Occupations as housing models:

The everyday and political role of collective labour in sustaining an occupation over time

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Plagiarism declaration

I, Kezia Fortuin, hereby declare that the work on which this thesis is based is my original work (except where acknowledgements indicate otherwise) and that neither the whole work nor any part of it has been, is being, or is to be submitted for another degree in this or any other university.

Signed by candidate

Signature: Date: 18 January 2024

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Abstract

In line with calls to decolonise planning, and planning imaginaries, this dissertation takes seriously one of the most pervasive models of securing housing and connecting to basic services across the global south: the occupation of land and buildings. Emerging literature has established the everyday labour of survival in occupations as equally a political labour, disrupting earlier understandings of occupations as either survival strategy or political statement. Enquiring into occupations as existing models of housing provisioning, this dissertation uses the notion of 'labour' to understand how occupations are sustained over time at their everyday and political scales. The research is informed by two years of ad-hoc engagements with, and five months of focused ethnographic fieldwork at, the Cissie Gool House building occupation in Cape Town. Limiting the study to four of the occupation's spaces of collective labour – the kitchen, the garden, the maintenance team and the security and safety team – the research finds an established system of resident-led management guided by mature strategies to respond to crisis, keep the community safe, counter criminalisation and meet community needs. Moreover, in the context of state dis-engagement and the threat of eviction, their model of resident-led management has become crucial evidence of their capacity to be engaged. This evidence is mobilised in the effort to 'reach for the state' in the carving out of the future of the site as affordable housing. 'Labour,' although understudied in the infrastructural turn, is useful empirically, in providing an attentive, intimate and embodied reading of southern urban planning and repair practices; conceptually, in tying together disparate bodies of literature on southern urbanism, infrastructures, repair and affect; and methodologically, in insisting on the use of the body to generate data. As such, I advocate for an embodied turn in the study of southern urban planning and repair practices.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AKH	Ahmed Kathrada House
CALS	Centre for Applied Legal Studies
CBD	Central Business District
CCT	City of Cape Town
CGH	Cissie Gool House
DA	Democratic Alliance
MA	Management Agency
MayCo	Mayoral Committee
MTT	Maintenance Task Team
NU	Ndifuna Ukwazi
PIE	Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act of 1998
RTC	Reclaim the City
SRT	Social Reproduction Theory
SSTT	Security and Safety Task Team
TRA	Temporary Relocation Area
TUD	Transport and Urban Development
UDZ	Urban Development Zone
WCGov	Western Cape Government
WCAEC	Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Southern urban scholars have made calls to decolonise planning, and planning imaginaries (Miraftab, 2009; Bhan, 2019). Miraftab (2009) suggests that this project begins with extending the category of planning to beyond professional and state actors, to include the everyday planner who approaches their housing needs from the bottom-up. This dissertation contributes to this project by taking seriously one of the most pervasive models of securing housing, connecting to basic services, and expanding neighbourhoods and cities across the global south: the occupation of land and buildings. While by no means an ideal model of securing and sustaining housing and a livelihood, occupations[1] are pervasive enough across urban contexts, and particularly in the global south (UN Habitat, 2022; Silver, 2014; Caldeira, 2017; Bhan, 2019), such that the model warrants close attention. As such, I pry open this model, to ask how it functions, and how it sustains itself.

Relatedly, emerging literature has blurred the binary view of occupations as either survival strategy or political statement (Saaristo, 2022; Cirolia et.al, 2021; Burgum and Vasudevan, 2023; Vasudevan, 2015a; 2015b; Bhan, 2019), suggesting that the labour of everyday survival amidst structural precarity is equally political (Scheba and Millington, 2023: 3). These scholars rest their claims on the potential for occupations to resist the financialised city, and disrupt cycles of dispossession, by insisting on the social reproductive functions of the home (Scheba and Millington, 2023: 16; Rolnik, 2022: 941; Burgum and Vasudevan, 2023: 3).

But beyond establishing that marginalised urban residents are indeed planners, scholars of southern urbanism do not offer much more as a way forward for enquiring into occupations as existing models of housing delivery. The notion of 'labour', on the other hand, from the literature on repair, pushes for a more attentive and intimate reading of southern urban planning practices,

[1] (Land and building) Occupations are variously referred to as slums, informal settlements, townships and favelas.

because of the fundamentally embodied experience of occupying, making a home, establishing a livelihood, and repairing and connecting to infrastructures. As an understudied lens of analysis in literature influenced by the infrastructural turn, there has been a recent conceptual (Stokes and De Cos-Corzo, 2023; Ramakrishnan and O'Reilly; 2023) and empirical (De Coss-Corzo, 2021; Scheba and Millington, 2023) interest in 'labour' as it makes and sustains infrastructures in material and affective ways.

Seeing occupations as existing models of housing provisioning, this dissertation takes 'the labouring body' (Ramakrishnan and O'Reilly, 2023) as

(a) an empirical site that provides an attentive, intimate and embodied reading of southern urban planning and repair practices,
(b) a conceptual site that ties together disparate bodies of literature (on southern urban planning, infrastructures, repair and affect), and
(c) a methodological tool that insists on the use of the body – of the researcher, and their participants – to generate data.

As such, the dissertation develops the argument that the project of decolonising planning would benefit from an 'embodied turn' in the study of southern urban planning and repair practices.

I explored these conceptual debates, and the focus on embodiment, through conducting ethnographic fieldwork at the Cissie Gool House building occupation in Cape Town. Fieldwork included participant observation, deep hanging out, and interviews. Limiting the study to four of the occupation's spaces of collective labour – the kitchen, the garden, the maintenance team and the security and safety team – I ask, *what is the role of collective labour in sustaining the occupation over time at the everyday and political scales?* Having laboured in these spaces myself throughout the fieldwork, an embodied account is generated in the findings.

The findings show that the resident's collective labour plays a crucial role in responding to some of the most pressing challenges related to living at an occupation, having developed mature strategies to respond to crises like the risk of fire, to keep the community safe socially and structurally in the building, to respond to police violence, raids and criminalisation, and to meet

community needs at the scale of financial and food security. Moreover, the model of occupying and sustaining home through collective labour has also come to serve a political objective in the resident's ongoing efforts to co-design the occupation as affordable housing. In the context of state dis-engagement and the threat of eviction, residents have used their model of resident-led management as evidence of their capacity to be engaged on the redevelopment of the building. Here, I develop the notion of 'reaching for the state' to demonstrate what happens when occupying communities are faced with state dis-engagement and the threat of eviction, taking the decision not to wait for their futures to be decided on their behalf.

The rest of this chapter outlines the research site, and the rationale and research questions informing the study. In Chapter 2, I discuss the conceptual debates within which this research is situated. Chapter 3 moves to the methodology of the study, detailing the research philosophy, methods used, limitations and ethical considerations. Chapter 4 outlines the findings in three sections, each responding to a research question: section 4.1., *Collective labour in practice*, presents the results responding to research question 1, *What, where and how is the collective labour performed in CGH?* Section 4.2., *Collective labour at the everyday scale,* presents the results responding to research question 2, *What is the role of collective labour in the Cissie Gool House resident's everyday lives?* Section 4.3., *Collective labour at the political scale,* presents the results responding to research question 3, *What is the role of collective labour in the political agenda of the occupation and the wider Reclaim the City movement?*

Chapter 5 discusses the findings in relation to the broader conceptual debates I have briefly mentioned here. Motivated by the literature on infrastructural labour, affect and repair, but equally in discussion with debates in southern urban planning, I advance four main contributions in the discussion:

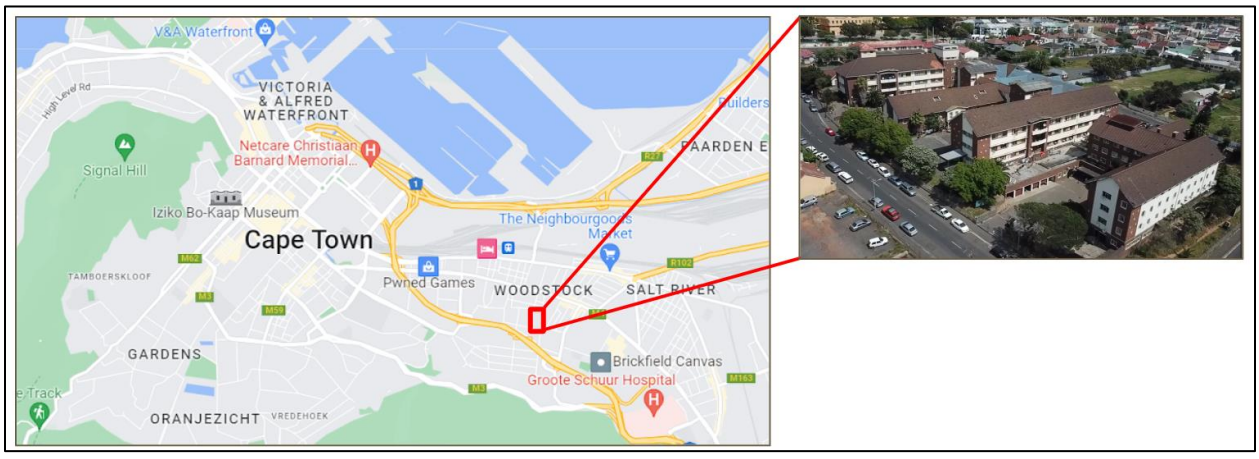
1. Although improvised, the collective labour is enabled by logics of anticipation and speculation, suggesting that improvisation and experimentation generates a knowledge base among practitioners.
2. The knowledge generated from everyday repairs to infrastructures in the occupation constitutes a form of practical knowledge known as embodied expertise. This embodied

expertise is worth unpacking, understanding, and engaging with meaningfully in any co-design or redevelopment of occupations as affordable or social housing.

3. The socialisation of gender seems to play a role in determining people's comfortability performing certain responsibilities over others, where, in the garden, gendered struggles threaten the garden's contribution to the occupation. But gender is not the only aspect of identity influencing the labour. Resident's age, culture, gender, personality, leadership positions and commitment to the movement also inform who is relied on for care, and the kinds of care strategies imposed. While the ethics of care sustaining the occupation has transformative potentials, the ethics of care also generates exhaustion, burnout and contributes to withdrawal from participating. Despite burnout and internal challenges, however, the core group continued to return to the labour, in hope for improvements to the experiment that is life at CGH.
4. Having demonstrated the political dimensions of the labour of everyday survival, there exists also a more overtly political labour: the labour of reaching for the state. As a mode of state engagement, this labour encompasses (1) reaching for information, (2) reaching for engagement, and (3) reaching for legitimacy, in an effort to sustain the occupation into the future through co-designing the occupation as affordable or social housing.

1.1. Research site: Cissie Gool House occupation, Cape Town, South Africa

Figure 1 Map and aerial image of the research site: Cissie Gool House Occupation in Woodstock, Cape Town, generated by the researcher, 2023.



The Woodstock Hospital site, located 1km from the city centre, was a provincial hospital in the suburb of Woodstock. The site has been mostly abandoned and unused since 1993 when it was downscaled as a day-centre (Cirolia et al. 2021). An initial wave of housing activists occupied the site in March 2017 along with the abandoned Helen Bowden Nurses Home in Seapoint.[2] In an early statement released by the occupiers of these two buildings, they described themselves as "residents of Woodstock, Sea Point, Marikana informal settlement[3], Blikkiesdorp[4] and Khayelitsha[5]" who are "from communities at the forefront of the housing and segregation crisis in our city" (Stop the sale, 2017). Their occupation of these two buildings began as part of the 2016 'Reclaim the City' (RTC) mobilisation to stop the Western Cape Government's (WCGov) sale of the old Tafelberg School in Seapoint to a private developer, among other demands around urban land justice. As such, the occupation began as a strategy of activism to encourage the government to use public land for affordable housing.

In 2018, the number of residents occupying increased from under 50 to over 400, following a decision to absorb families who were facing eviction from Woodstock due to processes of gentrification, and people generally in need of housing across the city (Urson, 2019). Today, the occupation has grown to house over 900 people (Reclaim the City, n.d.; Cirolia et al., 2021). The RTC movement has since become among the biggest campaigners for affordable inner-city housing in Cape Town (Herold and DeBarros, 2020), and are now supported by the Ndifuna Ukwazi (NU) law centre with resources, advocacy and popular education. The residents have

[2] Seapoint is an affluent suburb in the inner-city of Cape Town.

[3] Marikana is an informal settlement in the Phillippi East township in the peripheries of Cape Town.

[4] Blikkiesdorp is a Temporary Relocation Area (TRA) in Delft township in the peripheries of Cape Town. There is more discussion on TRAs in the following pages.

[5] Khayelitsha is the second largest township in South Africa, in the peripheries of Cape Town.

renamed the Woodstock Hospital to 'Cissie Gool House' (CGH) in memory of the late apartheid activist, Zainunnisa 'Cissie' Gool.

1.1.1. Post-apartheid significance

The location of the CGH occupation in the suburb of Woodstock has great historical significance in post-apartheid Cape Town. Woodstock has remained racially mixed throughout history, as one of the few inner-city areas in South Africa to evade the racial zoning, segregation and forced removals associated with the Group Areas Act of 1950 (Garside, 1993). Despite attempts by the apartheid government to declare Woodstock a coloured[6] area in 1986, the community's 'Open Woodstock' campaign successfully resisted this, and Woodstock remained a 'controlled area' (i.e. an area still pending a decision on its racial composition) before being declared a 'free settlement area' (i.e. an area open to any person irrespective of their race) in the late 80s (Garside, 1993; Wenz in Carls, 2016).

The suburb's strong multi-ethnic and multi-racial character is owed to it being somewhat of a 'grey area' throughout apartheid. Woodstock was home to generations of working class white and coloured Capetonians, but it also absorbed European and British immigrants, and Portuguese immigrants from Angola and Mozambique throughout the 20th century (Garside, 1993). Around the 90s, African immigrants also began to settle in Woodstock (Carls, 2016). Woodstock is also one of the few South African cities to experiences processes of urban renewal and gentrification that are common to international cities, which would continue to threaten its multi-ethnic and multi-racial character (Garside, 1993).

[6] During apartheid South Africa, the racial classification 'coloured' included people who were 'neither white nor black', which was a very ambiguous classification, but included access to a set of resources that remained inaccessible to people classified as 'black;' such as in housing, education and employment (Pirtle, 2023; Posel, 2001). In post-apartheid South Africa, despite the removal of legislation classifying race, social affiliation with a 'coloured' identity persists among many people who share similar histories in terms of what kinds of neighbourhoods, schools and employment they had access to (Posel, 2001), but many others have also rejected the term (see Pirtle, 2023).

The first phase of gentrification in Woodstock in the 80s is owed to its 'grey area' status. As coloured professionals moved to Lower Woodstock attracted by its proximity to the CBD, landlords began revamping and upgrading their properties in response, escalating rents by a factor of 400 – 500% and pushing out working class families (Garside, 1993). By the late 80s and 90s this trend picked up in Upper Woodstock too, as white professionals, similarly attracted by proximity, pushed out working class families.

The second phase of gentrification was initiated after the first democratic elections in 1994. As investment started to flow into the country, the property sector sought a post-apartheid revival of Woodstock, and by 1995, 32% of Woodstock's properties had already undergone renovation (Wenz, 2012 in Carls, 2016). Market and government efforts towards densification in the early 2000s encouraged gentrification in Woodstock (Carls, 2016). For example, the National Treasury's rezoning of parts of Woodstock as Urban Development Zones (UDZ) in 2004, and the declaration of Woodstock as a City Improvement District in 2005, gave private owners and developers tax incentives for building residential and commercial properties within the UDZ – effectively intensifying earlier processes of gentrification (Cirolia et al., 2021; Higgins, 2019; Carls, 2019). Eviction cases grew in scale during this period, displacing over 200 residents at a time, entire rows of houses, and sometimes lifelong Woodstock residents (Pillay et al., 2017 in Urson, 2019: 6).

The 2010s saw the intensification of phase two, with the construction of new residential, retail and office buildings, removing distinct parts of the community, and leaving behind some dilapidated, vacant and abandoned buildings (Shongwe, 2023). The suburb of Woodstock has always been the subject of public speculation and intense market forces, threatening the working-class community with dispossession and displacement. According to the Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land (PIE) Act of 1998, an eviction procedure must consider whether alternative land "can reasonably be made available by a municipality or other organ of the state or another land owner" (Republic of South Africa, 1998: 829 in

Huchzermeyer, 2003: 84). This provision is supposed to prevent an eviction from leading to homelessness (Levenson, 2018).

When many of the Woodstock residents were evicted, most of them were given the offer to accept alternative accommodation in a Temporary Relocation Area (TRA). Since the early 2000s, local governments across South Africa have been building these shack settlements in urban peripheries as emergency accommodation for residents facing shack fires, flooding, or other emergencies necessitating one to vacate their home (Levenson, 2018; Levenson, 2022: 62).

Levenson (2018, 2017a, 2022) argues that the offer of alternative accommodation in a TRA for an eviction case is "disingenuous", allowing local governments to legally displace residents to urban peripheries, entrenching social isolation, perpetuating squatting, and fuelling interpersonal violence. Levenson's (2022) decade-long research in urban peripheries in Cape Town found that no residents who had accepted the offer for alternative accommodation in a TRA had been relocated to more dignified shelter over time.

The situation of CGH in Woodstock is significant. The suburb and the residents who have lived there have always been under threat. For them, CGH represents more dignified shelter than placement in a TRA or the relegation to homelessness, a safe haven from processes of gentrification, and an opportunity to hold on to the intangible heritage of the suburb that they have known for most of their lives. But CGH is not only home to evictees from Woodstock.

24% of the CGH residents surveyed in 2021 indicated they were born and raised in Woodstock or surrounding suburbs, another 20% indicated they had lived in the area for over 25 years, and another 21% indicated they had lived in the area for 10 – 25 years (*City of Cape Town v Occupiers of Woodstock Hospita*l, 2021b). The 35% of CGH residents who had lived in the area for less than 10 years (*City of Cape Town v Occupiers of Woodstock Hospita*l, 2021b) are black and coloured South Africans from urban peripheries, and black immigrants from across Africa. Woodstock's close proximity to the CBD, and its connection to transport routes and job opportunities, remains a guiding factor attracting people to the suburb. Amidst slow post-apartheid public housing

delivery and fiercely competitive housing markets in Cape Town[7], the occupation of CGH has become more than a strategy of activism – it has become a home.

1.1.2. Collective living: making a home, rules and leadership structures

Residents at CGH have undergone a number of retrofit, repurposing and re-placing (Cirolia et al., 2021) exercises to transform previous hospital rooms into flats or rooms, and to transform halls and outside spaces into spaces for recreation, organising, house meetings and other daily activities, making meaning out of the space in the process. These include the after-school day-care and library, the communal garden, the kitchen and the hall for hosting events and meetings. All of these spaces operate through the volunteered labour of a handful of people who work collectively amongst themselves. CGH residents are now an organised body with their own house rules and leadership structures to facilitate collective living, alongside the political agenda of the movement.

Elected House Leaders coordinate activities within the occupation, working alongside RTC Chapter Leaders from CGH and AKH to form the Coordination Committee, who strategize for RTC mobilisations and demonstrations (Cosentino, 2022: 31; Scheba and Millington, 2023: 11). House leaders also form part of the Disciplinary Committee, who ensure adherence to the house rules (Cosentino, 2022: 31). CGH also have Task Teams focused on internal house issues: Security and Safety, Welfare, Youth and Children, and Maintenance (Cosentino, 2022: 31). There is also a communal garden and kitchen operated by resident volunteers[8]. A few committed and active residents volunteer their labour for these Task Teams. A Monitors structure has developed since 2018, as a bridge between the house and the movement (Scheba and Millington, 2023: 11), who hold weekly meetings attended by House Leaders and the Monitors to discuss matters relating

[7] There is more discussion on these post-apartheid housing dynamics in section 2.1.

[8] For the purposes of writing, the garden and kitchen will also be considered 'task teams.'

to the Task Teams (Cosentino, 2022: 31). Section Meetings are also held weekly, where Monitors and residents of their floor or section discuss section-level matters (Cosentino, 2022: 31). Last, Mass Meetings are attended by all members of the house to share information, plan and invite residents to RTC mobilisations, and enable dialogue at moments of threat (Cosentino, 2022: 31; Scheba and Millington, 2023: 11).

These structures are part of what has enabled the occupation to sustain itself as a home for the residents over time (Scheba and Millington, 2023). The residents have also established the co-design working committee – a resident-led group which formed in response to state dis-engagement and the threat of eviction.

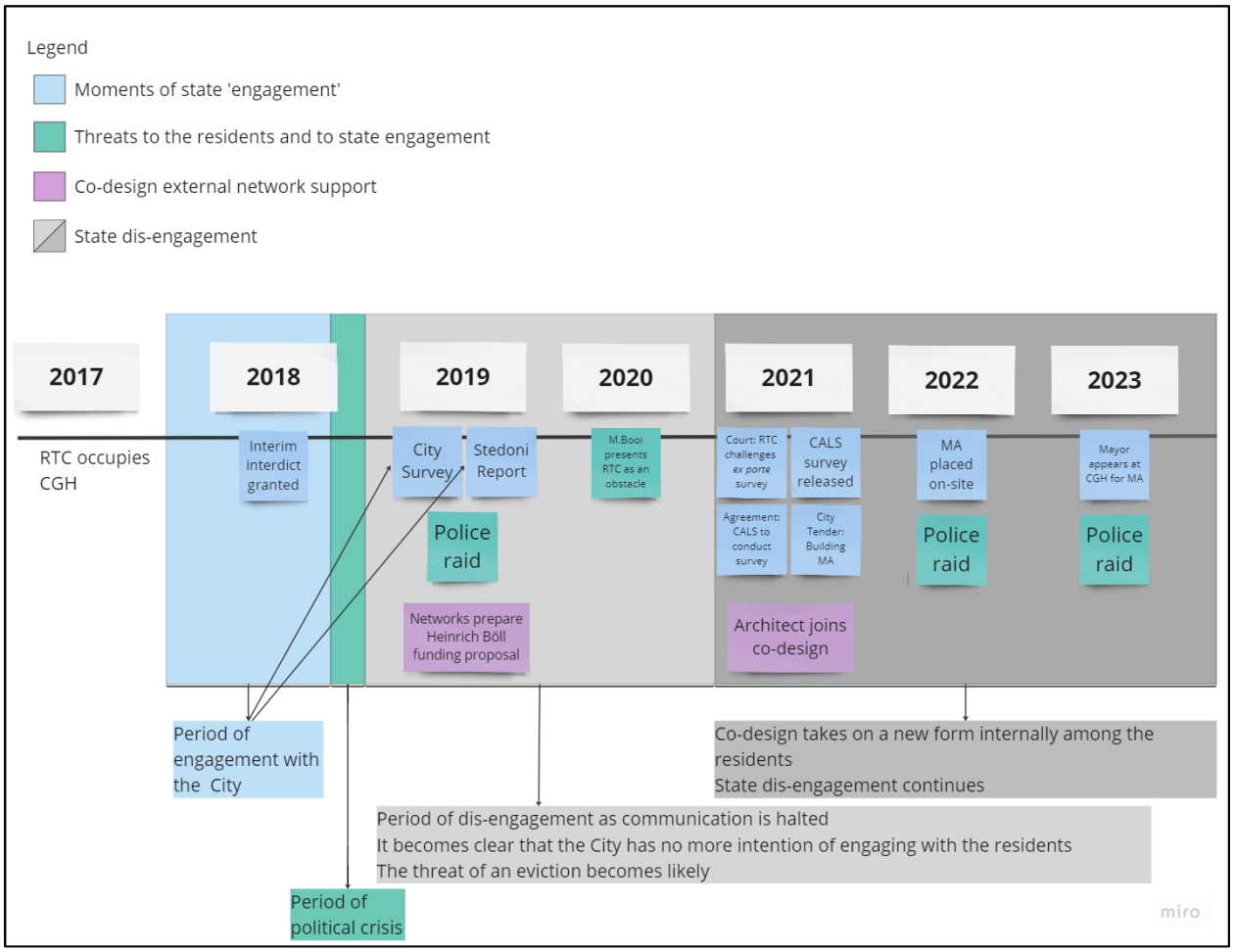
1.1.3. The co-design in context: state (dis-)engagement and the threat of eviction

An initial period of engagements between the City and the residents began in 2018 as the Mayoral Committee (MayCo) Member for Transport and Urban Development (TUD) at the time (Brett Herron) initiated discussions with the residents on the redevelopment of the building, catalysing discussions with a few other City officials.

