Dr Shose Kessi (Psychology) and Dr Shari Daya (Environmental and Geographical Sciences).

#### 2. Duration and Procedures

This project will run over a minimum of 6 meetings. You will be required to participate in every session and activity, however, you have the right to leave the project at any point. In the first session, we will agree on the dates of each session, and each session will be 1 to 2 hours long.

- **Meeting 1:** Introduction, registration and group discussion.
- **Meeting 2:** Basic photography and ethics training.
- **Activity:** Take photographs to tell a story.
- **Meeting 3:** Return the camera and discuss your photographs.
- **Activity:** Develop a written or spoken story to accompany your photographs.
- **Meeting 4:** Discuss stories and plan action (this might require a separate meeting).
- **Activity:** Action.
- **Meeting 5:** Discuss your experience of the project and the way forward.

#### 3. Risks

Participation in this study carries limited risk of harm. Attention will be paid to risks associated with publicly revealing your involvement in protest activities, and a decision to do so will be your choice. We will discuss ways in which to avoid harm in your photography and you will additionally be trained in ways to avoid risks photographers might face. If you experience any distress during the project, we can refer you to counselling at Cape Mental Health, 22 Ivy Street, Observatory.

#### 4. Benefits

Photovoice, as a research method, is a tool for community empowerment and advocacy. Although it cannot be guaranteed, the aim of the research project is to bring about social change towards addressing issues identified by your community. You can also receive print or digital copies of your photographs at the end of the project. You will not receive any monetary compensation from this project, but will have opportunities to raise awareness about your campaign.

#### 5. Privacy and Confidentiality

You can discuss and decide whether your name will be published in any photography exhibitions or the final research report. Without permission, your identifying details, transcripts, and voice recordings will be kept in an online, password-protected account that only the researcher can access. However, confidentiality cannot be ensured between group members, as you will interact with each other during the project.

#### 6. Contact Details

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please contact Ruth Urson, [phone number].

If you have any questions about this research or your rights as a research participant and would like to contact the Chair of the Research Ethics committee, please contact Rosalind Adams at the Department of Psychology, University of Cape Town (UCT), 021 650 3417.

- A. If you understand all of the above procedures, risks and benefits and you would like to participate in this project, please sign below:

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### B. Confidentiality Agreement

I agree to keep all information shared in group discussions confidential, particularly the names and opinions of other participants.

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

#### C. Agreement for Audio Recording

I agree to have my voice audio-recorded in the group discussions and interviews.

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix F: Informed Consent Form for Participant Interviews**

Informed Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN



Department of Psychology

Reclaim the City

### **Informed Consent Form: Interviews**

#### **1. Purpose**

You are invited to take part in a project investigating how people living in Cape Town experience and resist displacement in post-apartheid South Africa. This forms part of a Master's degree in Psychological Research, and is supervised by Dr Shose Kessi (Psychology) and Dr Shari Daya (Environmental and Geographical Sciences).

#### **2. Duration and Procedures**

You have already agreed to the Photovoice part of the study and we are asking you to participate in individual interviews. The interviews will focus on your individual experiences of housing and eviction, as well as your experiences in Reclaim the City. It will take place either in the Psychology Department at UCT, or at Cissie Gool House, depending on your choice. It will last 45 to 90 minutes and will be audio recorded.

#### **3. Risks**

Participation in this study carries limited risk of harm. Attention will be paid to risks associated with publicly revealing your involvement in illegal activities, and a decision to do so will be your choice. If you experience any distress during the project, we can refer you to counselling at Cape Mental Health, 22 Ivy Street, Observatory. You may also stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.

#### **4. Benefits**

This is an opportunity to share your opinions and experiences, and especially your individual stories, in relation to displacement and resistance in Cape Town. This will assist us in understanding how displacement affects evictees, and how they resist it.

#### **5. Privacy and Confidentiality**

You can discuss and decide whether your name will be published in any photography exhibitions or the final research report. Without permission, your identifying details, transcripts, and voice recordings will be kept in an online, password-protected account that only the researcher can access.

## 6. Contact Details

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please contact Ruth Urson, [phone number].

If you have any questions about this research or your rights as a research participant and would like to contact the Chair of the Research Ethics committee, please contact Rosalind Adams at the Department of Psychology, University of Cape Town (UCT), 021 650 3417.

A. If you understand all of the above procedures, risks and benefits and you would like to participate in this project, please sign below:

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

B. Agreement for Audio Recording

I agree to have my voice audio-recorded in the individual interviews and group discussions.

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

C. Additional agreement: Consent for Photovoice Publication

In addition to the Masters dissertation that this research forms part of, I agree to having my work published in the following forms (Please circle):

1. Exhibition: Yes / No
2. Photo-essay: Yes / No
3. Video: Yes / No

I would like my real name to be included in the following:

1. Exhibition: Yes / No
2. Photo-essay: Yes / No
3. Video: Yes / No

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix G: Informed Consent Form for Key Informant Interviews

Informed Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN



Department of Psychology

Investigating Spatial Justice in Cape Town through Photovoice

### **Informed Consent Form: Interview participants**

#### **1. Purpose**

You are invited to take part in a project investigating how urban residents experience place and resist displacement in post-apartheid South Africa. In particular, as a key informant, you are invited to share your views in an interview, which will inform a larger Photovoice project. The research is being conducted by Ruth Urson in fulfilment of the dissertation component for the degree of M.A. Psychological Research, and is supervised by Dr Shose Kessi and Dr Shari Daya.

#### **2. Duration and Procedures**

The interview will last for up to one hour. You will be asked questions related to your opinions and experiences in relation to housing and displacement in Cape Town. This will take a semi-structured format, in which your answers to prepared questions will be further explored with additional questions. The researcher will use a recording device to record this, and will also take notes.

#### **3. Risks**

Participation in this study does not carry specific risks of harm. Precautions can be taken to protect your anonymity should you wish, as mentioned below. You may withdraw from the interview at any point.

#### **4. Benefits**

Your opinions and experiences will inform a broader Photovoice project which aims to empower residents' narratives of place and displacement in Cape Town. This will provide a necessary context for these experiences.

#### **5. Privacy and Confidentiality**

Please indicate below whether you would prefer to remain anonymous, and if so, a pseudonym will be used instead of your name, and identifying details won't be used in the final report. Your identifying details, transcripts, and recordings will be kept in an online, password-protected account that only the researcher can access, to maintain confidentiality.

#### **6. Contact Details**

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please contact Ruth Urson, [phone number].

If you have any questions about this research or your rights as a research participant and would like to contact the Chair of the Research Ethics committee, please contact

Rosalind Adams at the Department of Psychology, University of Cape Town (UCT), 021 650 3417.

A. If you understand all of the above procedures, risks and benefits and you would like to participate in this project, please sign below:

Participant Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

B. Do you wish to remain anonymous and for a pseudonym to be used rather than your name in the final report? (please tick one)

Yes

No

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

C. Agreement for Audio Recording

I agree to have my interview audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis..

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix H: Transcription Key**

,	Short pause.
...	Longer pause or trailing off.
[ ]	Non-verbal action occurring during speech, or additional information added by the researcher.
-	Sentence cut off or interruption.
FG	Focus group
Interview	Interview with photovoice participant
KI interview	Key informant interview