Following an interdict granted by the WCGov to the City in 2019, which prevented RTC from 'inciting persons to be upon the property for the purposes of unlawfully occupying' the site, a survey of the residents was commissioned by the City as one of the conditions of the interdict (City of Cape Town, 2019; 2021b). As an outcome of the initial period of engagements, this first 'direct interaction' between the residents and the City, through the first survey, was considered an accomplishment (Jones, 2019) in terms of being recognised and engaged. A second outcome of engagements was a City-commissioned engineering report on the structural integrity of the building for the development of social housing, compiled by Stedone Developments. The 'Stedone report' found that the building is structurally sound and suited for redevelopment for housing, with the inclusion of different financial housing models to accommodate the beneficiaries who would not qualify for the social housing model (City of Cape Town and Stedone Group, 2019).

At the tail end of 2018, a crisis in the political wing of the City of Cape Town resulted in the resignation of then-Mayor Patricia DeLille and MayCo member for TUD from their City positions and from the DA; followed by at least five other resignations of DA Councillors who cited racism within the party (Payne, 2018). This political crisis within the DA marked a change in how the City engaged with communities, disrupting the communication between the City and the residents at CGH. A period of dis-engagement followed, which has continued until present day (see Figure 2 below). During this period, external networks and allies from the Woodstock Residents Association and the Cape Town Commoners Project began preparing a funding proposal to inform a resident-led 'co-design' proposal.

Figure 2 State (dis-)engagement and co-design timeline (2017-2023), generated by the researcher, 2023



During the ongoing period of dis-engagement, the City has stated that a top-down approach to social housing is underway, which has made the threat of eviction all the more possible.[9] For example, the former MayCo Member for Human Settlements, Malusi Booi, wrote and published an Opinionista in November 2020, labelling RTC as a "major obstacle to social housing," the provision of which would be "impossible," "if these properties are not vacated by all the RTC occupants" (Booi, 2020). Similar criminalising rhetoric directed towards RTC has been ongoing in the media published by the City (see Fortuin, 2021).

An important outcome of the CALS household survey was the City's finding that an estimated "67% of the surveyed households falls within the Social Housing income brackets" (City of Cape Town, 2021a). As such, not all the residents will qualify for the social housing planned by the City, either falling outside of the income bracket entirely, or in insecure or informal employment situations which place them in the 'gap market'; neither accounted for in subsidised housing, nor able to afford market housing. These findings further intensified resident's fear of eviction.

In mid-September 2021, the City put out a tender for a Building Management Agency (MA) for the site. This would include a building manager who stays permanently on-site, a security team stationed at the perimeter gates and entrances to the site, a cleaning team and a garden maintenance team; responsible for cleaning and maintaining the interior and exterior of the building, respectively. News of the tender reached the residents and created uncertainty around how a Building MA would affect the established resident-led management of the building. The tender also induced speculations that this would be an opportune moment for re-opening engagements with the City on the redevelopment. As the tender indicated the City's intentions of recognising the CGH leadership as a body through which engagements with the residents could

[9] Important to note is that the City has not explicitly stated that an eviction of the CGH residents is in planning - any suggestions of an eviction remain alleged and with no clear evidence from the City.

take place, the Co-design Working Committee was established by late September 2021 with the intention of establishing the resident's stance on redevelopment.

At this point, the residents were faced with the threat of eviction, the conundrum that not all residents will qualify for social housing opportunities on the site, and the potential opportunity for engaging with the City on the redevelopment through the MA, even though this also presented a potential threat to established resident-led management of the building. In this context of dis-engagement and the threat of eviction, the initial period of engagements in 2018 evolved to become an internal, resident-led 'co-design' process in 2021.

The committee is in the process of collating their own proposal for the re-development of the site, with sound findings, evidence, and professional support, to support the co-designed (as opposed to top-down) redevelopment of the site into affordable housing. Their intention is to present this report for consideration should there be an eviction hearing, or should the City seek to pick up engagements with the residents again. Since 2021, various workshops have been conducted by the working group, including discussions on resident's visions for building management, unit size and typologies.

The following section discusses the rationale for the study, and the research questions.

1.2. Rationale and Research Questions

Conceptually, this dissertation is a response to two provocations.

First, this dissertation responds to Southern urban calls to decolonise planning, and planning imaginaries. I draw on Miraftab (2009), for whom this decolonisation project relies on extending the category of planning to beyond its professionalised borders; establishing the everyday practices of occupying communities as part of how households, communities and cities are made, sustained and developed over time in the global south (Miraftab, 2009: 42). I contribute to these efforts to decolonise planning by enquiring into occupations as actually existing models of housing provisioning that respond to the conditions of structural precarity.

Indeed, occupations are prevalent across the global south, but especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, where 56% of the region's urban population reside in occupations (United Nations [UN] Habitat, 2022: 81). Where the UN World Cities Report would characterise African urbanisation as "unplanned" (UN Habitat, 2022: 82), the southern urban planning and repair literature would characterise them as 'planned according to logics of improvisation' (Silver, 2014: 789; Caldeira, 2017: 7; Bhan, 2019: 652). While not an ideal model for securing housing access, and with its own set of challenges, the model of occupation is pervasive enough in the global south (UN Habitat, 2022; Silver, 2014; Caldeira, 2017; Bhan, 2019) such that it warrants close attention. As such, I pry open this model, paying attention to and taking seriously the collective labour of everyday planners who approach their housing needs from the bottom-up.

Beyond establishing that marginalised urban residents are indeed planners, however, the southern urban planning literature does not offer much further to this study. The notion of 'labour' from the literature on repair pushes for a more attentive and intimate reading of southern urban planning practices, because of the fundamentally embodied experience of occupying, making a home, establishing a livelihood, and repairing and connecting to infrastructures. Therefore, in enquiring into occupations as existing models of housing provisioning, I use 'the labouring body' (Ramakrishnan and O'Reilly, 2023) as (a) an empirical site that provides an attentive, intimate and embodied reading of southern urban planning and repair practices, (b) a conceptual site that ties together disparate bodies of literature on southern urban planning, infrastructures, repair and affect, and (c) a methodological tool that insists on the use of the body – of the researcher, and their participants – to generate data.

Second, this dissertation builds on recent literature establishing occupations as both survival strategy and political statement across urban contexts (Saaristo, 2022; Cirolia et.al, 2021; Scheba and Millington, 2023; Burgum and Vasudevan, 2023; Vasudevan, 2015a; 2015b; Bhan, 2019). This is opposed to earlier documentations of occupations in the global north as political statements, and those in the global south as survivalist. I follow from these scholars to ask, if "the labour of

everyday survival is equally political" (Scheba and Millington, 2023: 3), then how may an occupation be sustained over time at each of these scales?

It is from these conceptual provocations that I develop the Research Question for this dissertation: *What is the role of collective labour in sustaining the Cissie Gool House occupation over time?*

In order to explore this question, I ask:

a) What, where and how is the collective labour being performed in Cissie Gool House?

b) What is the role of collective labour in the Cissie Gool House resident's everyday lives?

c) What is the role of collective labour in the political agenda of the occupation and the wider Reclaim the City movement?

The study of 'the everyday' at the intersection of southern urbanism and informality has focused on "the way in which everyday practices evident in particular places have significant scalar reverberations and theoretical significance" (Cirolia and Scheba, 2019: 596). At CGH, these 'everyday practices' are those practices of collective labour performed for the purposes of meeting the basic and livelihood needs of oneself, family or community. But those 'mundane' and 'ordinary' practices that occur at the micro-scale (Cirolia and Scheba, 2019: 597) also have an impact on the political agenda of the occupation and the wider RTC movement, equally sustaining the occupation as a home and as a political practice over time. Therefore, although I split sub-questions (b) and (c) up into two sections, in practice these micro- and meso-scales are in ongoing dialogue as they contribute to sustaining life at the occupation, and to furthering the plight to use well-located land for affordable housing in Cape Town.

1.2.1. Archiving and writing under threat of eviction

Aside from conceptual provocations, the study is also motivated by the resident's desire to archive the work that has gone in to sustaining the occupation over time. This work of archiving

is especially important under the threat of eviction, and the context of state dis-engagement, that the residents find themselves in. In this respect, the study is motivated to document that which is under threat of erasure. This project of archiving and writing under the threat of eviction is an important labour in and of itself, which other researchers and co-design working committee members are also contributing to. Indeed, the timeline in Figure 2 is part of a larger timeline I have been generating in response to resident's desire for the occupation's story to be told, and for key moments of the occupation to be documented. The project of archiving finds resonance in this study because the study is guided by the principles of scholar activism.[10]

Because of the threat of eviction and potential erasure of the occupation, it becomes even more important to recognise what sustains the occupation *as labour – and refer to it as such*.

Dwelling on (collective) labour

To recognise what sustains the occupation as labour is to assign value to that which is deemed to be of no value, and that which is subject to erasure. This sentiment is closely aligned with Social Reproductive Theory[11], and with the project of decolonising urban planning. The motivation, therefore, is to re-appropriate the concept of 'labour' for that which – while unwaged and informal – is nevertheless crucial in sustaining collective human life and maintaining housing security.

In the following Chapter, I draw on three bodies of literature as the theoretical frameworks within which this dissertation is situated.

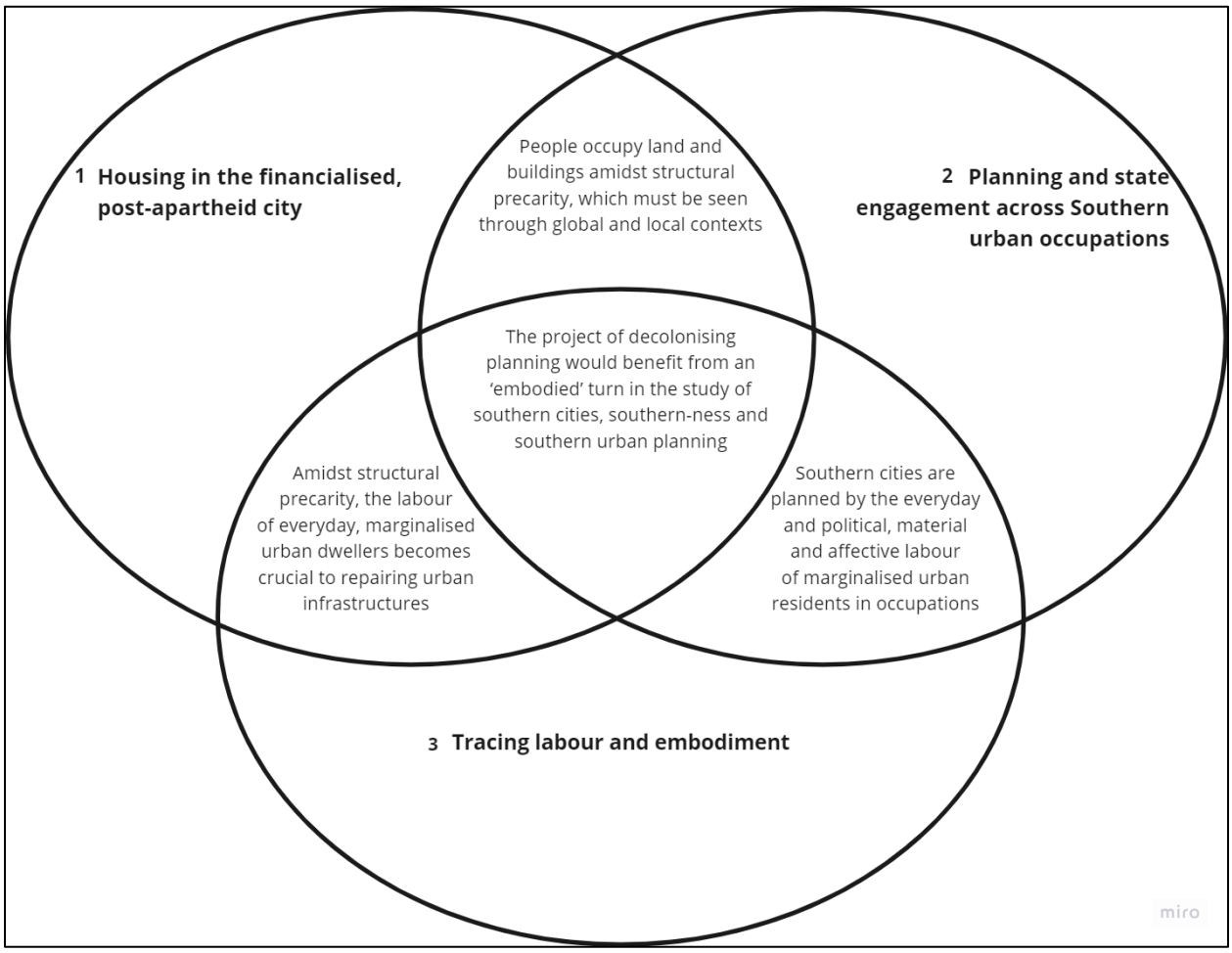
[10] There is more discussion on scholar activism in section 3.1.1.

[11] There is more discussion on Social Reproductive Theory in section 2.1.1.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This Chapter ties together three thematic sections, which encompass the theoretical framework informing this dissertation (see Figure 3 below). In Section 2.1., I situate occupations within discussions on the financialised, post-apartheid city. Here, I draw on global debates about the commodification and financialisation of urban space, and on local debates which nuance the neoliberal critique. This is to explain the context of the housing backlog which gives rise to land and building occupations in Cape Town. In Section 2.2., I draw on scholars of southern urban planning who have, for decades before me, been documenting occupations as modes of accessing housing, connecting to basic services, sustaining livelihoods, and engaging with the state. Cumulatively, in thinking from the south and taking poor urban residents seriously as core planners of southern cities, these scholars have been central in decolonising planning and highlighting the political content of so-called 'survivalist' occupations. Beyond validating the southern experience, however, southern urban planning does not take this study any further. In Section 2.3., therefore, I draw on emerging literature in repair which engages the concept of 'labour' in its material and affective sense. Here, I argue that 'labour' pushes for a more attentive and intimate reading of southern urban planning practices because of how fundamentally embodied 'doing the work' of repairing cities is. My main contribution in this Chapter is developed in Section 2.3., where I propose that the project of decolonising planning would benefit from an 'embodied turn' in the study of southern urban planning and repair practices.

Figure 3 Venn diagram illustrating the theoretical framework informing this dissertation, generated by the researcher, 2023



2.1. Housing in the financialised, post-apartheid city

This section aims to situate the phenomenon of land and building occupations within a global and local context. First, I establish the housing crisis, as it plays out across geographies, as a crisis of social reproduction. Nuancing the neoliberal critique, I discuss the drivers of the housing backlog, and the phenomenon of occupations, across contemporary Cape Town. Here I draw on Lemanski (2007) to highlight the dual-role of the local government in market and welfare needs, and on Levenson (2022) to highlight that the dispossession of residents from occupations actually happens as a strategy to deliver public housing.

2.1.1. A crisis of social reproduction

The rate of the supply of state-subsidised housing is not meeting the demand in Cape Town, and will not meet the projected demand. The City of Cape Town's Integrated Human Settlements Sector Plan projects a backlog of between 22 970 and 27 980 housing opportunities each year, assuming that the annual rate of delivery by both private and public remains consistent with current trends (City of Cape Town, 2022: 25). This represents a very real housing crisis which, though it plays out differently per urban context, is not unique to Cape Town. As the home is a key infrastructure of life-making and life-sustaining practices, the housing crisis intersects directly with a crisis of social reproduction.[12]

As a crucial site of social reproduction, the home enables participation in social, political and economic life, providing shelter, safety and security (Madden and Marcuse, 2016). Across geographies, however, access to and maintaining housing security is an everyday crisis for the working class (Madden and Marcuse; 2016; Rolnik et al., 2022) who are forced to live in precarious conditions, either through occupation, houselessness or other forms of insecure tenure or rental agreements. When housing is precarious, inadequate or otherwise inaccessible,

[12] Social reproduction – variously called care work and affective labour – involves the biological labour of reproducing the labourer generationally and on a daily basis, as well as the life-sustaining labour of caregiving and maintaining the labourer, which includes the acquisition and distribution of food, housing, clothing, health care, transportation and education (Katz, 2001; Rodríguez-Rocha, 2021; Fraser, 2014; Madden, 2018; Brenner et al., 2009). Social Reproduction Theory (SRT) departs from Marx's theory of value, arguing that his propositions about "the reproduction of labour power [are] underdeveloped" (Rodríguez-Rocha; 2021: 2). Building on Marx's understanding of social reproduction as 'the perpetuation of the wage relation', SRT includes the labour of "maintaining existing life and reproducing the next generation" as a crucial condition for the circulation of capital (Laslett & Brenner, 1989 in Rodríguez-Rocha; 2021: 2). This labour is usually gendered and racialised, and performed in spaces that are usually generated by state social spending – homes, schools, hospitals, parks, etc (Fraser, 2014).

then social reproductive capacities to acquire and distribute food, clothing, health care, transportation and education are strained and limited, representing a crisis of social reproduction (Madden, 2018).

2.1.2. The neoliberal critique

The dominant theory emanating from western contexts to explain this crisis of social reproduction in housing is that a 'profit-driven urbanisation' (Brenner et al., 2009) has commodified urban space (Madden and Marcuse, 2016; Madden, 2018), resulting in processes of neoliberal restructuring to cities and the state's relationship to its citizens. Western theories refer to the shift in the role of the state in the 1980s through the adoption of neoliberal policies to protect the market conditions for capital (Miraftab, 2017: 277), and the use of planning tools to incentivise and attract capital (Rolnik et al., 2022: 935), as drivers for the roll-back on public spending. This neoliberal critique has an assumed universality across geographies.

But there is not enough empirical evidence to support the theoretical claim to the universality of neoliberal drivers of urban change and urban poverty (Parnell and Robinson, 2012: 600). This suggests that processes of neoliberalisation "may be a partial, absent or even irrelevant driver of urban poverty", nor a guiding force shaping urban policy, in Southern cities (Parnell and Robinson, 2012: 600, 601). In South African cities, the rise of social spending policies happened *alongside* the adoption of macroeconomic neoliberal policies following the post-apartheid democratic transition (Levenson, 2018: 3222). Scholars like Parnell and Robinson (2012) and Levenson (2018, 2022) have been crucial in noting that the co-existence of social spending and neoliberal policies in South African cities is distinct from narratives of intensified marketisation and the erosion of state interventions. As such, "the relevant time frame" to consider for South African cities "is not a post-1970s crisis, but a post-1994 experience of state restructuring" that actually saw the expansion of public expenditure (Parnell and Robinson, 2012: 599, 605).

2.1.3. South African housing politics

Lemanski (2007) refers to post-apartheid cities like Cape Town as hybrids of pro-poor and pro-growth strategies, which use planning tools for the dual function of meeting market and community needs. This dual-role of the local government – as a protector of the optimal property market conditions, and an organ responsible for delivering public housing to redress apartheid spatial injustices – results in an unresolved tension which influences the housing backlog a great deal. Woodstock is a classic example of a suburb experiencing this tension: a well-located suburb undergoing gentrification and dispossession that is sanctioned by the City's UDZ policy, while also a suburb earmarked by the City for the development of social housing opportunities. The Woodstock case illustrates the local government's agency in both speculative and subsidised property markets in Cape Town.

Another example of this tension is the "unique paradigm" of state-subsidised home ownership through credit, which has been a prominent social spending and urban planning policy in South African cities (Rolnik 2019 in Rolnik et al., 2022: 935). Aside from the fact that the bonds are state-subsidised, the housing product is far from de-commodified – constructed by private contractors, a formally titled housing product is delivered (Levenson, 2018: 3221). In addition, these public housing projects have cut costs in construction, location and design, inhibiting their capacity to redress spatial injustices (Turok et al., 2017: 54; Lemanski, 2007: 454).

Indeed, Cape Town property markets are fiercely competitive, and the formal housing market is inaccessible to the majority urban resident (Scheba et al., 2021: 117). With this in mind, logics of 'the financialised city' (Rolnik et al., 2022) and 'the commodification of urban space'[13] (Madden and Marcuse, 2016; Madden, 2018) do have resonance in Cape Town, where the role of housing as a real estate investment has come to obscure its social function as a place to live. But the

[13] I use 'space' henceforth to encompass land and built space.

housing backlog must also be read in terms of the dual role of the state in market and community needs. Moreover, where occupiers view the practice as a consequence of the housing backlog, housing officials view the practice as the cause (Levenson, 2022: 37). Conflicting readings of the constitutional provision for affordable housing further intensify the slow delivery of public housing in Cape Town.

Where occupiers view the practice as a precarious though necessary strategy to secure housing while they 'wait for the state' (Oldfield and Greyling, 2015) to deliver a public house, housing officials view occupations as opportunistic attempts to 'jump the queue' to the front of the waiting list, and as such, a barrier to democracy itself (Levenson, 2022: 66). This logic is reflected in the City of Cape Town's Human Settlements Directorate's Integrated Human Settlements Sector Plan, where it is stated that occupations "often happen on land, which is already earmarked for projects – thus threatening service delivery and diverting time and money from planned projects to responding to crisis situations" (City of Cape Town, 2022: 30). This logic informs housing official's deployment of the ALIU to evict occupiers in order to preserve the integrity of the waiting list and prevent 'que jumping.' In post-apartheid Cape Town, therefore, the dispossession of residents from occupied land or buildings is deployed as a means of delivering public housing (Levenson, 2022). The significance of Levenson's (2022) argument is to note that dispossession can also happen through policies overtly targeted at social spending, and that the neoliberal critique is neither sufficient nor appropriate to explain the context in which the housing backlog, slow public housing delivery and the rise of occupations manifests in Cape Town.

In post-apartheid Cape Town, the occupation of land and buildings is both consequence of, and resistance to, the financialisation of urban space. But, operating at the juncture of the housing and social reproduction crises, occupations disrupt cycles of dispossession by insisting on the necessity of the home for its social reproductive function (Scheba and Millington, 2023: 16; Rolnik, 2022: 941; Burgum and Vasudevan, 2023: 3). As such, occupations may hold the potential

to make the city otherwise (Ramakrishnan and O'Reilly, 2023), carving out alternative legal-spatial-social reproductive relations through the collective labour performed in the everyday.

Scholars of southern urban planning have theorised occupations as dominant modes of producing space and accessing services in southern cities. In the following sections, I outline the contributions made by some of these scholars, to whom I am indebted for their groundwork in normalising and documenting practices of occupation across the global south. The bulk of the literature review is in section 2.3, where I hold together varied bodies of literature to trace the presence of labour and embodiment across the literature on southern urban planning, infrastructural labour, repair and affect.

2.2. Southern urban planning and state engagement

'Makeshift' (Vasudevan, 2015b), 'auto-constructed' (Holston, 1991) or 'occupied' housing have been central topics in infrastructural geography and southern urban planning for decades. This literature has reached consensus that cities of the Global South are most commonly planned by informality and irregularity, often intersecting with illegality (Simone, 2004; Miraftab, 2009; Caldeira, 2017). These scholars have been in conversation with the 'infrastructural turn,' which reframed infrastructure as more than purely physical, hard, fixed assemblages of pipes, grids, roads, and bricks, to include the political, social and affective (Graham and Thrift, 2007; Stokes and De Coss-Corzo, 2023; Bosworth, 2023; Scheba and Millington, 2023).

I begin by discussing those authors who have theorised makeshift forms of urbanism, variously reflecting on these as quiet (Bayat, 1997), embodied (Simone, 2004), incremental (Silver, 2014), and peripheral (Caldeira, 2017). Cumulatively, in thinking from the South, these scholars have been concerned to contribute to efforts at decolonising planning theory and de-universalising Western planning norms by documenting practices of southern urbanism. Among these scholars, some have theorised the forms of state engagement, expressions of citizenship, and the political possibilities arising from makeshift connections. Here, I narrow in on Caldeira (2017) in her

transversal engagement, and draw on Miraftab's (2009) understanding of the 'fluidity' of the spatial practices of insurgent movements.

Writing across Middle Eastern geographies, Bayat's (1997) interest is in those 'non-collective, silent, pervasive advancements of the disenfranchised onto the propertied,' through "quietly claiming" (54) open spaces on public land in the peripheries. Neither destructive nor clearly organised, he argues, these families and individuals secure and sustain basic services in an out of gaze and atomised manner, over prolonged periods of time (Bayat, 1997: 57). Bayat (1997: 57, 58) delineates these practices as non-conscious collective acts, which may become a social movement if their aims, methods and justifications were articulated as such – at which point they would lose their 'quiet encroachment' character. Bayat positions the non-collective, out of gaze and atomised nature of 'quiet encroachments' as a fundamental to their character. That they are 'quiet' also produces significant gains for the actors: gradual changes and connections have forced authorities to extend service delivery and infrastructure access to these neighbourhoods over time (Bayat, 1997: 57).

Bayat (1997) looked to the process of establishing a home and a neighbourhood through non-collective and atomised occupations and gradual (illegal) connections to infrastructure as a 'quiet encroachment' onto space and planning norms. In this, Bayat is commenting not only on a method of planning from below, but also on a method of state engagement. Silver (2014) was commenting on the political possibilities of urban systems that are made and sustained by the improvisations of marginalised urban residents.

Zooming in on the ad-hoc improvisations and social collaborations of residents in an occupation in Accra, Silver (2014) argues for the prefigurative potential of the new connections to energy networks; creating often free circuits, and the low-cost, self-built housing systems which have reshaped housing conditions. He terms these 'incremental infrastructures', in that they are constantly 'in flux' and dependent on the movements of and collaborations between people. Shifting the lens of the incremental temporally, he argues that makeshift connections,

experiments and improvisations are not just about immediate provisioning, but also prefigure future possibilities.

Where Bayat's concern is with the non-collective, Silver (2014) is clear that incremental infrastructures depend on the movements of and collaborations between people. He argues that occupying communities in Accra "come together *as* infrastructure to consolidate existing housing and energy networks" (Silver, 2014: 801). In this, Silver aligns with and builds on the work of Simone (2004), who reflects on the embodied ways in which people in Johannesburg constitute an infrastructure in themselves as they re-make the inner city in "tentative" and "often precarious" ways amidst abandonment, vacancy and ruin (408, 411). Simone's (2004) 'people as infrastructure' extends the terrain of 'infrastructure' beyond the physical, to include people's activities in the city as an infrastructure providing for and reproducing urban life (408).

In a similar vein to the scholars discussed so far, Caldeira (2017) was concerned with understanding practices of city-making across Southern cities, but she was thinking more broadly to theorise a mode of producing urban space that may encompass many interrelated, southern urban practices. 'Peripheral urbanisation,' she argues, "unfolds slowly" as residents build their homes step-by-step with available resources, engaging transversally with official logics (Caldeira, 2017: 4. 5). Her thinking of state engagement and planning under peripheral urbanisation according to 'transversal logics' is unique. As opposed to the outright absence of the state and official logics in occupations, Caldeira would argue that the state is engaged transversally: the state steps in to regulate, plan or provide services, but often also orchestrates raids and denies the right to exist to occupying residents. Moreover, while occupations side-step planning laws and the property market, they nevertheless operate within them (Caldeira, 2017: 3).

Her argument aligns with Simone and Silver's in that it centres the agency of everyday, marginalised urban residents in city-making (Caldeira, 2017: 5). Like Bayat, she also thinks of Southern urban space as planned from the point of occupation, from which connections to infrastructures are made, and official logics of planning become engaged, urbanising neighbourhoods and then cities. Caldeira goes on to discuss the "new modes of politics" that

have been generated as citizens across southern cities who are engaged in occupation have often been politicised, joining or creating social movements, developing new discourses and citizenship identities, and experimenting with local governance and administration to regularise occupied land or buildings (Caldeira, 2017: 9).

Unlike the quiet and out of gaze nature of the occupations documented by Bayat (1997), others begin as or develop into insurgent movements (Caldeira, 2017: 9) who outrightly assert their citizenship rights (Miraftab, 2009). Miraftab (2009) examines how the strategies of the insurgent movement, the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign (WCAEC) in South Africa, moves across invited and invented spaces through 'fluid, spatial practices.' She writes that "they use formal spaces when they are advantageous, and defy them when they prove unjust and limiting" (Miraftab, 2009: 37). Her reading of the fluidity in the strategies and practices of the WCAEC resonates with Caldeira's (2017) 'transversal logics,' suggesting that fluidity or transversality may be a guiding feature of state engagement in peripheries.

I have outlined some of the prominent scholarly efforts made at decolonising planning theory and de-universalising Western planning, drawing on authors who have made great strides in outlining a vocabulary of Southern urban planning as advocated for by Bhan (2019). These authors have been equally invested in re-thinking informality, challenging the formal/informal binary, and highlighting the political content of so-called 'needs-based, survivalist' modes of making and sustaining home and life. I have shown how, faced with a housing crisis and a crisis of social reproduction, everyday urban residents in the global south have had to self-build their own housing and makeshift connections to energy, water and sanitation infrastructures. The often-illegal nature of occupations, and the new connections made, places residents in the state's gaze, often initiating a series of state engagements which may lead to the delivery of basic services, but which may also unfold in processes of criminalisation and eviction.

Beyond establishing that marginalised urban residents are indeed planners, however, the southern urban planning literature does not offer much further to this study. The notion of 'labour' from the literature on repair pushes for a more attentive and intimate reading of

southern urban planning practices, because of the fundamentally embodied experience of occupying, making a home, establishing a livelihood, and repairing and connecting to infrastructures.

Where Gidwani and Maringanti (2016) brought 'infrastructural labour' to the literature through the informal waste work of marginalised urban residents in Bholakpur, scholars like De Coss-Corzo (2021), Ramakrishnan and O'Reilly (2023), and Stokes and De Coss-Corzo (2023) have recently called for labour to be more rigorously grappled with as an explicit lens of analysis. These scholars are entering the discussion through the literature on repair. While I situate this dissertation within efforts to de-colonise planning theory, and am in debt to scholars of Southern urban planning before me, I also follow from scholars of infrastructural labour, repair and affect. As such, I agree that the role of labour and embodiment, although crucial to self-build housing and infrastructure connections, remains understudied across the intersecting bodies of literature discussing these topics. The following section pulls together some of these gaps and constitutes the bulk of my own contribution in holding together varied bodies of literature.

2.3. Tracing labour and embodiment

In light of Stokes and De Coss-Corzo's (2023) argument that labour is an understudied lens of analysis in research influenced by the infrastructural turn, the discussion below is my conceptual effort to bring infrastructural labour, affect and repair into the orbit of southern urban planning through a much more explicit engagement with 'embodiment'. In this section, I draw on emerging literature in repair which engages the concept of 'labour' in its material and affective sense (see De Coss-Corzo, 2021; Scheba and Millington, 2023 and Ramakrishnan and O'Reilly, 2023). In so doing, I develop my main contribution in this Chapter: to propose that the project of decolonising planning would benefit from an 'embodied turn' in the study of southern urban planning and repair practices. Three sub-themes are then discussed as potentially significant additions to the southern urban planning vocabulary on occupations, and as potentially significant lenses to examine how to enhance, secure and scale repair as an existing mode of

housing practice (Bhan, 2019): improvisation (as anticipation and speculation), practical knowledge (as embodied expertise) and gender, care and exhaustion.

'Labour' first appeared in the infrastructural geography literature through the work of Gidwani and colleagues. For instance, Gidwani and Maringanti (2016) characterise the poorly-compensated labour of waste recycling, repurposing and re-processing at waste treatment units in Bholakpur as 'infrastructural labour'. As reparative to the city, infrastructural labour is argued to reproduce the conditions for capital and urban life. In 'doing the work' of locating labour across infrastructural geography, Stokes and De Coss-Corzo (2023) provide a working definition of infrastructural labour as "intentional human work which is fundamental in sustaining collective life by enabling, mediating, maintaining, and modifying infrastructural assemblages" (428). This builds on Gidwani's (2015) articulation of the concept as the work that 'creates, sustains and performs infrastructures.' These working definitions have great overlap with established understandings of repair as the "ongoing" (Jackson, 2015), "constant" (De Coss-Corzo, 2021), "humble but vital" (Graham and Thrift, 2007) everyday labour of keeping "dwellings liveable, infrastructure working" (Corwin and Gidwani, 2021), and by which "order and meaning in complex socio-technical systems are maintained and transformed" (Jackson, 2014 in Jackson, 2015).

Ramakrishnan and O'Reilly (2023); who trace affective infrastructures at the intersection of labour, repair and care, argue that 'the labouring body' maps the repair and care of infrastructures onto the affective conditions that necessitate labours of repair and care (Ramakrishnan and O'Reilly, 2023: 93). As such, the labouring body proves a useful conceptual site for understanding what the labour of repairing infrastructure entails in practice, and why certain groups continue to 'put one foot in front of the other' in pursuit of this labour. The literature on affect, infrastructures and repair, therefore, intersect in their discussion on the crucial role of labour in "making or maintaining infrastructural relations" (Stokes and De Coss-Corzo, 2023: 428) – both in its material and affective sense.

Thinking of affect, in relation to infrastructures, can steer towards transformative justice and future-making (Ramakrishnan and O'Reilly, 2023). As a body of literature emerging out of the infrastructural turn, there are ongoing discussions among and between the two schools of thought writing about the concept. Those approaching it from the 'affective infrastructures' school of thought are concerned with the affects generated by infrastructure in its physical, material form (Bosworth, 2023; Ramakrishnan and O'Reilly, 2023: 93). These scholars have documented how physical infrastructures generate a range of emotions (Harvey and Knox, 2012 in Bosworth, 2023; Larkin, 2013). Appel et al. (2018), for instance, talked about the 'promise' that infrastructures project into the future, exciting affects, sentiments, and producing feelings of belonging, accomplishment or loss.

Those approaching it from the 'infrastructures of affect' school of thought are concerned with the conditions for the circulation of collective emotions (Bosworth, 2023; Ramakrishnan and O'Reilly, 2023: 93). A notable finding among this school of thought has been the tendency of broken infrastructural 'promises' (Appel et al., 2018) to produce both stress and solidarity-building (see Bettocchi, 2022 in Bosworth, 2023). Affect therefore has the potential to prefigure alternative social relations (Jeffrey and Dyson, 2021; Ramakrishnan and O'Reilly, 2023) – as emotional responses to infrastructures generate an impetus to act i.e. to occupy, to build, to repair, to call on authorities for services, to join insurgent movements. But affect also has the potential to entrench vulnerabilities – as those who are disproportionately responsible for reparative labour become targets for criminalisation and police violence (Bosworth, 2023: 60), or become exhausted and face withdrawal from participating in solidarity spaces (Emejulu and Bassel, 2020; 2023).

Affect, in its intersection with reparative infrastructures, examines how the temporalities of infrastructures may motivate individual and collective action (Bosworth, 2023; Ramakrishnan and O'Reilly, 2023). This understanding suggests an affective investment (or emotional attachment) to infrastructure which may motivate the labour of repair. Indeed, repair – as an act of embodied labour – follows from an 'attachment to a broken object or context, a reflection on

that attachment, and how it might prefigure something out of brokenness' (Berlant, 2016 in Bosworth, 2023: 66). An emerging body of literature, therefore, has focused on the "affective responses from those who patch and adapt existing infrastructure to support alternative modes of living and working" (Ramakrishnan and O'Reilly, 2023: 93; see De Coss-Corzo, 2023 and Scheba and Millington, 2023).

In the following sub-sections, I draw on scholars who operate at this intersection of affect and reparative infrastructures, discussing the logics which enable the labour of repair. As an effort to take repair seriously, as a practice that could inform housing policy, I detail three sub-themes as potentially useful additions to the southern urban vocabulary on occupations, and as potentially significant lenses to examine how to enhance, secure and scale repair as an existing mode of housing practice (Bhan, 2019). These themes include improvisation (as anticipation and speculation), practical knowledge (as embodied expertise), and gender, care and exhaustion.

2.3.1. Improvisation: anticipation and speculation

The notion of improvisation is not new to the literature on southern urban planning. Scholars in this arena have documented the "improvisations, rhythms, and tactics" that allow everyday urban dwellers to connect to infrastructures of housing, water, sanitation, energy and transport (McFarlane, 2011 in Stokes and De Coss-Corzo, 2023: 428; Graham and Thrift, 2007: 11). For instance, Silver (2014: 789) noted the crucial role of "resident's improvisations and social collaborations" in incremental infrastructures. Bhan (2019: 652) expects incremental practices to "adapt frequently rather than rarely." Similarly, Caldeira (2017: 7) noted that although official logics regulate and provide services, "peripheries are improvised." This body of literature has engaged with the notion of improvisation as a mode through which occupations are planned and expanded into burgeoning communities, neighbourhoods and economies. Their main argument has been that occupations are not unplanned, they are planned according to logics of improvisation.

Emerging literature on repair, on the other hand, has reminded us that improvisation, in that it makes and sustains the home incrementally, serves a material and an affective purpose. For example, Cirolia et al. (2021) embarked on a multi-media exploration of the processes of repairing the abandoned Woodstock Hospital building to meet the resident's needs as they occupied and built a community. They identify practices of 'retrofitting infrastructure' as those material improvisations (Silver, 2014) that have allowed residents to access basic services, but they also identify 'repurposing for enjoyment' and 're-placing' as those practices of making meaning out of the material space (Cirolia et al., 2021).

Based at the same occupation and with authors who cross over, Scheba and Millington (2023) build on Gidwani's earlier notions of 'infrastructural labour.' They identify 'infrastructural repair' as those "collective processes of building, adapting to, and repairing a home" (725), which encompasses Cirolia et al.'s (2021) earlier notions of retrofitting, re-purposing and re-placing. They note that this is also 'prefigurative labour', which depends on collective engagement, unfolds unpredictably, and proceeds through "multiple forms and phases of improvisation" (Scheba and Millington, 2023: 728).

De Coss-Corzo's (2021) participatory ethnography, which follows public worker's repairs to the Mexico City water grid, has recently looked at improvisation as it takes place in practice by the body. In doing so, he reframes improvisation as an embodied logic which enables the labour of reparative infrastructures. De Coss-Corzo (2021), in his insistence on staying with the moment of breakdown, unpacks the moment, and the reparative labour called on in response, in great detail. He makes a unique contribution to the literature: he distinguishes between the preventative logics of maintenance that act before breakdown, and the adaptive and improvisational logics of repair that emerge at breakdown (De Coss-Corzo; 2021: 239). He identified 'patchwork' as those improvised, on-the-spot solutions that emerged at moments of breakdown when the "imperative of repair demanded creativity and improvisation" from public workers (De Coss-Corzo, 2021: 245).

More, improvisation at moments of breakdown has been positioned as the means by which communities learn. De Coss-Corzo (2021) shows how improvised solutions are not always new, but have been learned over time as experiences with previous patchwork allowed public workers to anticipate and speculate on, for example, what materials may be needed to repair breakages, in light of what usually happens. That strategies of improvisation may be anticipated and speculated suggests that improvisation and experimentation generates a learning, and a knowledge base among practitioners (Graham and Thrift, 2007: 5).[14]

Southern urban planning literature could benefit from taking further their understanding of peripheries as expanded via improvisation, to ask *how* that improvisation plays out in practice by the body. De Coss-Corzo (2021) reveals the anticipated and speculated dimensions of improvisation as an existing labour of repairing urban infrastructures. In the following section, I discuss the knowledge generated from practices of repair as a form of practical knowledge known as embodied expertise.

2.3.2. Practical knowledge: embodied expertise

De Coss-Corzo (2021) brought Björkman's (2018) 'embodied expertise' and Scott's (1996) 'practical knowledge' to the literature on repair. He defined patchwork as an improvisational logic enabled by a form of practical knowledge (Scott, 1999) that is known as embodied expertise (Björkman, 2018). As public workers relied on their bodies to feel and detect where leaks were

[14] Graham and Thrift (2007) go on to identify 'maintenance as learning.' When Graham and Thrift were writing, however, the literature had not yet had much discussion distinguishing between maintenance and repair, often subordinating repair to maintenance logics of ensuring order is maintained in society (De Coss-Corzo, 2021). It is unclear if Graham and Thrift were lumping the two together, or if they meant that maintenance, as a form of repair associated with maintaining order, is learning. Because they were speaking from the point of breakdown - and to stay with breakdown as advocated for by De Coss-Corzo (2021) when studying repair - it seems as if, to be distinct, repair is learning, of which maintenance is one form.

(De Coss-Corzo, 2021: 241), so too was the embodied expertise of engineers and plumbers crucial in mediating Mumbai's shift to governing water supply through property titling (Björkman, 2018).

Rather than learning through manuals, codes or theory (Stokes and De Coss-Corzo, 2023: 241), embodied expertise are learned through ongoing practice (Scott, 1996: 315), and long-standing engagements with infrastructure networks (De Coss-Corzo, 2021: 241). This is a kind of knowledge base that depends on "close and astute observation of the environment" (Scott; 1996: 324), making practical knowledge almost always a highly localised knowledge base (Scott; 1996: 317). As such, embodied expertise will be held among Mexico City water grid public workers; and disproportionately so (De Coss-Corzo, 2021: 241), and may be held among the residents in an occupation.

Scott (1996: 324) argues that the marginal economic status of practitioners of practical knowledge constitutes a powerful impetus for their close and astute observation of the local environment. In other words, the dependence of one's housing and livelihood on repair practices constitutes one's deep engagement with their local environment and infrastructure networks. Established literature on repair and care has, similarly, recognised that marginalised bodies are disproportionately tasked with performing this labour (Corwin and Gidwani, 2021; Doshi, 2017), and are marked by gendered relations of care and exhaustion.

In the following section, I argue that scholars operating at the junction of infrastructural labour, affect and repair, especially those using the lens of the labouring body, need also to grapple with the ways in which gender, race, caste or ethnicity weave through the labour, and contributes to disproportionate exhaustion among practitioners of infrastructural repair.

2.3.3. Gender, care and exhaustion

The nature of the labour and the knowledge generated as embodied, means that the performance of this labour is a "felt experience" and may become "physically strenuous and exacting in its toll" (Ramakrishnan and O'Reilly, 2023: 93). This may particularly be the case when

the labour being performed is the everyday, ongoing, incremental labour of life- and home-making.

Marginalised bodies who perform this labour operate in an "untenable state of embodied precarity" (Doshi, 2017 in Corwin and Gidwani, 2021: 9). Operating within and despite the confines of the global housing crisis (Rolnik et al., 2022; Madden and Marcuse, 2016; Scheba and Millington, 2023), and at the intersection of the housing and social reproduction crises, bodies who perform this labour are "marked by gender, race, caste or ethnicity in ways that naturalise labour devaluation and uneven resource distributions" (Doshi, 2017: 126). There are risks, therefore, in romanticising repair, including perpetuating gendered relations of care and exhaustion (Scheba and Millington, 2023: 10).

Emejulu and Bassel (2020) studied exhaustion in women of colour activists across six European cities, finding that exhaustion is both a signal of having done meaningful work, as well as a breaking point that could lead to withdrawal from participating (401, 404). Where emotional turmoil can be expected in activist spaces - indeed, activists are mobilised by an affective response to a social problem (Gould, 2009 and Nairn, 2019 in Emejulu and Bassel, 2023: 2) - declaring exhaustion is also a way for activists to build and sustain community (Emejulu and Bassel, 2020: 406). Exhaustion can therefore act as an endpoint to, or a rebirth of activism (Emejulu and Bassel, 2020: 406). This aligns with the literature on affect (Bosworth, 2023; Ramakrishnan and O'Reilly, 2023). Similarly, in Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination, Robin D.G. Kelley (2022: 9) encouraged us to "remember that the conditions and the very existence of social movements enable participants to imagine something different, to realise that things need not always be this way."

But if women of colour are expected to bear exhaustion unequally, based on their disproportionate responsibility to care for issues outside of performing the labour – extending to caring also for social issues which affect the community – then such activist spaces may never be politically productive (Emejulu and Bassel, 2020: 404). Scholars contributing to the literature on infrastructural labour, affect and repair; especially those using the lens of the labouring body,

need also to grapple with the ways in which gender, race, caste or ethnicity weaves through the labour, and contributes to disproportionate exhaustion. Emerging discussions should not only seek to understand the transformative, future-making (Ramakrishnan and O'Reilly, 2023) and prefigurative (Jeffrey and Dyson, 2021; Silver, 2014) potentials, but also the exhausting, frustrating and unequal dimensions of the labour as it plays out in practice.

This section has drawn on the literature on infrastructural labour, affect and repair in order to pull these intersections into southern urban planning debates. I argue that 'labour' becomes quite useful empirically and conceptually in this task, opening up space to ask *how* labours of repair are embodied, particularly when it comes to the everyday labour of life- and home-making in occupations. Three sub-themes were then discussed as potentially significant additions to the southern urban vocabulary, and as potentially significant lenses to examine how to enhance, secure and scale repair as an existing mode of housing practice (Bhan, 2019) on occupations: improvisation (as anticipation and speculation), practical knowledge (as embodied expertise) and gender, care and exhaustion.

In the following chapter, I position the ethnographic methodology as an appropriate approach for conducting research centred on the embodied aspects of making and sustaining a home under precarious circumstances.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This section discusses and justifies the ethnographic methodology that was used for this project. After discussing the research philosophy; which grounds the project in the practices of scholar activism, reciprocity and ethnographic comportment, I move to detailing the methods used. These include participant observation, deep hanging out and interviews. I then discuss the project's limitations and any ethical considerations.

3.1. Research philosophy

Ethnography's assertion that researchers should gain access to spaces, and spend time there for as long as possible (Harrison, 2018; Lewis and Russell, 2011: 400) is particularly useful for this project in my intent on participating in the collective labour to generate an embodied understanding of its functioning, and what it entails. I take ethnography's focus on immersing oneself in the community to its decolonial possibilities – grounding the study in a philosophy of scholar activism, reciprocity, and ethnographic comportment. I have viewed these as foundational values guiding my conduct as a researcher, but which have also informed the impetus for, and design of the project.

3.1.1. Scholar activism

Scholar activism emphasises the importance of engaging with our emotional responses to the world as researchers and scholars, making room for researchers like myself who ask questions, and choose research sites, because they are 'moved' (Routledge and Derickson, 2015) by the plight of those communities. My mother was born in a house nearby Woodstock, in a neighbouring suburb called Walmer Estate. Hearing of the decision to declare Walmer Estate a white area under the Group Areas Act, my great grandfather sold the house 'before the government could take it from him', as the family story goes. As a coloured woman who grew up hearing these kinds of stories, the CGH resident's stories of eviction and displacement was not far from home for me.

South African geographers who have been influential to me through teaching, supervision or mentorship have advocated for collaborating with sites of activism (Scheba and Scheba, 2023), co-producing knowledge with diverse stakeholders (Patel, 2022) and nurturing a geography from diverse African contexts (Daya, 2022). These values, which have become core to my practice as a researcher, also align with ethnography's emphasis on gaining access to and engaging with communities; a practice developed in critique of the 18th and 19th century 'armchair anthropology' (Harrison, 2018: 8, 22).

In various ways, I gave viewed this dissertation as a project of scholar activism. From project design to the presentation of findings, there has been a conscious effort to engage with the residents, and collaborate with the participants. For example, the research was designed to respond to questions coming from the residents at CGH (Routledge and Derickson, 2015: 391), who wanted a timeline of key moments at CGH to be documented. The research was then also re-framed iteratively over time, changing focus slightly depending on what made most sense when in the field, relying on participants to help me understand the relationships between different bits of findings.

The 'cyclical' nature of ethnography (Spradley, 1980 in Harrison, 2018: 45, 46) often meant the generation of overwhelmingly new findings in the middle of fieldwork, which in turn refined the research questions a number of times. The choice of wording as 'collective labour' to refer to what was being *done* in the task teams, for example, came only after spending time in the kitchen and garden for a few visits, and noticing the fundamentally resident-led (as opposed to movement-oriented) spaces that these were. This informed a change from what I had initially sought to explore: the 'everyday governance' or decision making that is sustaining the occupation as a home and as a political practice. The project became an exploration of the everyday and political role of 'collective labour' in sustaining an occupation over time.

Finally, in keeping with scholar activism's commitment to channel resources to the communities with which we engage (Routledge and Derickson, 2015: 391), I hope to generate an advocacy report (a booklet, pamphlet or zine of some kind) in collaboration with the participants at CGH

after submitting this dissertation, which will include various versions of the timeline; which I have been working on in the background. This brings me to the second point.

3.1.2. Reciprocity in research

Reciprocity, as opposed to extractivism in research, is a guiding value closely related to scholar activism's 'politics of resourcefulness' (Routledge and Derickson, 2015: 391). In attempt to subvert the common, extractive dynamic in which researcher engages with community, much of the time I spent hanging out at CGH was not in a research capacity at all, but as an ally and on an ad-hoc basis. Since 2021, I have been showing face, building rapport, joining protests, coming to Mass Meetings with my supervisor, making friends, and developing an understanding of the space. This time spent getting to know the movement and the community allowed this research to be designed with an (although limited, at the time) understanding of the space and the community, as opposed to coming in with predetermined theoretical questions.

It is thought that "a level of familiarity between researcher and researched, and perhaps even mutual respect, leads to better research collaborations" (Harrison, 2018: 26). As a result of spending time at the site before conducting the research, when I began my fieldwork in 2023, residents were already familiar with me, and knew that I was one of my supervisor's students. The relationships developed between my supervisor, her research group 'City Occupied', and the leadership body at CGH meant that participants could trust that I had a similar philosophy of reciprocity for conducting research, eroding that initial, awkward, 'do I trust this person' phase in research relationships.

I spent a great amount of the fieldwork actually doing the labour that my participants do in their task teams: the kitchen, the garden, the security and safety team, and the maintenance team. This kind of 'embedded' or 'collaborative' approach to research also meant that I had to give advice at times; when appropriate, and even if it was uncomfortable, as opposed to remaining a neutral observer (Lewis and Russel, 2011: 401). It also meant keeping an attentive eye when

analysing the findings, and deciding which bits of information seemed too sensitive or personal to include.

The use of my own body as a methodological tool meant spending time contributing to the labour, learning from doing, and being in the spaces in which the collective labour is performed. It also meant paying attention to all of my senses, desires, inclinations, feelings, thoughts and emotions throughout the duration of the fieldwork, and noting similar corporeal reactions or statements among the participants. Throughout the fieldwork, I became hyper-aware of my own body at CGH, which contributed to generating an attentive, intimate and embodied understanding of the everyday and political making and sustaining of the occupation. This brings me to the third point.

3.1.3. Ethnographic comportment

The final foundational value guiding my conduct as a researcher entails a commitment to an ongoing reflexivity. The researcher's critical awareness of their positionality is what Harrison (2018: 30) refers to as ethnographic comportment. In holding this value, I take time throughout the dissertation, when appropriate, to reflect on my positionality both at the site of fieldwork, and throughout the research process. In holding this as a value, this is not a discussion which I can have in one section, but a reflexive attitude that I wish to weave throughout the dissertation.

3.2. Methods used

The transformation of the field of anthropology 'out of the armchair' has led to proliferations that ethnography is done best when the researcher is trained and resides in the community for a long period of time, learns or knows the local language, collects as much data as possible across spectacular and mundane activities, takes lots of field notes, and participates in social activities (Harrison, 2018: 15). Below, I detail the methods used for the project, discussing the process of sampling, the data collection methods of participant observation, deep hanging out and interviews, and the approach to collecting field notes. Throughout, I interweave a discussion of my proficiencies – or lack thereof – in the criteria outlined by Harrison above.

In addition to participant observation, deep hanging out and semi-structured interviews, I also sourced some documents from external allies within the CGH network, and collected some online archives for the analysis.

I outline the methods that follow in retrospect, similarly to scholars like McManimon (2021), who did not want to "get caught up in the minutiae of academically naming what [she was] doing," and Lewis and Russel (2011), who employed the term 'embedded research' after-the-fact to refer to their work.

3.2.1. Sampling

The process of sampling taken for this project relates most with the snowballing process, in which participants are referred or recommended by other participants, "forming a chain of connected individuals" (Harrison, 2018: 48). The choice of where to locate myself among the various teams, committees, structures and spaces in the occupation, and on who to speak to, came after meeting with a member of the leadership. This member of leadership suggested I spend time in the task teams, as the leadership at the time were feeling overworked and exhausted.

After a member of leadership set it up for me to join the kitchen team for their Friday feeding schemes, I spoke informally to someone from the security team who was frequently assisting in the kitchen. I then made contact with a resident from the garden team, through a member of leadership, and became involved in the gardening. Gaining access to the maintenance team was made possible by their engagements with participants from the garden and security teams, and access through a member of leadership.

Six participants were residents of CGH who volunteer actively in the task teams. I refer to these six participants as the 'core group' with whom I engaged throughout the period of my fieldwork. This 'core group' consists of residents who have been, and who remain the most active to

volunteer their labour in the kitchen, garden, maintenance and security and safety task teams[15], who are mostly middle-aged or older, coloured, Muslim, evicted from Woodstock or surrounding neighbourhoods, and of the first residents to move into CGH when the occupation began in 2017. Two participants were external allies and members of the network of CGH, who volunteer on the co-design working committee; one of whom has a background in architecture, the other in the arts and commoning.

Table 1 List of participants

Names of participants	**Affiliation**
Nazeem (Boeta[16] Nazeem)	Resident at CGH, Core group: Kitchen task team
Nadeema (Aunty Nadeema)	Resident at CGH, Core group: Kitchen task team
Melissa	Resident at CGH, Core group: Garden task team
Faldilah	Resident at CGH, Core group: Garden task team
Quintin	Resident at CGH, Core group: Maintenance task team

[15] I provide a detailed ethnographic account of these spaces as part of Chapter 4, section 4.1., moving through arrival and first impressions of the spaces, to researcher reflections on participant observation.

[16] Afrikaans for 'uncle.' Nazeem and Nadeema

Ismael	Resident at CGH, Core group: Security and safety task team, and Maintenance task team, and assists in the kitchen
Andrea	External network of CGH: Architecture background, Woodstock residents association
Naren	External network of CGH: Arts and commoning background, Woodstock residents association

3.2.2. Participant observation

Participant observation is thought of as a process that oscillates between participant and observer, situationally and temporally (Harrison, 2018: 21), throughout the period of fieldwork. This was indeed the case for my fieldwork. It often took a bit of time upon first meeting someone properly to let them know that I really wanted to participate in the labour. It was often easier to become comfortable in a space, and for participants to become comfortable with me, if we were all women, like in the garden. Across spaces, however, when I established that I was there to participate, my note-book was put down, and often not picked up again as I became involved in the labour.

Participant observation was particularly useful in this study for its objective of being in dialogue between the everyday and political scales of the occupation, for which everyday understandings of what the labour entails in practice can only be properly developed through being in space, in time, and actively participating, generating an embodied experience. “There is usually some disjuncture between what people do and what people say they do”, and so ‘interviews alone would not have sufficed’ (Harrison, 2018: 22) for this project. It was necessary to gain access to the space, build rapport among the community, develop trust, and spend time there, becoming familiar enough within the space such that participants could feel comfortable leaving me alone

to do my job while they did theirs, allowing "everyday life" to proceed as if I was not there (Harrison, 2018: 22).

Factors enabling this degree of immersion in ethnographic fieldwork include the researcher's duration of time in the setting, their resemblance to the community, and their degree of participation (Harrison, 2018: 21, 22):

(1) *Duration of time in the setting.* The doctrine is that the longer the researcher spends in the space, the better their understanding develops of the community (Harrison, 2018: 23). I have had an ad-hoc presence at CGH, and at RTC public-facing events, since 2021, which was followed by a dedicated period of fieldwork for five months from April until August 2023. My presence on the site has since continued on an ad-hoc basis since closing the fieldwork. This might be called an 'introverted' approach to gaining access and building rapport, "hang[ing] around patiently becoming a familiar part of the social landscape before approaching anyone" (Harrison, 2018: 41). Nevertheless, I think that the time I spent hanging around before and after the fieldwork facilitated trust and allyship, as well as enabling an immersive and embodied experience during the fieldwork.

(2) *Resemblance.* The physical and social resemblance of the researcher, in relation to their participants and the community, is thought to facilitate life to go on as usual, whereas perpetual differences become a reminder of the presence of the researcher (Harrison, 2018: 41). To a degree, my racial resemblance to my participants, and the community, may have played a role in enabling life to go on as usual. CGH is a diverse community, with black isiXhosa-speaking residents, black residents from across Africa, coloured Afrikaans-speaking residents, some white Afrikaans- and English-speaking residents, and no doubt many other linguistic groups.

    The research participants selected for this study, based on them leading their task teams, happened to all be coloured Afrikaans- and English-speaking residents. Being a coloured

woman myself, spending time with the participants often felt like spending time at extended family's houses. Notwithstanding obvious class differences in my physical resemblance, such as clothes and accent, coloured culture is socially familiar to me. Though I cannot speak Afrikaans fluently, I understand it quite well and am able to participate in Afrikaans jokes and social cues; having grown up in a family that makes the same jokes and has similar social ques. I suspect that my social resemblance played a role in enabling life to go on as usual during the fieldwork among the research participants.

(3) *Degree of participation.* My participation in the collective labour of the task teams included assisting in the kitchen during the Friday feeding schemes, in the garden on Saturdays, doing repairs with Quintin whenever possible, and visiting a soccer and netball tournament for the kids organised by the security and safety team. The Maintenance and Security task teams were more difficult for me to access, I suspect due to these spaces being male-dominated. My position as a researcher made it necessary to establish that I was in the space to participate and contribute in the spirit of reciprocity, because in some spaces, residents were unsure if I wanted to watch or work, and so I had to assert my intentions. I tried to stay at the occupation longer than the time required to finish the labour, or arrive early, or take breaks when others were taking breaks in order to hang around while little to nothing was happening. I also attended co-design meetings where possible, and attended and was involved in the Co-design Exhibition at the Cape Institute for Architecture in a small capacity as a researcher, presenting research done on another project. I was then invited to present at the NU Urban Land Justice Dialogue at the District Six Museum in October 2023. Last, the garden re-launch event, for which I also volunteered my labour, saw the garden, maintenance and security and safety teams come together to plan the event. I sometimes brought my partner along to the gardening work, and we all developed close bonds and shared intimate moments during this time.

3.2.3. Field notes

Once I established that I wanted to join in on the labour, I often put down my notebook, sometimes forgetting where I left it before heading home for the day. Over time, as my presence at CGH became more regular, I often left my notebook at home on purpose because I knew it would get in the way of performing the labour. My notebook would often fall out of my pocket while bending over in the garden, or I would have to dry my hands and fetch my notebook out of my bag before jotting something down in the kitchen. Often, holding the notebook made my presence more noticed, and inhibited immersion. Moreover, "experiencing something with an eye toward documenting it … can produce a qualitatively different experience from being fully present in the moment" (Harrison, 2018: 74).

Where possible, on-the-spot "jottings" or "scratch notes" of quickly scribbled words or phrases (Sanjek, 1990 in Harrison, 2018: 25) were done on-site, and mostly in the beginning phases of fieldwork, intended to jog my memory when I returned home. I began a Google Doc titled 'Fieldwork notes' when I began my fieldwork which took the format of a diary entry. When I returned home from each visit to CGH, I documented everything that happened at the visit in this Google Doc, usually chronologically from arriving to leaving for the day, making an effort to draw on all of the senses. I wrote about everything I saw, touched, smelled, heard, tasted, and thought during the visit, drawing on memory and jottings, and referring to any pictures or videos taken during the visit. This document ended up being over 15 000 words after the completion of fieldwork, which I used to guide the writing process. I also included "post interview note-taking" in this Google Doc, recording "such things as context, qualities of the interview" and "general impressions and future considerations" (Harrison, 2018: 74).

3.2.4. Interviews

I preferred to conduct interviews after having visited the space a number of times, as I felt uncomfortable requesting information from participants before having developed a relationship with them, and before demonstrating my intent to assist and contribute to the space. Indeed,

"first-hand experience in a social arena is thought to facilitate better interview questions" (O'Reilly, 2012 in Harrison, 2018: 26). This was the case for the kitchen and garden team, with whom I engaged for a number of visits before requesting an interview. For the security task team, however, who did not have a dedicated space in which to conduct the labour[17], an interview was held first to gain an understanding of the team's role, after which I was invited to SSTT events. For the MTT, the interview took place after a tour of the recent repair and maintenance work done, and it was only after these initial engagements that I participated in the repairs to the building.

All interviews took place at the occupation, either in the space where we were working, or in the hall. The hall, now a communal space used for events and meetings, used to be the nurses dining quarters when the building functioned as a hospital decades ago. Holding interviews at the occupation, in spaces familiar to the residents, might have enabled a sense of comfortability and being 'at home' for participants. During interviews, participants spoke openly, in Afrikaans (most of the resident's home language) or mixing between Afrikaans and English, and often emotionally, revealing personal and often confidential details. The sense of comfortability afforded by being 'at home,' coupled with the fact that participants felt they could trust me, likely contributed to the generation of rich data. Had we conducted the interview at a coffee shop, for example, many of these rich details may not have been learned.

As opposed to interviewing CGH leadership on the co-design, I chose to interview two external allies who volunteer on the co-design working committee, because the leadership remained over-worked at the time, and expressed a degree of researcher burnout. I conducted interviews with external allies during the live Co-Design Exhibition, which was held at the Cape Institute for Architecture for about one month. During this time, discussions about the co-design were

[17] Rather, the Security and Safety task team - like the Maintenance task team - is a space in movement, operating across the occupation where needed.

ongoing, as the public was invited to view the exhibition panels, and use the space for discussions on affordable housing in the city. The presence of the co-design panels in the room allowed participants to draw on and point to visible information during our discussion, generating a rich discussion, and allowing the co-design story to be told from its inception.

3.3. Limitations

The perspectives of City of Cape Town officials who have engaged with the CGH residents were not captured for this study. Although a research request to conduct interviews was submitted to the City, the Human Settlements department did not respond to the research request despite numerous follow-ups and nudges by the department responsible for research, the Policy and Strategy department. This is not uncommon for this case – numerous other researchers affiliated with the CGH case have expressed that the City will not talk to them. The occupation is highly contested, and if suspicions are correct that an eviction and court case is on the way, then it makes sense that the City would avoid open discourse with external parties during this time. The absence of the City's perspective on the co-design, and on the story of dis-engagement, remains a limitation to this study. The notably different willingness to engage with me between the two departments may be testament to the City's siloed approaches to researcher engagement.

A second limitation lies in my limited engagement with the MTT and SSTT, compared to the garden and the kitchen teams. Different spaces in a research setting often have different levels of accessibility (Harrison, 2018: 22). Being male-dominated spaces, and moving spaces without a fixed location, I struggled to immerse myself deeply in the MTT and the SSTT labour. While this is a reflection on the role of my positionality and resemblance as a young female researcher in enabling or hindering access to and immersion in a space, I understand this limitation also in terms of the strategic choices researchers must often make in the field; choosing to follow those angles which have become accessible, and to keep trying with the others.

3.4. Ethical considerations

As the CGH occupation is a contentious and political topic in the Cape Town housing regime, the presentation of any research results on the residents may have a bearing on their future housing security. For this reason, anonymising the participants was my default position when it came to presenting the results, to avoid any potential risk or harm to participants. I felt it the right thing to do, however, to give participants the choice to be identified by name in the final presentation of results. Giving the participants in this study the option of being named was a strategic choice made because I did not want the research to reflect the erasure of identity that is associated with cycles of dispossession and living in an occupation. The process of gaining ethical clearance for this study included motivating for the choice to be identified by name. Where a name is used in the dissertation that is not a research participant, a pseudonym has been used.[18]

In a feedback and consent session which I held with each team, I shared the final results with participants, discussed the arguments I was developing, and checked with participants if they remained comfortable with the information included in the study. At this discussion, issues of consent, anonymity, and dissemination of the results were discussed and agreed upon openly, and any potential risks to the participants were discussed. All participants decided they wanted to be identified by name in the research outputs. Relatedly, I had to keep an attentive eye when analysing the findings and deciding which bits of information to include or leave out for its sensitive or personal nature.

In order to avoid compromising participant's free will to participate in the study, financial contributions were not offered, and it was made clear in the consent form that participation in the study would not have a direct bearing on participant's lives. Contributing to the collective

[18] This is with the exception of two quotes used in section 4.3.2. where these quotes were taken from a speech made at a public event, the Cissie Gool House Co-Design Exhibition in 2023. These quotes subsequently appeared in online news media, where the persons were cited by name.

labour, and perhaps taking some difficult tasks away from participants during my time there, was my way of offering back what I learned from being in the space. I also brought along coffee and biscuits to visits and interviews, and left some behind when I returned home as a way of indirectly giving back. Many of these are practices learned from others in the City Occupied network. In the closing stages of the research, my supervisor and I organised data vouchers for the residents who participated in my study, to compensate for the data and airtime they used contacting me throughout the year.

The following Chapter moves into the research findings, which are presented in three sub-sections, each responding to a core research question. Section 4.1., *Collective labour in practice,* presents the results responding to research question 1, *What, where and how is the collective labour performed in CGH?* Section 4.2., *Collective labour at the everyday scale,* presents the results responding to research question 2, *What is the role of collective labour in the Cissie Gool House resident's everyday lives?* Section 4.3., *Collective labour at the political scale,* presents the results responding to research question 3, *What is the role of collective labour in the political agenda of the occupation and the wider Reclaim the City movement?*

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1. Collective labour in practice

This section serves as an ethnographic account of my experience participating in the collective labour in the kitchen, garden, maintenance and security and safety task teams. I move from arrival and first impressions, to detail immersive experiences in these spaces, and discuss themes in how the labour functions. Themes include temporal shifts in labour practices, the flow of resources, the role of external networks, and the roles and responsibilities of specific people. Themes more specific to a space include the use of space in the garden, and everyday versus longer-term priorities in the MTT. I include some colloquial Afrikaans words throughout the discussion below – this came naturally while writing this section, and has been retained as such as a reflection of the atmosphere of CGH.

4.1.1. Kitchen

Arrival

On Fridays beginning at 10am, the Kitchen Team cooks for the Feeding scheme, which is a resident-organised Friday meal prepared predominantly for the kids in the occupation. Food is usually ready around 2pm, the idea being that the kids can come with their bakkies[19] as they come home from school. Food is dished up and served until around 5pm. The core Kitchen Team during the period of my fieldwork consisted of husband and wife, Boeta Nazeem and Aunty Nadeema. Other residents would come and help throughout the day sometimes, particularly Ismael, who also serves on the Security and Safety Task Team (SSTT) and the Maintenance Task Team (MTT).

[19] Afrikaans word for 'Tupperware'

It was a cold morning at around 10:10am when I first arrived to join in the kitchen for the Friday Feeding scheme. Kim, a member of the CGH leadership, came down in her pyjamas to sign me in. We walked to the kitchen and she introduced me to Boeta Nazeem and Aunty Nadeema, who I had only interacted with peripherally until now, and then Kim went on with her morning after a few minutes of chit chat.

The Kitchen is usually quiet when I arrive. Aunty Nadeema will be busy cutting onions, or Boeta Nazeem will be operating the large buckets used to soak the split peas or lentils. Sometimes I would arrive and Ismael would be in the kitchen cutting onions, or Lauren, another student who was interested in being in the space, would be in the kitchen cleaning chicken necks.

First impressions

Figure 4 Cooking for the Friday Feeding scheme, 2023

I used to feel an almost cold, industrial atmosphere coming from the kitchen's physical infrastructure. The space was made warm by the presence of Boeta Nazeem and, particularly, Aunty Nadeema. Aunty Nadeema is sweet, welcoming, her smile is warm and her demeanour is caring; protective. Boeta Nazeem and Aunty Nadeema were adamant that I should pull up a chair and sit, watch and chat. I had to push my way in to participate and not only observe. I had to combat their kindness, accommodation and, to my perception, their insistence that I was a guest in their space who should not have to be put to work, with a similar kindness and comfortability

in the space. I tried to give the impression that I was so comfortable that I could pick up a knife and cut the onions myself, wash my hands without asking where the soap was, put things in their place myself. I tried to portray an understanding of and connection to the space. I felt this was necessary in order to learn, contribute and participate, while also not getting in the way by asking too many questions about where to put what. In reality, underneath this facade I put up, the kitchen was a difficult space to navigate - as is anyone's family or home kitchen when you don't know where anything goes or how things are usually prepared. The only difference was that this was a collective kitchen.

The space has various modes of operation that can only be known by operating in it. For example, the pole on the door needs to be inserted into a small nook in the ground for the door to remain closed. This is one of the doorways the police knocked down to enter the occupation during the recent police raid. Or, how you must switch from a small wooden spoon to a large wooden spoon (what feels like an ore on a boat) once the pot has been filled with most of its ingredients, in order to stir the pot thoroughly. This large wooden spoon sits in a holding spot above the pot, poked between two horizontal pipes, and needs to be pulled out at a very specific angle that I could not figure out. Or, how you have to crouch down on your knees in the front of the gas stove - not the side or any other angle - in order to spot if the flame is burning. This bending and crouching is getting difficult for Boeta Nazeem as he gets older.

The meals would usually be relatively simple - dhal and rice, black eyed peas and rice. Chicken necks would usually fill the dish, and provide some extra protein. Unless there were veggies to be peeled and cut, there was not much preparation to be done - onions need to be cut, lentils need to be soaked, and chicken necks need to be cleaned and defrosted in water until it is ready to be added to the pot.

Temporal Shifts

In November 2018 the Friday feeding scheme began in response to resident's – particularly the children's – growing need for a meal. The Feeding scheme is dependent on when donations come

in. During the covid-19 period of strict lockdowns (2020 - 2021), the kitchen received many donations, and could cook for the occupation most Fridays, even providing porridge every morning. Donations have not been as consistent since this covid-19 lockdown period. Aunty Nadeema expresses that *"It's been a quiet year hey."*

Resources and External Networks

> *"That is the problem here is the money, there's never really funds man. Though people pay what they call a contribution it doesn't really come to the kitchen. That goes to the maintenance and things like that - wherever things breaks they make use of that money to fix… The stuff is so expensive. I mean many times I use out of my pocket, and I mean I'm only a pensioner, I can only afford so much." (Boeta Nazem, 2023)*

An individual from the BoKaap community, who is also involved in community kitchens, used to bring a pot of cooked food for the CGH kitchen to serve. After Ramadan and the fast, this individual brought 50kg bags of split peas, lentils and beans, which allowed the Feeding scheme to run during the period of my fieldwork. The kitchen used to receive resources from an individual from the Woodstock Upliftment NPO, who would bring veggies from the supermarket, with which the kitchen would make soup. On another occasion, Boeta Nazeem received R500 from the Madrassa, with which he bought onions, potatoes and rice for one Friday meal, but he had to buy the chicken necks with his own money.

The kitchen does not only cook for the Friday Feeding scheme. They also host events for the 'friends of Cissie Gool', a network of allied researchers, NGOs, social movements and neighbourhood associations who sometimes host events at CGH and serve cooked meals.

> *"Like Suraya, and a few others as well. If they ask me to cook gladly I'll cook, they would buy everything, I don't ask for [contribution for] my time." (Boeta Nazeem, 2023)*

In cases when donations are not directly handed to Boeta Nazeem from close networks, one of the House Leaders is responsible for filtering donations through to the kitchen.

Roles and Responsibilities

Before I was familiar with the Kitchen, I had imagined a fast-paced, hustle-bustle environment, where everyone is designated one job, and the chopped vegetables and cleaned meat travelled down some sort of Reclaim the City Assembly Line, into the pot, and then into the bakkies and bellies of delighted children. In reality, the kitchen is much more quiet, slow, intimate and care-filled.

Boeta Nazeem sends out a message in the morning on the CGH WhatsApp groups informing everyone that they will be cooking a meal for the afternoon, and asking for residents to come and help cook if they are available. The kitchen is usually quiet, unless residents trickle in to assist, converse, or to ask when the food will be ready. People show up sporadically, and usually not for long. One member of the core team has had personal commitments of their own which has made them less available for the kitchen. Ismael will be in and out throughout the day, sometimes cleaning the kitchen himself after Feeding schemes or events to reduce the labour placed on Boeta Nazeem. I noticed one resident, who is also a Monitor and who assists in various capacities across the occupation, who would collect elderly resident's bakkies and dish their food for them, and bring their food to their rooms on their behalf so that they don't have to walk far distances.

Boeta Nazeem handles much of the heavy lifting in the kitchen - knowing the ins and outs of where large buckets are to soak split peas in water, and how to unload these split peas into smaller buckets to transport to the pot in smaller batches. Aunty Nadeema handles the finer details, like the chopping of the onions, or cleaning the chicken fat, and does so while talking to Boeta Nazeem or myself. She brings warmth into the kitchen through skinner[20] about other people in the occupation, or stories about her family, and makes us coffee and offers us biscuits.

[20] Afrikaans word for 'gossip'

After the preparation is complete and the dishes have been washed, all that is left is for the pot to simmer. The kitchen becomes quiet, and begins to smell like spices. Boeta Nazeem sits and diligently watches the pot. I would usually visit the garden while the pot simmered, or hang around and get into conversation until it was time to dish up and serve the food.

Dishing up was my favourite part. Boeta Nazeem would release a message on the WhatsApp groups that the food was ready, and people would begin to trickle in with their bakkies. Sometimes, kids would fight in excitement to see the pot. Boeta Nazeem and Aunty Nadeema used two large shopping trolleys to block the exit/entry to the kitchen, and the kids knew that they should line up behind these trolleys. As a barrier, the trolleys prevented the kids from walking to the pot and potentially burning themselves, though they often pushed to the front anyways, making the trolleys obsolete but to slow the kids down. Other times, kids would trickle in slowly. One with her sibling; each having been put in charge of a bakkie - and taking the role very seriously. Another would trickle in with their parent, another carrying 2 bakkies all on their own - we always warned them to walk carefully. Boeta Nazeem, Aunty Nadeema and I would dance between the rice pot and the soup pot to dish up - we didn't stick to clear roles here - as smiles, greetings and thanks were offered.

4.1.2. Garden

Arrival

The first time that I was invited to volunteer in the garden, I arrived around 12pm after spending time in the kitchen for most of the morning. I had confirmed with the Kitchen Team that I would be volunteering that day before Kim informed me that I could also join the gardening on the same day. Melissa (the garden co-ordinator) had been waiting for me at the garden since 10am, and was visibly annoyed that I was late. We did not have each other's contacts yet, as she preferred to communicate with me through Kim at this point in our relationship. Not knowing that she had been waiting for me in the garden, I felt tied to the kitchen as this is what I had committed to first. *"Gardening needs to be done early in the morning,"* she would explain to me, because once

the sun rises, it's usually too hot to continue working, and then the plants need time to be in the sun without our interference.

Nevertheless, Melissa decided we would do what we could with the time we had left. She showed me around, introduced me to the space, and we planted beans in one of the soil beds which had recently been mixed. I learned to stick my fingers into the soil, pop seeds in the holes, and cover them up. She taught me to space out the seeds, so that they would have room to root and grow.

We made plans to garden every Saturday from 9am going forward. I later learned that Faldilah, one of the resident volunteers, tended to the garden during the week on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays while Melissa was at work, and on Saturdays Melissa did much of the big picture stuff involving planting and designing the space.

Use of space

The entire outside, untarred section of the occupation plot falls part of the garden, though different sections of the space perform different functions.

> *"So, the [garden by the] kitchen, it's nearby for … them to use stuff. So its your exit and your in. So we were planting more stuff that they were using like on a everyday basis… like herbs… And here [by the pool] it was more for the creation at the back for the compost. Because it's a open space. On that side [where we spent most of our time gardening] is [for] the grey water… But there was a garden, to feed the kitchen, because there was water nearby also in areas by the kitchen. And it was also liveable - the garden was like for, when we having this, what we having now. Like a braai, but you can also enjoy the space. Cause it's a garden and the area, the way it looks, if you clean it, it will be nice because then you can use it. (Melissa, 2023)*

Melissa explains how the garden attached to the kitchen, on the corner of Mountain Rd and Earl St, was designed to grow everyday, usable plants to service the kitchen feeding scheme, made possible by its close connection to a water point. The idea was for the kitchen staff to quickly pop out and grab some thyme or rosemary from the garden to add to the pot. With the hall being

next to the kitchen, a space used for gatherings of all kinds, and an outdoor stoep[21] overlooking the garden, this section was also intended for recreational use and social events.

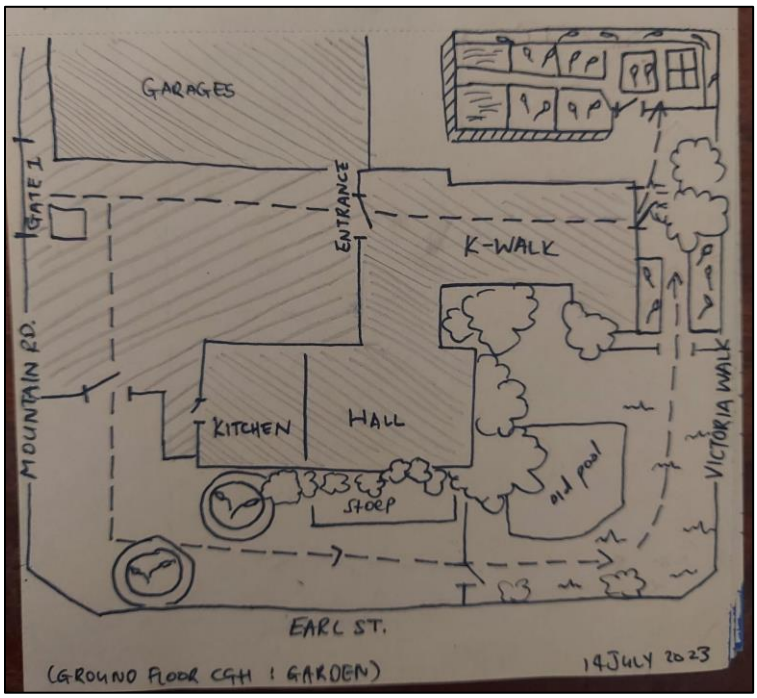
I attended a gardening day at CGH one year before enrolling in my Masters, where we 'revamped' this section of the garden, colourfully painting large, old tires which would be planted with flowers. Here, I learned that this section - because of its visibility to neighbours and people coming up from the Main Road - also serves to welcome the outside to the CGH community, further justifying the need for it to look 'pretty' and 'well maintained.'

The section of the garden near the old pool, on the other hand, is designed for composting - a less than pleasant activity, though crucial to feed the garden with nutrients. Closed off by a wall to public view, this section of the garden has been overgrown with grass for most of the year, and the pool has been filled with heaps of soil and branches and old stuff. Kids have warned me of rumours of snakes settling in this section of the garden.

I spent hardly any time in these two sections during my fieldwork. Around 2019, the late Boeta Nabil, an elderly resident in the occupation, cleared up the section adjacent to Victoria Walk for the extension of the garden. This section had been barren, covered in concrete, grass and a thin layer of beach-like sand, before Boeta Nabil decided that it could be used for planting if properly designed and maintained. This section has since been re-named in Boeta Nabil's namesake, in remembrance of his commitment to the garden. This is where I spent most of my time gardening with Melissa, Faldilah and a few other residents or external volunteers throughout my fieldwork. This section is now covered in neatly aligned, parallel soil beds, populated by plants for aesthetic, medicinal, nutritional and ecological purposes; including lettuce, tomatoes, potatoes, spinach, onions, wild garlic, beans, carrots, chillies, cherries, celery, mint, a banana tree, a lemon tree, an apple tree, and lilies.

[21] Afrikaans word for a 'veranda' or 'patio'

Figure 5 Sketch of the Cissie Gool House outside garden space and ground floor, drawn by the researcher, 2023



The full garden space is not only strategically used to service the many functions of a garden, nor is gardening only about planting and growing. The garden is also about design. Melissa 'creates' and 'shifts' space inside the garden; extending, connecting or changing the shape of soil beds. We were often put to the task of creating borders for soil beds. This involved digging a small trench around the perimeter of the soil beds, placing wooden planks within these trenches, and filling soil around the plank to stabilise it. When extending a soil bed in size, this also involved adding compost, and then digging and mixing the soil; ensuring the bed is evenly fed with nutrients, and then bordering the bed with planks. This exercise demarcated one bed for a specific purpose, created footpaths and working paths between beds, and beautified and neatened the garden; aesthetically speaking.

Figure 6 Before (top) and after (bottom) pictures of Boeta Nabil's garden, 2023

Designing the garden involves a lot of planning and thinking about where to situate the beds, or how large to make the beds so that there was still space for us to crouch down and reach the full bed comfortably with the body and the hands to tend to the plants. In the context of a self-managed building occupation, it was also a challenge to source enough materials to border the beds, like wooden planks or plastic bottles.

Resources, Decision Making and Participation

Materials were always being repurposed for new uses inside the garden. The wooden planks used to demarcate the soil beds were collected from old refurbishing projects inside the occupation. I once witnessed two residents take empty soil sacks and unfurl the material into long, flimsy strips. These were then used to tie the stems of tomato plants to a wooden plank stuck in the soil, in order to guide the plants upwards and stabilise them.

I was also once put to work labelling the vegetable beds which had just been planted with seeds. One of the residents went to fetch a koki[22] from her room, bringing one from her daughter's school stationary. I was handed recycled plastic milk bottles, and told to cut small rectangles out of the recycled bottles, and use the koki to write the names of the veggies on here. These would be the labels. I was told to choose some decently sized wooden planks (about the size of a hand) from a pile of differently sized wooden pieces that had been lying on the floor, and hammer the labels into nails which were already protruding from these wooden pieces, from previous uses.

Melissa had even developed a use for the weeds. After weeding the beds, we would make piles of broken up weeds. These we would either sprinkle over the soil beds with some broken up Comfrey leaves which had been drying in the sun, or dunk them in a bucket of water to soak for a week or two, and then use this weed water to water the plants at a later stage. This provided much needed nutrients and fertiliser for the soil.

The Garden team is represented by Leadership and an Administrator when decisions are made about resources. The Garden team will inform leadership about needed resources, and leadership will try to allocate funds or material on their behalf. This is not an easy system. There are often no funds available, leaving the team to make do with what they have; repurposing materials for new uses.

> *"And when we speak, we speak to the one, she is like the admin. She is taking what we need for the garden, by telling them, 'This is what the garden need, so please can you review some funds for the people to buy the stuff they still need for the garden.' And every time it was said there isn't funds… There isn't funds available." (Faldilah, 2023)*

Melissa explains how this system of representation and resource allocation can cause frustration - misrepresenting the labour, and disrupting the flow of the labour.

[22] Colloquial South African word for 'marker.'

"In a garden, you don't need politics… The circulation of what's happening here, what I've realised, I can't let you go and speak for me there, and I'm working. Because you not gonna represent me as I'm gonna represent my face. Through my experience. What I go through, and what I'm gonna say, you gonna hear another thing. But if you gonna talk for me, it's a totally different story. Because you just gonna say, 'I'm working, I'm there,' but if I'm gonna speak, I'm gonna speak from my heart, because I'm in there and I make myself messy. And there's days that - like you were seeing, the bricks; women! And at some point, in the garden, there's things that need attention, of hard work. It needs hammers, it's not only planting. A garden also flows with the everyday. You must wait for the vegetables to come out, and while that's waiting you need to do another thing. Because that waiting now means it needs something to uproot them. So it's a lot of things for women. And there's no men ..." (Melissa, 2023)

The struggle of misrepresentation is also a gendered struggle. In the above quote, Melissa explains that if she were representing herself in meetings about resources, then leadership or monitors may develop a more accurate understanding of the context behind requests for funds or more participation. The garden labour can be strenuous, and, physically speaking, more difficult for the average woman than it would be for the average man. Melissa refers to a time when we carried eco bricks from the pool section of the garden to Boeta Nabil's section. Two women to one brick, the bricks digging into our palms, taking a break in between, sweating and laughing; Melissa cursing the lack of men willing to assist.

The sentiment from the gardening team was that men were needed in the garden to perform some of those more strenuous tasks, like moving the eco bricks and some of the heavy lifting and digging, as an act of appreciation for the garden, the gardening labour, and as an acknowledgement that only two women operate the garden consistently. Nevertheless, the core gardening team only consists of two women, requesting the assistance from men in the MTT when needed to fix broken garden resources, or to perform tasks that may be dangerous.

Resident participation in gardening has slowed down over time. During the permaculture course in 2018, and when residents were getting paid through a facebook 'Zlatos' system in 2019, there was more involvement. People drop out because they cannot afford to work for free, only

participating when they are offered a stipend for their labour. The majority of the time, it is Melissa and Faldilah working in the garden, for free. While they understand that people opt out from participating because they do not want to work for free, and would themselves prefer to get paid for their own gardening labour, the lack of participation nevertheless complicates the process because the labour is left in the hands of two women with limited resources.

There were often disputes about materials being missing or broken, or arguments over communal versus private ownership of some of the garden materials. A Gardening Whatsapp Group chat has functioned as a space for conflict resolution, knowledge sharing, decision-making, and support. The team is able to share to-do lists of tasks that need to be completed throughout the week, request people to join the gardening on specific days, or air grievances about misplaced or broken materials. External networks are also on the group, who chime in when there are disputes or decisions being made, and are often called on by the garden team to assist in solving disputes, as they are familiar with the struggles of lack of participation and resources.

> *"So, me and Melissa would like to have a meeting with the people that bought the stuff for the garden. So they can say, personally, what belongs to the garden, and what doesn't. Because we fixed the pipe, Melissa told me the pipe is broken again… And then I thought okay, after this with the hose pipe thingy, I put it plain jane inside the group chat. And still, nobody came forward to say anything about we need to have a meeting." (Faldilah, 2023)*

Roles and Responsibilities

Melissa and Faldilah are the two residents who were the most active in the garden during my period of fieldwork, and with whom I spent most of my time gardening. While Melissa has been gardening since 2019, Faldilah began in 2023, after making a commitment to Boeta Nabil that she would keep his garden alive after his passing.

Everyone reverts to Melissa's instruction on anything garden-related. She takes charge, and is determined, efficient and motivated. Her vision for the garden includes the whole occupation - she plants lots of spinach because 'spinach is a hit'. She plants lots of onions because 'onions can

go all year round, and it's something you always need'. She is frustrated when people harvest before it is time because it destroys opportunity for the whole occupation. When you make a mistake, she teaches you why what you did was wrong. I made the big mistake of splitting a soil bed horizontally instead of vertically, which made it difficult for the body and hands to reach certain areas of the bed to harvest or care for the plants. She was not happy about the mistake but informed me why it made things difficult, and we moved forward from there. She is open to questions and suggestions, and delegates tasks well using peoples varied skill sets to execute the vision.

One Saturday, Melissa had asked the youth committee to rally some people together to help out in the garden. She was disappointed when about five young boys, and two teenage girls, arrived - you have to watch young kids and make sure they are not messing stuff up, which means more work for Melissa. I brought my partner[23] to the garden on this day, knowing that Melissa would appreciate the extra help from a male. She decided it was the perfect time for us to create a fence out of meshed material, logs, and something to tie the mesh to the logs. The fence was intended to be a temporary measure, until they could secure resources for a more durable fence, to prevent residents from entering the garden to harvest vegetables prematurely.

She sent one of the teenage girls to fetch cable ties or rope to tie the mesh to the logs. She also sent the young boys on what seemed like an activity to keep them busy, even though it would be necessary at a later stage - the boys were to fetch 2L plastic bottles from the communal box where residents dump their old plastic bottles, and fill the bottles up with water, seal them, and bring them to the garden. Cats will avoid areas bordered by plastic bottles filled with water, as it reflects into and irritates their eyes; mitigating the challenge of cats digging through the soil and

[23] Henceforth I use the pseudonym 'Aaron'

disturbing the produce. She had them set the filled and sealed bottles aside for now, for her to create the border at a later stage, before they went on to play soccer next to the garden.

Melissa put Aaron to the task of digging holes around the perimeter of the garden, inserting the logs inside these holes, and stabilising the logs by adding soil, compressing the soil, adding more soil, and compressing some more. She had one of the teenage girls and I cut up the mesh into usable rectangles, as Aaron was securing each pole.

When the other teenage girl returned with rope, she stood to the side and danced to videos on her phone until Melissa instructed her to help me tie the mesh to the logs using the rope. She then obeyed, showed respect and performed the task; even seeming semi-interested, if likely thinking of doing better things. When we realised that the mesh was not long enough, Melissa was delighted when Aaron had the idea of piling up some heavy sand-bags into the open corner, to fill up the space in between the fence and the wall. As much as the labour involved thinking and planning, there was also a fair amount of improvisation.

For the majority of my fieldwork, the garden's hose pipe had a leak, until the pipe eventually broke. Faldilah demonstrates the disruption that this caused to the labour she was expected to perform throughout the week, and how she requested the help of Quintin from the MTT to fix the pipe.

> *"It's me and Melissa who went to go beg Quintin, I actually went to go fetch him to fix the pipe. I can't keep on running to the water, fill up the funnel, and run there and water the- you can't do that! How many times am I going to run up and down?" (Faldilah, 2023).*

On another occasion, Quintin from the MTT was called on as barbed wire had been falling down one of the garden's perimeter walls, making it dangerous to work in one of the soil beds without getting your clothes or hair stuck on this barbed wire. This also made it dangerous for kids to be in the garden. Melissa had the MTT and Aaron stabilise this wire atop the wall - which involved Quintin and one other gentleman from the MTT climbing up atop the wall, pulling the wire up and securing it with rope, as Aaron pushed the wire up from the ground using a gardening fork.

Melissa directed this task from the ground, as I watched hoping the wire would not poke Aaron's eyes out.

Figure 7 Gardeners, Maintenance Task Team and external volunteers fixing the barbed wire, 2023.

Networking and Knowledge Transfers

We often used Google, YouTube or gardening Facebook groups to help us understand how to perform certain tasks, or to help us remember the qualities of a plant. Outside knowledge is also passed on to the gardening team through networks with allies in gardening and activism. These individuals have introduced the Garden Team to other community gardens, and to gardening workshops, courses, learning or community building activities. Faldilah was able to learn the basics through a workshop organised by Bianca, one of the garden's most long-standing networks.

> *"I only started now, recently, in the garden, after Oupa passed away. So that is how I came about to working inside the garden. Also, knowing nothing about the garden. But then also learning. So my first workshop that I went to was in Plumstead. So that was more seeding - how they explain to you what type of seeds do you get, and how do you plant it…. So, Bianca will be organising*

workshops and stuff for us to go to to get more understanding about how the garden work." (Faldilah, 2023)

Networks and allies support the garden in a number of ways - through visiting and sharing knowledge, donating materials, suggesting other contacts, or bringing the team along to events and introducing them to other networks. This snowball effect of networking has also allowed the CGH garden to work hand-in-hand with other community gardens, assisting each other and co-labouring.

"I've been experienced with people in the garden, and who I've met, through Bianca, being to her house, meeting people through her. Through the workshops, they were also wanting to send us to permaculture course… We've been working there [at Oude Molen Garden], because we were putting wild garlic in pots and also putting seedlings in the greenhouse there. But there is people that's working there… It's a community, and even they were cutting the trees for us because we work hand-in-hand with them." (Melissa, 2023)

4.1.3. Maintenance

Arrival

I was nervous to meet with Quintin and join the maintenance work at the occupation. At our last tour and interview, he said there would be a men's meeting happening that evening, where they would discuss what needs to be done and what the way forward is. He also spoke about them doing some big projects after the long weekend (and it was now, after the long weekend). He teased (though I thought he was serious at the time) that I would need to wear gumboots and overalls if I wanted to participate in the maintenance work. I had ideas in my head about joining a big project, with lots of men on the job standing around, tools lying around everywhere, instructions being thrown around, and me - a young, skinny female researcher - standing to the side, clearly not fitting in.

Quintin was waiting for me by the gate. He has a green plastic packet (which is tied up, not sure what is inside) and a roll-up of something white in his hands that he is carrying (it looks like a thicker, longer toilet roll). A boy that I always see hanging around outside the occupation - he is nice and always greets me or makes jokes - opens the door for us. Quintin leaves me inside by the foyer while he goes upstairs to fetch Jason. I am standing, still, in the foyer, having placed my notebook next to where Quintin placed his packet and roll-up, on the countertop near the entrance. A woman walks down the stairs. She is carrying a laundry bag, and is heading outside. Is she going to the washing machines?

The Woodstock Hospital was built over a century ago. As Ismael remarks, *"the English knew what they were doing. All the equipment they used for this place is long-lasting."* Pipes, walls, ceilings, roofs - the structure and infrastructure of the building are only beginning to deteriorate now.

> *"And why it starts now, because it [the building] wasn't designed for the basic service of this many people. So it's not for households, it wasn't designed for-... So now there's more currency on electrical. So there's more pressure on the water pipes. Because people use washing machines, whatever, whatever. And pipes is old, they perish, and we can expect that." (Quintin, 2023)*

Quintin and Jason, a younger member of the MTT, come downstairs. I am relieved that no one is wearing overalls or gumboots. We exit the building and enter again through the side door. We walk through darkness, wet floors, up stairs, around corners. Quintin and Jason speak Afrikaans to one another along the way. I understand what they say intermittently - Jason is going to fetch a ladder in a lady's room, and Quintin wants me to stay with Jason as he goes to fetch a light and a chord.

I am standing at the end of a passage, next to a stairwell. I place my notebook on a windowsill. Jason comes from one of the nearby rooms with a folded ladder and places it on the floor. Someone comes up the stairs - a young man, looking to be around Jason's age, early thirties or so. Like it was expected of him but without being instructed, the man helps Jason unfold the ladder - clicking some mechanism on the legs, then unfolding the legs. He greets me in the process. He must have asked Jason who this girl is, because Jason replies *"our photographer"* and

smiles and winks at me, jokingly. The man leaves down the passageway after the ladder is unfolded and set upright.

We will be entering the ceiling above someone's room to repair a small breakage in the roof tiles, causing a leak through the ceiling. Water enters these openings, and leaks inside, causing leaks in people's rooms. The leak has been so bad that the ceiling has caved in, falling through into someone's room, leaving a hole in their ceiling. A chord must go through this hole, to inside the ceiling where we will be sitting and doing repairs. Quintin asks permission from the resident in that room, and informs them we are about to begin repairs in the ceiling above them, while Jason has been setting up the ladder. The chord enables us to plug in a light that will allow us to see what we are doing while we work in the ceiling - it is dark up there.

Quintin goes up the ladder. I go up, and Quintin helps me stabilise myself as I enter the ceiling. Jason comes up.

It smells like bird shit in here. On every surface and beam there is a thick layer of it, hardened. Trestles will hit your head if you don't look up while walking. You will fall through the ceiling if you don't look down while walking. You will go nowhere if you are not holding a torch while walking, or unless Quintin has set up the light.

We are waterproofing a breakage in the roof tiles. I learn that the white roll-up that Quintin was carrying is cotton. Quintin hands the roll-up to me. I am cutting rectangles, handing them to Quintin and Jason, and they are placing the cotton on the breakages in the roof tiles. They are using a brown 'paint' formula that hardens as it dries and sticks the cotton to the tiles, turning black as it dries. It is quiet as we work. Birds coo. There are some bird eggs next to me, as I cut cotton rectangles. Quintin does what I think is improvising - he tears a piece of plastic and crumbles it into a ball, inserts it into the small holes in the roof tiles, where the cotton will not fit, and then secures it with cotton and paint formula on top. Jason bends his body and neck in awkward angles in order to see if all the small holes have been patched up.

Quintin is teaching younger men, like Jason, what the labour entails and how it is performed. He has men stationed at other sections of the occupation doing other everyday repairs today.

After me listening for a long while to stuff about the reason the roof is broken and how the hooks work with the tiles, Quintin laughed, *"Why are you interested in this messy stuff?"* I told him a bit about my interest in the kitchen, garden and security and safety labour, and how his work in maintenance fits in, and Quintin remarked that I should write a book about CGH.

We delivered the ladder back to the lady's room where we took it, and we made our way to Quintin's room. The three of us walked down stairs, around corners. Quintin and Jason drop off the light and the chord in Quintin's room, and Quintin fetches a cloth and two bottles: both vinegar bottles, one with translucent liquid, and one with bright purple liquid. We walked outside where they began using the liquid and cloth to clean the 'paint' substance off of their hands, which had hardened and turned black.

Figure 8 Ladder set up to enter the ceiling (left), and the darkness in the ceiling (right), 2023

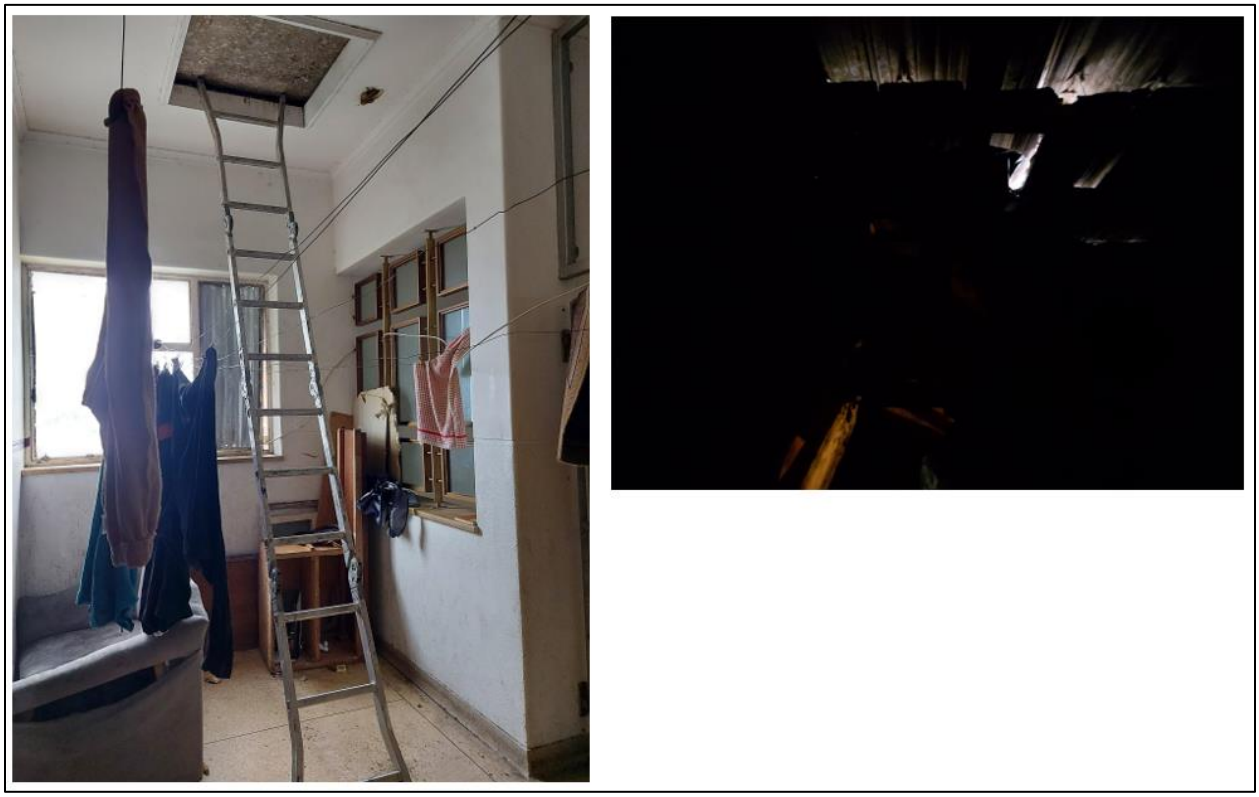


Figure 9 Members of the maintenance task team repairing a break in the ceiling after the light has been set up, 2023

Priorities: everyday vs long-term

The MTT differentiates between everyday repairs and longer-term repairs, which are usually bigger projects.

> *"But what we do, our first priority is to see where people stay, that it's workable. Like, the plumbing, toilets, water and things like that. Sewage, whatever, and the electric. That is the importance that comes first on a daily basis." (Quintin, 2023)*

Everyday repairs include repairing leaks in the roof, or attaching gates to the doors that separate the sections or repairing someone's electricity connection to their rooms. These are usually repairs which affect one family's room, or quick jobs that do not need more than two or three men. Longer-term, big projects usually affect whole sections in the occupation, requiring a team of men, and this labour is often planned in men's meetings, where the MTT will come together to discuss and plan future projects, how to structure the labour, and what will be needed to

finance and resource the projects. Big projects include repairing damages from the 2022 fire, or fixing sewage pipes which have broken.

During my fieldwork, I once spent a Friday in the kitchen and the following Saturday in the garden. The MTT began the two-day job of repairing a pipe that sent water to the whole occupation on the Friday, affecting water availability and quality for the two-day period. We could not wash the chicken fat off of our hands on Friday, nor could we clean the dishes. On Saturday, I went home with dirt in the folds of the skin on my hands. Quintin later explained this was part of efforts to 'modernise' the building - old pipes are being replaced, and fixed on the outside of walls; as opposed to inside the cavities, so that they are in open view to the eye and easy to work with going forward.

Figure 10 One of the gates that was recently installed to the section doors (left) and the blue pipe recently installed as part of modernising projects (right), 2023

There are also repair projects which require rapid responses. The fire that broke out in early 2022 collapsed the ceiling and the trestles in one section of the occupation. After the SSTT completed their task of evacuating residents from the building, the MTT and other willing residents were able to contain the fire to one section, not allowing it to spread. Without fire extinguishers in the building, this was challenging, time-pressuring labour, involving the rapid response from the MTT and other willing residents.

"We respond immediately. First, we make sure that all the families that is on that premises or on that site, out… So Security and Safety task team is responsible for fire exits, extra doors on sections, and if something happens, the quickest way to take them out. Then we come in as the Maintenance task team and some residents also want to help to just reduce. Because, as you could see, we keep it there. We keep the fire- [contained]... It's heavy. Because, first what they do is there's plastics in the tiles, in the cavities, and by the roofs; there's plastics. So when it [the fire] touch that [the plastics] it can make a whole- [he imitates an explosion with his hands]. So what we first do is we climb in there, we cut it [the plastics], we cut it with grinders. We cut all that, that the fire can't have too much- [access]... But it's not easy. You must play quick." (Quintin, 2023)

One year later, the fire damage remains. The roof, ceiling and trestles caved in and collapsed. When you stand inside the building in this section, you look up to see the sky. When it rains here, it floods the floors.

Figure 11 Fire damages to the ceiling and trestles in one section of the occupation, 2023

Resources

The resources for the MTT come from the monthly contribution that is paid by each household in the occupation. As Quintin explains below, these funds are placed in a third-party RTC bank account. Funds are drawn for repairs of the building as interest is gained. Money from this third-party account is only used for repairs to non-private spaces; where the issue is outside of someone's private room. Where residents may want to make renovations inside their private rooms, this labour comes at their own cost, but is gladly performed by the MTT.

> *"The resources, the capital, okay. What we do, we put something as a system in place. What we do is, on a monthly base, we ask a contribution - a R50, R100, whatever they can afford. So, what we do with that money, we put it in a account in the bank so when that money starts to gain interest, we take the interest, we take it out, and buy our resources and whatever is needed… So what we basically do, we say to you, this is your space inside. If anything happens, you must pay for that. But outside, communal spaces whatever, we will fix it for you. Like your roof, whatever whatever, we will fix it for you. If we see that it's not a shortage, electric shortage that comes from your room, but it's by the DB Box, there's a circuit breaker that give in, whatever whatever, that is our baby. That is how we put in that structure in place. Plumbing, the same. Some people want to make it comfortable for them, put a toilet in if they have space in the place. They put showers in for them. Okay, that's their baby. They pay for it, we do it. You understand? But outside, communal spaces, you see here by K-Walk they got those bathes inside in the toilets, there's a bath. If something happen there, we are responsible to fix that. So that is how we structure our living space inside here." (Quintin, 2023)*

Aside from this system, Quintin and Ismael have made reference to a kind of capacity to innovate that exists among the residents at CGH, and that has helped them to find resources for the maintenance labour. For example, some members of the MTT have gone to the local shops to ask for their left-over paint, or other smaller materials, and collected them as donations or for much lower prices. These kinds of ideas are also decided on at men's meetings.

> *"So as the men come together we will formulate a plan to say - we go to the factories, if they have second hand this, second hand that. We will see how it goes." (Quintin, 2023)*

4.1.4. Security and safety

Temporal shifts: the influence of the Management Agency security guards

The SSTT used to patrol the perimeter of the occupation at night, and every Friday they would monitor the 'crime hotspots' inside the occupation. These are sections in the building where unsolicited behaviour is common. When MA was placed on-site, however, patrolling stopped, as it was understood that MA would take over that responsibility.

> *"Kim always brings it up, that we have to patrol again like we used to. So we used to have Fridays, every Friday - it was supposed to be Friday - that we will go around to hotspots and sort out problems and so on. But I don't see so far anything going on there." (Ismael, 2023)*

Since patrolling was halted, the SSTT have had to be in communication with the MA on security and safety-related matters. At first the MA security were just placed at the gates - requiring residents to present an 'access book' upon entry, and external visitors to be signed in by a resident - but the SSTT asked them to patrol inside sometimes as well. This is to monitor hotspot areas and maintain a sense of order not only at the gates, but also inside the building.

> *"We asked them, we had a meeting with them, where we asked them, 'Look here, seeing that yous are 30 [security guards], okay yous are by all the gates, you can handle all the gates, but isn't there maybe of yous that can just walk around? In the sections, you know, to be visible?' Okay they do it… You know what we used to do, the time when we used to operate at night and patrol and so, then we used to go help that side, you know? You got to the small hotspots, you sort it out there, 'Ons hoor daars 'n problem ne. Moenie lat ons weer kom nie.'[24] You know? Things like that." (Ismael, 2023)*

There have been multiple iterations of security agencies on-site over the years, stationed at the entrances to the occupation to monitor access. External agencies were not always equipped to

[24] Afrikaans for 'We heard there's been a problem here hey. Don't make us come again.'

handle the everyday security of the occupation, however, often calling on the resident-led SSTT to handle difficult situations. As they are more respected and feared by the community, it is more likely that trouble-makers will listen to the SSTT, as opposed to the security agencies that have been on-site over the years.

Now, the MA security have man-power and direct links to the City. Below, Ismael explains how the presence of the MA security has reduced unsolicited behaviour in the occupation. He relates this to residents' fear for the City and a fear for the 'pending eviction;' a fear which has been projected onto the MA security because of their direct links to the City through the tender. There is a general understanding among CGH residents that the MA are taking note of resident behaviour in order to present as evidence in court, which itself is a factor contributing to fear, and to an increased sense of order and behaviour policing.

> *"There's been so many securities and the same things come up… They are like, in the beginning they are like on the ball, but it fades. It fades. The MA too. The securities before that have had a lot of problems with people coming in. You know, they [residents are] drunk, they [security] don't know how to handle it. … Now we come in there - so we sort that out. But now this securities [the MA security] they got man-power. So people know they got man-power, they not gonna try actually. Cause, they just say [Ismael mimicks someone talking on a walky-talky] 'Hey, uh dingas and dingas is a problem' and they write it down. Now there's another black dot to our name. And they bring all this nonsense up in that court. All these things will end up in court." (Ismael, 2023)*

Roles and Responsibilities

Despite the MA catalysing a change in the SSTTs patrolling, there remains a different kind of labour being performed by the SSTT. Being someone that residents generally like and respect, Ismael uses this to his advantage by employing a subtle form of behaviour policing.

"We had a problem by [someone's room], the wires was taken out. I round up all the people, so here's the people. They skrik[25]. That's something I can do man, cause they listen to me. You know how big respect they got, but they haven't got respect for the next person, leader. They got respect for me cause if I tell them something they'll understand. This lightie came with a scooter here riding up. I said, 'Nai man, this is mos not the place for that.' He walked out here with the scooter in his hand." (Ismael, 2023)

Ismael is a slightly intimidating, and quite a dominant, character. Even I was a bit intimidated to have my first one-on-one interview with him. Characters like Ismael - who people like, respect, and fear - are crucial to maintaining order inside the occupation. Even in Ismael's section, K-Walk, which is also where many of the other strict Monitors and Leadership reside, is considered more orderly than other sections. Boeta Nazeem, Aunty Nadeema, Ismael, Melissa and Faldilah have on separate occasions spoken to me about how much more orderly it is in K-Walk than other sections - not only because rules are more strictly enforced here, but also because there are not many kids or teens residing here.

"We have banned people from coming into this section [K Walk]. We've got a list here. But that is our side, what about the other side?" (Ismael, 2023)

"I'm proud to say, this section where I'm staying in, we don't have any problems in this section. Also we don't have a lot of teens. Children going through that stage in their life." (Aunty Nadeema, 2023)

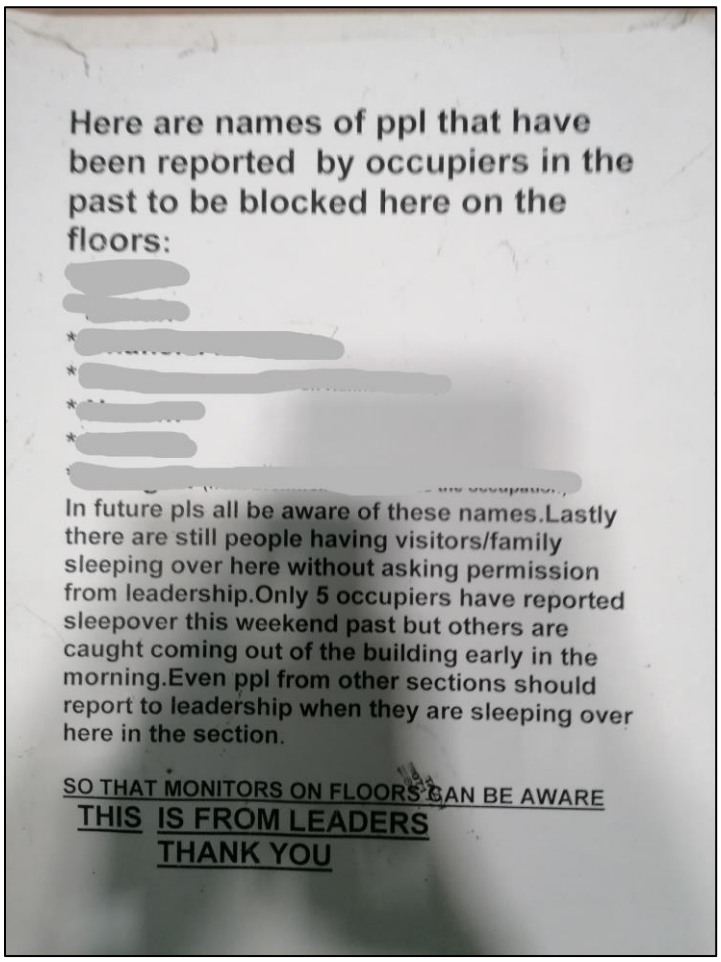
When I asked if people who are caught with drugs in police raids are ever kicked out of the occupation, Faldilah and Melissa responded,

"Only so far at K-Walk." (Faldilah, 2023)

[25] Afrikaand for 'get a fright'

"Here by K-Walk yes. But, you see, it's also a movement. But why is there two different balances?" (Melissa, 2023)

Figure 12 List of people banned from coming into K-Walk section of the occupation (names redacted by the researcher), 2023



The kids have become a notable challenge as they have increased in number, and also grown up, many entering their 'teenage rebellion' phases. For one, setting and monitoring the kid's 7pm curfew to be indoors and in their units has been an ongoing endeavour to mitigate the safety risk of being outside in the dark. As a result of living collectively in small, often overcrowded rooms, however, kids often ignore curfew. The SSTT and other adults who happen to see kids running around outside of curfew are often organically responsible for enforcing curfew.

Moreover, many of the drug-users inside the occupation are kids and teens, which was surprising for me to learn. The SSTT are making efforts to keep the children busy so they do not participate in drugs or other unsolicited behaviour. There was a hike 3 years ago which the kids enjoyed a lot; and have been asking for more. Ismael wants to organise more activities like this - taking the kids to beaches, parks, public spaces. Ismael often remarks, *"What if these lighties didn't see a beach yet?"* The evening before I had this conversation with Ismael, there was an activity for the kids, for which Boeta Nazeem cooked boerewors rolls. The following day there was a netball and soccer tournament planned for the kids.

The netball and soccer tournament was intended to keep the kids out of unsolicited activities. Organising these kinds of events for the kids and teens takes up much of the SSTTs role since the MA have taken over patrols and stations at the gates.

As I arrive to the field opposite CGH, where the tournament is planned, people stand around; clearly thinking, talking, deciding. Kids, parents and spectators have just arrived and were looking for the soccer and netball poles. Women (mothers?) shout from the CGH balconies to the field at the kids, in instruction.

Teenage-looking boys are carrying soccer goal posts onto the field. Girls, looking perhaps 6 or 7 years old, are bouncing balls walking towards the netball court. The net of the soccer goal posts is broken, flapping in the wind. The girls walk single file, wearing red RTC t-shirts, carrying a white metal pole parallel to the ground so that their arms wrap fully around the pole. They are too small to be carrying that pole, but they are doing it.

> *"This kids, they smoke dagga. They catch [on] all this shit. And they won all their trophies [at the tournament]. All the games they won. The girls won all their games. And this is people that plays tournaments every week [their opponents]. We won the thing. That's what I'm talking about, go out with these kids man. Give them a time. They need that. Now there's nobody worrying. Now they catch shit on, they smoke dagga, or whatever. Because there is no adult among them to show them." (Ismael, 2023)*

I once spent some time in the garden painting on bins which had been planted with trees - I was painting the names of the trees on the bins, to label them. There was a boy hanging around in the garden who was keen to help me. I think Melissa had gathered some youth to help out one school holiday morning, and, while all the other kids had slowly abandoned the scene by afternoon, this boy was still hanging around. His eyes lit up when I mentioned paint, and I asked him if he wanted to help me. Though he neither nodded nor said yes, he followed me around until I stationed myself at one bin and began to paint. I handed him a brush, and told him we would be painting the words 'Aloe Tree.' He showed incredible interest, not only in painting, but also in spelling the names of the trees; excited when he learned how to spell 'Rosemary.' After about 30 minutes painting together, one of the adults told me how surprised they were that I held his attention for so long as he would usually be quite naughty, one of the naughtiest boys in the occupation, *"but if you engage with them on their level, they won't want to be naughty."*

Building on the momentum of the successful soccer and netball tournament, and with a clear need to engage the kids in kid-friendly activities, there are plans to organise events like these more frequently.

> *"Quintin said he's gonna have a meeting with Blackool. For a sponsorship, like boots, tops, jerseys and that. I have to find out by them when." (Ismael, 2023)*

External Networks and Resources

Hosting and organising events for the kids necessitates resources - money for food, transport, gear. The SSTT will be offered, or will request, sponsorships or donations from external networks to resource these kinds of events.

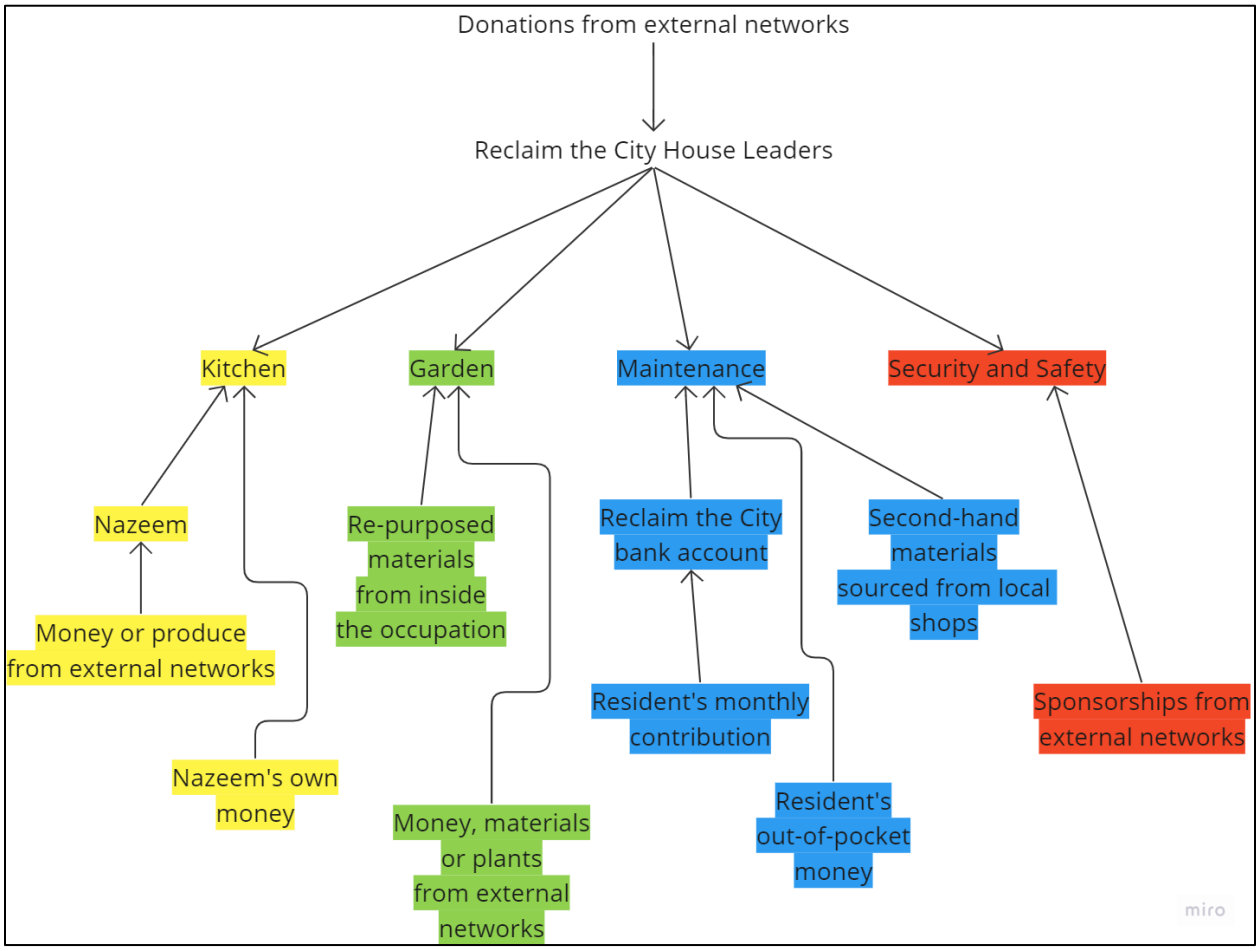
> *"3 years back we had a hike. R3 000, we had a sponsor actually from Cape Union Mart. We bought R100 koesisters, each one a drink and orange and so. Joh, they enjoyed themselves. They even came to ask, 'When is this gonna happen again?' We went up this mountain, down the other side. Came around. They had a ball of a time. There's ponds as you go around, they wanted to go dive in the ponds. I say there's frogs, they didn't worry about the frogs. But they enjoyed themselves!*

> *That is what these lighties need. They are not that bad. But if they not gonna get attention then they gonna become bad people… We have a karate club here [down the road]. It's actually a boxing club. They also approached us, where after the fast, we can send our kids down. It's gonna be for free: gym, swimming, self-defence, boxing, whatever. So at least there's a program for them." (Ismael, 2023)*

This section has discussed what the collective labour entails in practice, the spaces in which the collective labour is performed, and how the collective labour functions through strategies that are improvised and planned at the resident-scale. Rather than operating according to predictable and stable shifts over time, the collective labour is contingent upon the availability of (monetary and material) resources and the capacities of residents to volunteer to participate. I have also outlined the flow of resources to each team, which is visualised in Figure 13 below. The collective labour has been influenced by the presence of the Building MA on-site, particularly for the SSTT for whom patrolling the premises has stopped, leading to a more organic form of behaviour policing. External networks are greatly relied on within these spaces, not only for donations, but for the transfer of knowledge, and for sharing opportunities for self- and community-development; such as the gardening workshops and the kids karate club.

I have also introduced some of the ongoing challenges which have hindered the potential contribution of the labour to the occupation, such as resident participation, and the top-down nature of decision-making and resource flows. In the following two sections, I discuss the contribution that the collective labour is making to the occupation, first at the everyday-scale (in section 4.2.) and then at the political-scale (in section 4.3.).

Figure 13 Diagram of the flow of resources to each team, collated by the researcher, 2023



4.2. Collective labour at the everyday scale

In this section I discuss how the collective labour at CGH responds to the resident's everyday lives. I first identify some of the most pressing challenges related to living at an occupation, and then discuss the strategies of collective labour that residents have developed – either organically or through planning – to respond to these challenges. I show how the occupation is sustained through mature strategies to (1) respond to crisis; including the risk of fire, (2) keep the community safe; including caring for and disciplining the kids and repairing and modernising the building, (3) de-criminalise the stigma on the occupation, including peer-to-peer behaviour policing, and (4) meet community needs, including generating income, food and self- and community-development opportunities.

4.2.1. Responding to crisis

The risk of fire

Although fires are a common risk of living in dense cities, residents who live informally and/or connect to infrastructure informally are differentially vulnerable to these risks. Those risks are unique when living in an abandoned building which was not designed to house this many people, or to house people at all. The event of a fire and the damages incurred, notwithstanding the risk of losing lives, also causes a health and safety hazard for residents who continue to live in the building after fire damage, as leaks and floods may become commonplace. The images below capture the long-term impact of flooding and leaks after the January 2022 fire at CGH. The residents at CGH have developed strategies of collective labour to respond to the risk of fire, demonstrating prevention strategies, a rapid response plan, a long-term strategy which is presently underway, and future planning strategies.

Figure 14 The long-term effects of fire damage: flooding hazard on a staircase (left) and a leakage (right), 2023

Prevention strategies: fire education

The MTT hold sessions to educate residents on the risk of fire in occupied buildings. These sessions include teachings on evacuation procedures and preventative measures, like proper care for gas stoves, and the risks of overloading electricity circuits.

> *"What we do, we try to let them also understand the seriousness of using gas and the seriousness of just overload your electric. That also can cause the fire… I did explain to her, and I did do all the safety measures. And… they did have a teaching about that, and how to use it." (Quintin, 2023)*

Rapid response: evacuation plan and emergency response

In the event of a fire, the SSTT are responsible for evacuating residents, which means they need to know the building's fire exits and the proper evacuation procedure. Once the residents have evacuated, the MTT are responsible for keeping the fire contained and minimising the damages.

> *"So, immediately when that fire [in 2022] broke out, immediately the Security and Safety task team do their work [evacuating people] out of the sections… And then we come in as the Maintenance task team and some residents also want to help to just reduce [the impact]." (Quintin, 2023)*

Future planning: men's meetings, fire extinguishers and new trestles

The men involved in the SSTT and the MTT often overlap. They meet in men's meetings to discuss various issues on safety, security and maintenance. Fire repairs have been an ongoing discussion since the fire in 2022. In men's meetings, they decide on immediate and longer-term priorities, so that they can then request from leadership the required amount from the monthly contribution fund, and they delegate tasks among themselves.

> *"So tonight, the men is also coming together. And we will have a discussion: way forward, how we going to assist and what is necessary to do… the future and how we going to create some better living spaces… So when there's a fire, you haven't got now at this present moment, fire [extinguishers] in the building. But that is also future planning, in pipeline." (Quintin, 2023)*

"You know the trestles… in the roof. Now, I suggest to Quintin that we can make trestles for that roof. We can fix it up again. It's gonna cost money. The parts that were fixed of that roof, it was done in the winter, so it wasn't fixed perfectly, so you have your leakage and that rain comes down the stairs. If we put our mind together, we can fix that place. We don't need to go buy trestles. It's gonna cost you money. But if you buy the beams, we make our own trestles. But that's also another story actually… That's why we having this men's meeting. So we can put these skills to test man." (Ismael, 2023)

Long-term strategies: corrugated iron sheets

Long-term strategies are planned at men's meetings, such as the decision to patch up a section of the fire-damaged ceiling with corrugated iron sheets. The MTT hope to patch up the rest of the fire-damaged ceiling with this or other available materials. These decisions require resources and often can only be completed in sections, as opposed to all at once. Materials are either purchased using funds from the monthly contribution, or are sourced by the MTT for a cheaper price at local shops, or repurposed from previous uses within the occupation.

"Just two weeks ago, we also withdraw R4000 where I showed you, we start with that. [For] where it was burning." (Quintin, 2023)

The fire left long-term damages that the residents have had to iteratively repair over time. With limited resources, repairs have happened in sections, and remain ongoing. Where fire education did seem to be more of a reactive measure, proactive strategies, such as the SSTTs evacuation plan and the MTTs emergency fire mitigation response, have ensured that fires have not caused any harm to human lives. Good ideas and a sense of resourcefulness have informed future planning and long-term strategies, which are agreed upon through the men's meeting structure.

The strategies of collective labour are crucial to mitigating the risks of fire associated with living in an abandoned, underserviced building. Despite internal efforts at mitigating the risk of fire, however, state antagonism and criminalising narratives about the occupation has fostered a culture of dis-engagement and de-investment in the community, increasing the risk of fires causing damages at the everyday scale.

Figure 15 Corrugated iron sheets used to patch up part of the fire-damaged ceiling, 2023

4.2.2. Keeping the community safe

Challenge: Kids and teens

> *"5 years ago when we moved in here, we did not have a lot of kids here. But for the time I've been staying here, now we have so many babies here. And, people got married here, people got divorced here, people died here. It was part of our family for the past 5 years." (Aunty Nadeema, 2023)*

The number of kids in the occupation has grown over time. Notwithstanding the benefits of community parenting, the kids experience a unique set of challenges growing up in a building occupation. They become frustrated by being cramped up in small, overcrowded rooms and want to play outside, or in the passages with their friends. Left to their own devices, they often become involved in naughty, rebellious behaviour. Participants spoke of some parents as negligent - not giving their kids enough attention, causing them to get involved in unsolicited behaviour. The residents have their own ways of handling situations where kids are either confronted with challenges, or are causing challenges for life in the occupation, assisted by the presence of the Building MA social workers, and the resident's Whatsapp group.

Let them play!

Some residents feel that the ongoing noise of the kids playing outside is a disturbance, preferring for them to play in nearby public parks. Other residents feel that the kids are safer playing on CGH grounds, where it is ensured that they will remain inside the gates, and can be monitored by the foot traffic of residents coming in and out of the occupation, as well as the MA security guards stationed at the gates. Kids playing outside will often kick soccer balls, breaking windows and causing health and safety hazards for the residents. Disputes were common between residents who had different approaches towards the kids. Ismael, for one, approaches the situation by simply letting them play, and encourages others to give them attention.

> *"I make an example- this kids, is in a small room with his mommy and daddy. They play outside here, whether it's with skateboard or whatever. Now they [residents] start complaining. Leave the kids alone! Let them play! Why don't you go to them and talk to them, ask them, 'Why you making a noise?' It's actually quite simple." (Ismael, 2023)*

Ismael finds this approach quite necessary given the threat posed to the occupation at large if the kids become bored. If they are not engaging in kid-friendly activities, they will find other, more unsolicited activities to engage in. An increase in unsolicited activities in the occupation threatens the sustainability of the occupation, as on-site drugs and weapons have been two of the most common justifications for police raids and police violence at occupations. Keeping the kids engaged, active, and supported, therefore, has been some of the SSTT's most pressing work.

> *"Cause if they out of the way, their program is sorted, now we can start, you know? Cause they are actually now a big problem actually. The kids. You getting these groupies here smoking dagga. Dit bly die kids. That's all the things they will experiment." (Ismael, 2023)*

Ismael's 'let them play!' approach has developed organically – likely an offshoot of his own parenting and discipline style, and a reaction to other adults who want the kids to stop playing and keep quiet. It may not be obvious, but Ismael's approach is an aspect of the labour of care – seeing to it that the kids have the environment to play and be kids. Other residents in the core

group, predominantly women, have been relied on by the kids for the more traditional care role of providing food, advice and serving as a trusted adult.

Care for them

Where the feeding scheme directly responds to the children's need for a filling, healthy meal, the feeding scheme is only part of the community parenting and ethics of care that I observed at CGH. People who are active as leaders, including monitors and the core group, have become informally responsible for telling the kids to go inside in the evenings, and are relied on by the kids and teens for a cup of sugar, some bread, or advice.

> *"I promise, it [the hunger] is bad. Because, last week when we dished up or the week before last, the first 'clients' that came in here was the kids. They were standing here with their buckets and things. Cause most of their parents is at work. Or, a lot of them don't even care." (Boeta Nazeem, 2023)*

> *"Shame, I feel sorry for some of- and you know the kids during the month- we only started cooking recently when that man donated that stuff, so the children come and knock on my door, they come straight to my door… Now whatever I have left from the night before I will give it. Even bread, you know how many times- And then you get the teens, they will come there with a cup for a little bit of sugar. I can't say I don't have, what I have is sufficient for me from month-to-month… now because he [Boeta Nazeem] is one of the house leaders, when Kim is not available, when [another house leader] is not here, they knock on my door. Sometimes it's children, and I will also give them advice you know, where I can help.'" (Aunty Nadeema, 2023)*

Social workers

With the introduction of the MA social workers on-site, some of the burden of care that was traditionally placed on residents like Aunty Nadeema has been alleviated. The social worker will often WhatsApp message Boeta Nazeem or Aunty Nadeema when they know of a resident in need of support in any way. A local day clinic has also been visiting the occupation regularly,

taking on some of the kids for counselling, which has contributed to the self-development of some of the kids in the occupation.

> *"Now that the social workers is here they deal with the smaller issues… The social worker in the next building, she often WhatsApp's Nazeem, 'This one or that one needs bread' or so. Then we don't have but then I just buy out of my pocket to give it to them, because I've been blessed. I feel I am blessed… A lot of these people, they had outside help from the clinic, the day hospital. I think it's on a Friday that they have a social worker there. They would also come out, make appointments with the occupiers, come see them here and take it further, whatever needs to be done." (Aunty Nadeema, 2023)*

WhatsApp group chat

The WhatsApp group chats for each section of the occupation is used to inform parents if their kids are roaming when they should be inside, helping to maintain order and adherence to the rules. This does, however, cause frustration for the residents who are disproportionately relied on for care. Aunty Nadeema and Boeta Nazeem demonstrate this frustration below.

> *"But sometimes it's dark at night and it's school nights, and then we've got our gate 1 [WhatsApp] chat, and you will hear people saying on there, 'The children is outside, parents please come fetch your kids,' when it's their responsibility." (Aunty Nadeema, 2023)*

> *"We have to see to it that the kids go inside, 7 o'clock no more kids outside. They [the parents] relax in their rooms, they expect us to do everything as leaders… They say your kid is my kid. That's exactly it. I don't know who brought that saying in because the parents is definitely taking that serious." (Boeta Nazeem, 2023)*

Resident's responses to this challenge with the kids have developed organically based on resident's personalities and preferred ways of disciplining, as well as being influenced by their gender; but men and women both perform important care roles for the kids. The core group's status as 'leaders' in the occupation also influences the kids' reliance on them – those residents who the kids see as consistently active in the occupation are those residents who the kids will go

to for help, or listen to when reprimanded. The presence of the Building MA social workers has taken up some of the responsibilities of disciplining and caring for the kids, which has reduced the burden placed on those handful of residents who the kids actually listen to. The resident's WhatsApp groups have also been a useful 'last resort' tool to inform parents if their children are wandering after the 7pm curfew.

Challenge: Ageing, abandoned building

The CGH building - over a century old, and having been abandoned for over two decades without proper maintenance - is now beginning to deteriorate. This has created a health and safety hazard for residents. A City-commissioned engineering report on the structural integrity of the building indicated a perishing electricity system (City of Cape Town and Stedone Groun, 2019). Pipe infrastructure is not adequate to service the amount of people now residing in the building, causing leaks and breakages. Wind pressure in the ceiling has damaged roof tiles over time, causing holes in the roof through which water seeps, leaking into people's rooms. This is just to name a few of the common maintenance and repair concerns at CGH. Daily repairs, new connections and modernising projects are the three main facets of the MTT's collective labour of repair and maintenance. In the process, these strategies also mitigate the health and safety concerns related to living in an ageing, abandoned building.

Daily repairs

Daily repairs serve an important health and safety role for the residents. Repairing leaks in the roof or in old pipes prevents flooding, mould and the associated health risks. The recent attachment of gates to the doors that separate the sections inside the occupation has also enforced the house rules more strictly, preventing people from straying between sections after hours and causing disturbances; which is a rule in place predominantly for the safety of women and children.

> *"Okay, we got a lot of challenges actually. Because at the spur of the moment things break somma." (Ismael, 2023)*

Disruptions caused by spur-of-the-moment breakages have limited the garden team's capacities to perform their labour, in turn limiting the impact of the garden on the wider CGH community. Faldilah has, for example, demonstrated the impact of the broken hose pipe on her ability to garden during the week, and her reliance on the MTT in this instance to fix it.

New connections

New installations or connections made for the kitchen and garden have created new ways of working, improving on existing practices. Aunty Nadeema demonstrates the purpose and impact of the installation of a shower, toilet and countertop in the kitchen.

> *"And he even built on the shower doors and that shower is supposed to be for the kitchen staff when they finish work or when they going. He decided 'I'm gonna put a shower in here.'" (Aunty Nadeema, 2023)*

Additionally, Quintin recently installed a tap to the wall outside the kitchen. This new connection to a water point has enabled the cultivation of two new soil beds outside the kitchen in attempt to revive the garden's relationship with the kitchen (see figure 16), demonstrating how the capacity of the collective labour shifts temporally based on access to services.

Figure 16 Two new soil beds, repurposed from old mattresses, near the new waterpoint outside the kitchen, 2023

Modernising projects

Long-term, 'modernising' projects have improved the building's capacity to house and service this many people, reducing the toll placed on water, sewage and electricity infrastructure. In turn, the reduced toll on infrastructure reduces the risk of hazards like fire, flooding, water shortages, and electricity cuts.

> *"Like, for instance … third floor, we have a discussion about buying a cable, but the cable we going to buy, the voltage of that cable, it's high pressure voltage. And it cost us- hoeveel het ons laaste betaal? … Three to four thousand. Just for the cable… So when we come to plumbing, then we look what is necessary, how we can modernise some things that is already old. Just to make it more comfortable and liveable for people." (Quintin, 2023)*

"Sometimes we can't assist them [the residents], we have to wait maybe two, three days in order to get a part. Because the building is strong, but the plumbing, electrician, concern you know. It's starting to perish. We are thinking of actually, we have to still sit about this, to put a other draining system in. Bypass all this old-" (Ismael, 2023)

"-Pipes and stuff." (Quintin, 2023)

The MTT understands their labour in terms of these three facets: daily repairs, new connections and modernising projects. Daily repairs and new connections are usually made when and as needed, on an everyday basis, and often in a rush when being called on by a resident in need. Modernising projects, on the other hand, are planned in advance in men's meetings, necessitating the withdrawal of large sums of money from the contribution fund. This labour has a notable effect on resident's health and safety - mitigating the risks of living in an ageing, abandoned building; protecting women and children; increasing the garden's capacity to provide food; reducing the risk of fire, flooding, water shortages and electricity cuts; and improving resident's comfortability in the space.

4.2.3. Eroding the criminal stigma

Challenge: Police raids and the criminal stigma

CGH has been a target of violent raids carried out by the police, law enforcement, and the army, sometimes accompanied by police on horses and in helicopters. There have been three police raids over the 7 years of occupation: one in July 2019, one in February 2022 (6 days after the fire that broke out at CGH) and then again a few months later, in November 2022. Law enforcement have broken doors to enter the premises and people's rooms, harassing people in the process, including minors and children. Notwithstanding the traumatic effects of the raid on the residents, the fear and threat of police violence is shared among the community long after a raid. Indeed, this is a fear that may well be characteristic of living at an occupation. This fear was further intensified by public statements released by the City of Cape Town, claiming CGH as 'sabotage, a risk to social housing delivery' and 'an invasion by criminals and hijackers' (see Fortuin, 2021).

The residents have developed strategies of collective labour to respond to the risk of police raids. A rapid response was in place which is no longer used.

Rapid response

At the first indication of an oncoming police raid, the residents used to use their cars to block the entrances to the site, preventing the police from entering. This is no longer possible, however, with the MA security guards now on-site permanently and stationed at the perimeter gates.

> *"So it wasn't easy in the beginning because we have a lot of raids coming with the army with law enforcement, but, we carry on. The struggle was heavy. There was times that we have to put cars here by the gates." (Quintin, 2023)*

A daily response, which has likely developed over years of living at CGH, is seen in the peer-to-peer behaviour policing or 'friendly disciplining' that people like Ismael take it upon themselves to perform.

Behaviour policing

Raids are an ongoing threat which the residents must mitigate against on a daily basis. This takes place through a subtle peer-to-peer behaviour policing. Below, Ismael explains the community-wide suspicion that the MA - as representative of the City through the tender - are watching and taking note of daily happenings among the residents, especially unsolicited behaviour, to use in the court case. The behaviour policing performed by people like Ismael, therefore, is rooted in a fear for the 'looming' court case; a fear that grows each day with the City's lack of engagement with the residents.

> *"They gonna come with all their bullshit to bring us down. To find something, you know what I mean. If they not gonna find today, they gonna find tomorrow. Every raid that comes down, it goes to the book [he imitates a police officer:] 'Right they got this, they got illegal immigrants.' All this nonsense. So at the end of the day, they piling up actually. There's not a date yet, but they preparing themselves for the high court. So we have to have our ducks in a row. We mustn't take*

this lying down or whatever you know? Just take an example, me and you have a fight, now you go down to the police station and make a case against me. That goes [on the book]... And then outside people also start to talk. Because these occupiers also talk and go tell the people. And now you get someone from Shoprite wie sê, 'Haai, het jy geviet het? That is happening there.' Where did they get it? Occupiers. Because the house is not right… We have to try to avoid things like this. Not to say you mustn't party or mustn't drink or whatever, but do it in the perimeter of- don't go overboard. Now the neighbours will complain, 'Loud music'. This is small things, but they [the MA] write it down. They [the City] use it. They gonna use it. Believe me… Now that is what we fighting actually, it's for the court date, which we don't even know when this court date is gonna happen…" (Ismael, 2023)

Behaviour policing not only constitutes a heightened, organic strategy to maintain order in response to resident's suspicions regarding the MA. Behaviour policing is also important to prevent the public from hearing or talking about any unsolicited behaviour at CGH. This kind of peer-to-peer friendly disciplining includes community parenting, ensuring your neighbours do not play loud music and do not 'go overboard' with parties. It includes settling disputes, arguments and grievances between residents and reprimanding perpetrators of domestic violence. It includes rounding up the people who stole electricity chords from someone's room and frightening them with a lecture, and it includes visiting the crime hotspots in the occupation and letting people know that you know they have been causing trouble. Behaviour policing is usually performed by people like Ismael, who residents like, respect and fear.

But people like Aunty Nadeema, a respected Muslim Aunty in the occupation, also demands respect when in her presence. Although not an intimidating character like Ismael, Aunty Nadeema's position as an Aunty, and her strict approach to her own religion, makes her presence in the room a barrier to unsolicited behaviour. For example, while I would often share a smoke with someone outside, I did not feel comfortable doing so if Aunty Nadeema was around. I also noticed this with other residents who would, for example, avoid telling inappropriate jokes in Aunty Nadeema's presence. From a cultural and gendered point of view, Aunty Nadeema

performs a similar role to Ismael in policing the behaviour of residents, keeping troublemakers at bay, and in turn eroding the criminal stigma associated with occupations and occupiers.

4.2.4. Meeting community needs

Challenge: Financial and food insecurity

The residents at CGH are in precarious financial positions - some are permanently employed, but many are temporarily employed or on contract employment, and many more are unemployed, on government grants, or pension (*City of Cape Town v Occupiers of Woodstock Hospital*, 2021b). There is an ideal vision for there to be a circular relationship between the garden and the kitchen: the garden growing produce to contribute to the kitchen's feeding scheme, the kitchen distributing their organic waste to the garden, and in turn both contributing to making a self-sufficient occupation. This would enable the garden and kitchen to 'feed the community,' alleviating the resident's financial, mental and physical burden associated with providing food.

> *"[a resident in the occupation often says] 'You stay here for free, you must work for free.' That's why, what she's saying is, if we all come and plant, then we give it to the kitchen, it's feeding us." (Melissa, 2023)*

> *"It's feeding everybody in the occupation. You going to live from the garden, so whatever they see from the garden they going to make some food… so everybody is going to live from the garden." (Faldilah, 2023)*

> *"[Ideally] I mustn't avail myself for like 7 hours. Because there's a lot. So if everyone is being part of like-" (Melissa, 2023)*

> *"-If everyone is giving like a 2 hour input… So it's not just Melissa for 8 hours in the garden… So for that two hours maybe you plant, now the next person come, you tell that person this is how far you planted, and then you leave. So the next person starts again. And so it goes on. So each one will teach one." (Faldilah, 2023)*

With sufficient donations from external networks, and sufficient participation from the CGH community, the circular relationship could be realised with more ease. But the lack of residents who are willing or able to participate in the gardening leads to Melissa and Faldilah being overworked, contributing to their exhaustion, and inhibiting the circular relationship vision from being realised.

Incentivising participation and compensating for labour

Many residents will only volunteer for gardening if they will receive a stipend for working in the garden, as compensation for the labour, which is very often strenuous manual labour. Although Melissa and Faldilah are active despite the lack of monetary compensation, they understand why other residents are not willing or able to participate. The lack of monetary compensation means that residents would rather spend their time labouring for pay, or looking for paid work, to feed their families.

> *"The ones you ask for help in the garden, they want to know how much are they going to get paid. So my words is, I'm not doing it for money-" (Faldilah, 2023)*

> *"-No but I wanna do it for money. Because if I'm full time, and my everyday, in the garden, then it's fair… And now also people are arguing that they must give us a stipend. I can't work for free there. I can give my time, like you give your time, I don't mind, but I have a family. I don't ask much, but I mean I have a family. And I mean it's not 10, it's 2 people… Because, if we call it a community, and the community hands is not there, I dont think it's fair as a occupation for people to just come in the community garden, to harvest and not being active." (Melissa, 2023)*

Those who are able to participate actively in the task teams without pay are more often than not receiving some kind of income on a monthly basis - be it from paid work, or pension, or government grants. There were periods in time when there was more participation from the community, although this was when there were opportunities to generate an income from the gardening labour. As such, opportunities for income generation have enabled increased participation.

"[Through] Zlatos, we volunteer on Facebook. When you were doing anything in the garden, and then you [she mimicks taking a picture with her hands of] how it looks… Before and after. And then you get points… And that points add up to a R100 voucher. And you can go to Shoprite. We were earning something from that… [In 2019] we were selling the boxes for December. We were making boxes and we were selling it for Christmas… Because the December month, we were having a cut off; me [and two other residents] were making boxes… Then we were deciding we gonna make some funds to give us money, and… [a resident] and Boeta Nazeem were helping cutting us the boxes. And [2 other residents] were making [decorating] the outside. And we were selling it for R200 a box. And after December passed- [she throws her hands up in the air, to indicate that everything stopped after December]." (Melissa, 2023)

Below, Melissa refers to a time when leadership received donations and offered monetary compensation to anyone willing to come and help in the garden. Pictures of this occasion were also used in the movement's co-design exhibition; where the co-design planning was presented to the public, giving the impression to the public that gardening is a community affair at CGH, as opposed to the consistent labour of two women. She demonstrates the frustration this caused among those who were participating daily, who never received monetary compensation, nor adequate recognition or acknowledgement for their labour.

"And even… in the exhibition there was [a resident] on that side, in the garden.... That posters on the other side, when you come in. And that time, we were asking people to come clean and they give them all R50 vouchers. And I was asking why couldn't they give it to us, that's been here everyday? Now they taking a lot of people… I make example with Dilah: get the men; me, she and the men, give that men maybe R150 [for] the 3 days… and for us. Until the garden get a certain standard, and even through that we make our own money through boxes, and what we are selling. Like other gardens, like my experience, they making bunch of carrots, and they selling maybe as a combo. That's how you making money so that it can give back to us. But you not gonna get the garden stable if you don't put in… I mean who's not gonna come work for a R150 a day, or even if it's 2 days in a week. R300." (Melissa, 2023)

Despite all of the challenges and frustrations in participation, exhaustion, recognition and acknowledgement, Melissa and Faldilah continue to labour in the garden without monetary

compensation. Other, more personal reasons motivate them to labour in the garden. Where Faldilah gardens because of a promise she made to the late Boeta Nabil, Melissa gardens because of the potential opportunities for income or self-development, and because she believes exposure to the garden is good for her kid.

> *"I only started now, recently, in the garden, after Oupa passed away. I made a promise to Oupa, because he asked - it was me, it was [4 other residents] - we must see that his garden doesn't go to waste, at the back. So that is how I came about to working inside the garden… it was the four of us. And all four of us promised that old man." (Faldilah, 2023)*

> *"For me, I also want money, but for me I know through volunteering it will open doors for me. That's one thing I know. And from here, and what I learn, I can go in the outside world, and explore. And one of the reasons is for my child. You understand? But I know through volunteering, it's not only about the garden, there's different types of doors that can open for you as a job. Through this, I can get a permanent job outside maybe by the City, or wherever, through my experience that I'm gaining here. And the nice part for me is like, it's community also. [she demonstrates the ideal scenario]: The two of us will be the kitchen, and then you will meet up with the kitchen, and then the other team will meet on the planting and what needs to go back to the garden. So it was actually a whole circulation that's been- but the end of the day it's- [she imitates something crumbling apart with her hands]" (Melissa, 2023)*

The garden provides food to the community - a direct input into their everyday lives and well-being. Although the garden does have a relationship with the kitchen, there are ongoing challenges realising the ideal vision; most notably the lack of participation. On the other hand, opportunities for income generation have attracted and incentivised more participation. In lieu of a consistent income from the garden, Melissa and Faldilah continue to garden for other, more personal reasons: promises, family and self-development opportunities. This suggests that emotional attachments attract more dedicated participation.

In this section, I have shown how the occupation is sustained through mature strategies to (1) respond to crisis; including the risk of fire, (2) keep the community safe; including caring for and disciplining the kids and repairing and modernising the building, (3) de-criminalise the stigma on

the occupation, including peer-to-peer behaviour policing, and (4) meet community needs, including generating income, food and self-development opportunities. The residents demonstrate a blend of planned and organic strategies to respond to these challenges, and strategies often cut across spaces.

In response to the risk of fire, the MTT and SSTT demonstrate prevention strategies through fire education talks, a rapid response strategy including an evacuation plan and an emergency mitigation plan. These strategies have ensured that there are no risks to, or loss of human lives in the event of a fire. Future planning strategies discussed in men's meetings, including sourcing fire extinguishers and new trestles for the ceiling, have also been in process, and a long-term strategy including repairing the ceiling with corrugated iron sheets is underway. These strategies have mitigated the long-term risks of living in a fire-damaged building, especially the risk of flooding, leaks, mould and the associated health risks.

In response to the challenges with kids and teens, the residents across spaces have developed strategies to discipline and care for the kids. Their strategies are based on their preferred parenting styles, as well as being influenced by their leadership status in the occupation and their gender. The presence of the Building MA social workers on-site, and the nearby day clinic, has alleviated the burden of care placed on the handful of residents who the kids will listen to. As a last resort, the resident's Whatsapp groups assist in informing parents if their children are roaming late at night. These strategies of community parenting have kept the kids safe and engaged, so that they do not participate in rebellious or unsolicited behaviour, in turn also eroding the criminal stigma.

In response to the risks of living in an ageing, abandoned building, the MTT perform daily repair and maintenance tasks, install new connections to water, sewage and electricity, and plan modernising projects. This labour has a notable effect on resident's health and safety - mitigating the risks of living in an ageing, abandoned building; protecting women and children; increasing the garden's capacity to provide food; reducing the risk of fire, flooding, water shortages and electricity cuts; and improving resident's comfortability in the space.

As a response to police raids, residents used to have a rapid response in place to block the gates with their cars, preventing police entry and initiating engagement. This more reactive response is no longer possible with the presence of the Building MA security guards on-site. As a daily, organically developed strategy to mitigate the criminal stigma associated with occupations, residents employ a subtle peer-to-peer behaviour policing or a 'friendly disciplining'. This strategy, informed by resident's personalities, gender, age and culture, has been useful in keeping troublemakers at bay, in turn eroding the criminal stigma.

Last, to meet community needs, the gardening and kitchen team are working towards realising the ideal scenario, where the garden and the kitchen operate in a circular relationship with one another. At this point, the garden is limited in its capacity to provide food to the kitchen for the Friday Feeding scheme, but the residents do benefit from harvesting veggies from the garden on an ad-hoc basis. The garden has, at times, generated an income for resident volunteers, which has attracted and incentivised more participation. In lieu of a consistent income from the garden, Melissa and Faldilah continue to garden for other, more personal reasons: promises, family and self-development opportunities. This suggests that emotional attachments attract more dedicated participation.

Taken together, these strategies show how the building has been managed from the bottom-up over the past 7 years of occupation; contributing to resident's health, safety, security and well-being in material and affective ways. This analysis has taken seriously the model of occupying a building and sustaining it as home for a community, unpacking the extent to which the collective labour of the core group responds to the resident's everyday lives. In the following section, I discuss the role that these collective labour practices play in the political agenda of the occupation and the wider Reclaim the City movement.

4.3. Collective labour at the political scale

In this section, I show how the everyday purpose of collective labour plays a crucial role in the political agenda of the occupation and the RTC movement, particularly so now that the residents

are going through an internally led co-design process. I develop the notion of 'reaching for the state' to demonstrate what happens when occupying communities are faced with state-disengagement and the threat of eviction, taking the decision not to wait for their futures to be decided on their behalf. I show how the co-design process and the labour of the co-design working committee is an effort to sustain the occupation into the future. In this effort, the role of the collective labour at the everyday scale comes to serve a political purpose.

Co-design meetings, workshops and exhibitions have been focused on developing a proposal to counter the top-down social housing proposal that is anticipated to come from the City. Although resident-led, there has been support from external networks and allies with experience in architecture, urban design, arts, commoning, research and advocacy. Since 2021, various workshops have been conducted by the working group, including discussions on resident's visions for building management, unit size and typologies. Their intention is to present this report for consideration should there be an eviction hearing, or should the City seek to pick up engagements with the residents again. One of the external networks explains that, taking the decision not to wait for the City, the co-design can be seen as capacity building for the residents to be engaged,

> *"There was a phase [in 2018] where the City said, without telling you you have the right [to live in the building], we started to have a discussion. … But there was a crisis on the political side. … Everything was stopped, … the communication [between the City and CGH] was brutally interrupted. There is no formal communication. We [now] have informal communication… And we said, look, if you wait for the City to put on the table their proposal, 90% of the time it's already too late. … So it was important to understand how … we can produce a document. … To me, it's problematic the fact that we don't have the City. As a professional co-designer. But, … for us it was a question to decide, do we stop and wait? The risk was too much. … I think we can see the co-design as a capacity building for the residents to be engaged. Because it's complicated engagement." (Andrea, 2023)*

As part of this process, the resident's collective labour - in that it sustains the community over time by responding to various challenges - has come to serve as 'evidence' of resident-led

management of a building. In other words, the collective labour of the core group have come to serve as evidence of how a community might manage and sustain an occupied building as a home over time. This 'evidence' has become particularly useful in the context of state dis-engagement, the threat of eviction, and an ongoing internal co-design process focused on developing a counter-proposal to the City, to open up engagements.

Below, I show how the co-design, as a process of developing a counter-proposal, serves as an effort to 'reach' for the state. Relatedly, I show how the co-design process has relied, in part, on the core group's collective labour in the kitchen, garden, maintenance and security and safety task teams (and others), as evidence of resident-led management of a building, because this evidence is useful in demonstrating the resident's capacity to be engaged. Further, I outline the tensions and frustrations that were apparent among some of the core group, whose labour has become glorified for the political agenda of RTC; for its role in demonstrating to the public and to the state their capacity to be engaged, while being devalued at the everyday scale; facing ongoing challenges in participation, resources, transparency and representation.

4.3.1. Reaching for the state

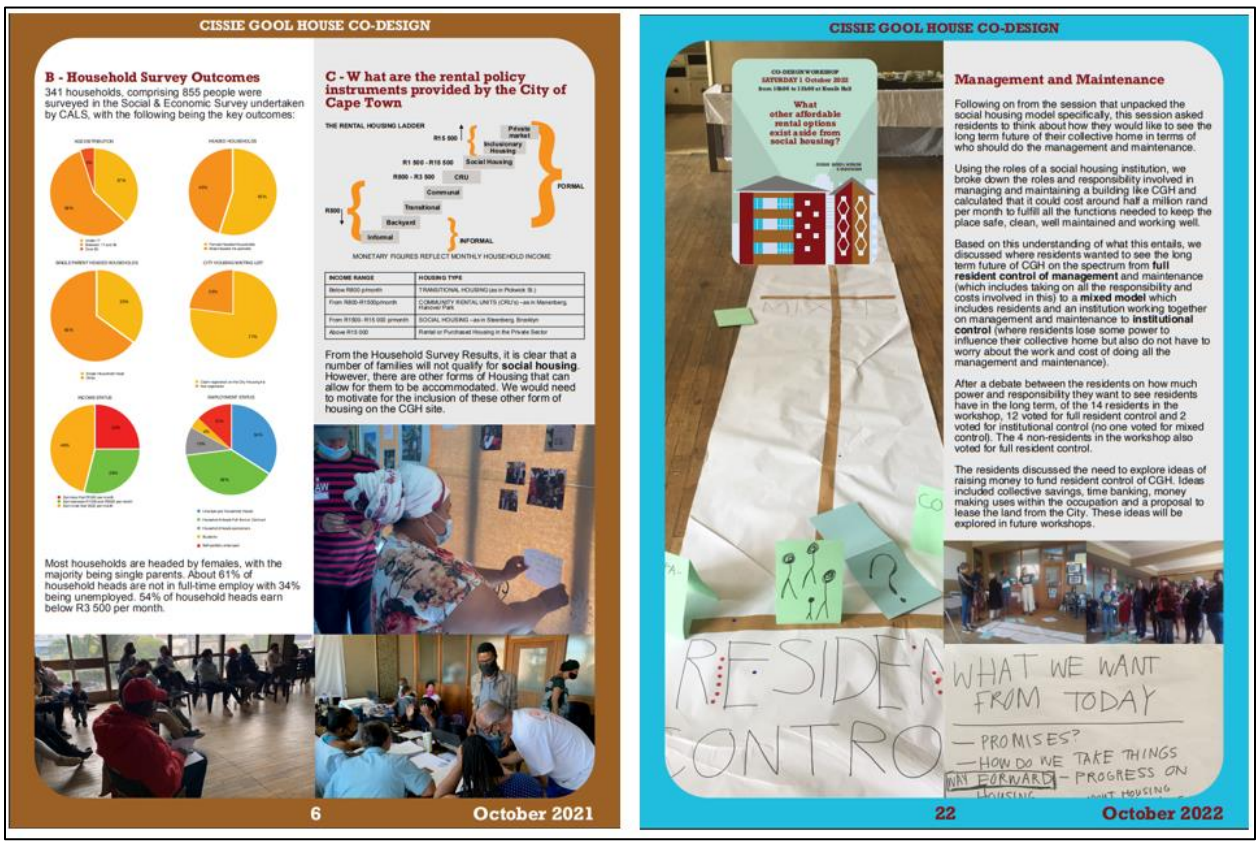
The co-design proposal, thus far, includes a presentation of the working committee's efforts, including the discussions and findings from workshops. Topics range from the building's structural integrity, the use of space, the criteria to qualify for social housing, and other affordable rental options that may fit the community. Although the co-design has been an entirely resident-led process, with the assistance (in terms of resources, decision-making and labour) from external networks, the City and its official logics are not entirely absent from this process.

City-commissioned reports, surveys and other documents are drawn on as the working committee lobbies City findings for the co-design. For example, the CALS household survey and the Stedone report findings informed the committee's decision to look at different financial models for affordable rental housing for the redevelopment of the site (see Figure 17 below, page

6). As such, the committee has been exploring the combination of social housing units and transitional housing units on the site. The Tender for the Building MA also informed the committee's decision to workshop and discuss who should do the management and maintenance of the building (see Figure 17 below, page 22).

City documents and findings are drawn on by the working committee to present an alternative proposal to the social housing proposal for which the documents were commissioned. Moreover, leaders have made constant pleas and invites to the City to engage with them on the co-design, and to visit the co-design exhibition events, to no avail.

Figure 17 Cissie Gool House Co-design Exhibition document, pages 6 and 22, snapshot taken by the researcher, 2023



I argue that the co-design, as an effort to sustain the community into the future, represents an effort to 'reach' for the state. By this, I mean three things.

First, because the state has pulled itself away and has actively dis-engaged, the residents have had to 'reach' to find and draw on what is known about the City's social housing plans for the site. As such, the CALS survey, the Stedone report, and the Building MA Tender have been drawn on to inform discussions about the resident's vision for unit size, typologies, building management, and financial rental models. The state is, therefore, not altogether absent, but exists in a diluted form through the official logics drawn on from City-commissioned documents. The City becomes present in the co-design only by 'reaching', which brings me to the second point.

The notion of 'reaching' (as verb) also captures the co-design's active effort to be engaged. That is, the effort and labour it has taken from the committee to develop the proposal as a plea to be engaged and acknowledged as planners and co-designers. When addressing the public who attended the Co-design Exhibition Opening Night, one of the leaders in the occupation, who is also active in the co-design working committee, frames the exhibition as an opportunity to *show* the state and the community the resident's collective engagement,

> *"This [turnout] is what we would have expected of a state that believes in the ability of people to address their conditions in a particular way, in a way that speaks to self-reliance. … What we have done here is to show not only the state, but the community, our collective engagement to achieve an objective that we set ourselves… And so this exhibition resonates with what many other people are doing in other parts of the world about self-reliance: re-writing the way in which we organise our communities, re-expressing a new approach to how we organise ourselves, independent from the state; and the state being in all its forms, whether at the municipal level, provincial level or even at a national level…. (Bevil, 2023)*

In this 'reach', the committee and residents alike supplement their argument that they should be engaged, with the central evidence presented through the already established resident-led, collective management of the building. This 'evidence' serves as a 'currency' for the co-design, in its effort to reach for the state; a currency that is mobilised in demonstration to the public, and to the state. At the same exhibition referenced above, another leader and active co-design committee member reminds the audience that in order to discuss the co-design and its future

visions, it is important to first consider 'where we are now' and 'what has been done.' In other words, the collective labour that has made and sustained home, and established a system of resident-led management of the building, must be taken seriously before looking to future visions of co-design.

> *"We coming from eviction and displacement. We went and we occupied a site and a building. And the house [she points to a small, colourful cardboard model of a house] represents the very building where we are living. It showcases what and how the community there manage this space, and how we are planning our future out of this site; this particular site called Cissie Gool House. So, before I send you to read about this 22-step process, I first want to take you to how it all started. … And then, after that we'll be going to where we are now, what have we done. So the 22-step process that we will be engaging with throughout the course of June … would be where we are now. And then, we move on for the next 21 days: where are we going to, what is our future? We will be engaging with and speaking about how we plan, and how we envision our future. It is right here in front of us [the model of the envisioned co-designed building]. This model signifies what our future is, how we perceive our future, and what we want to do. … Our next step here tonight - we will be walking around, we will be learning what this struggle for affordable housing is all about. We will be learning how we have reclaimed the city." (Karen, 2023)*

The reliance on the established evidence of resident-led management of CGH is not limited to residents who operate at the movement-scale. At the resident-scale, Boeta Nazeem and Ismael find hope in the collective labour's potential in demonstrating to the public, and to the judge and the City, the resident's capacities to manage a building, and their capacities to be engaged on the co-design. For Boeta Nazeem, the kitchen's 'friends of Cissie Gool' events are good for generating and maintaining support, and it is hoped that the judge in the looming court case will see the community that continues to develop at CGH.

> *"Well I think it's good in the sense that - trying to get outsiders involved with this place. So it's not just us on the inside. We've got friends on the outside as well. Which is also very important. Because, uhm, it's not just our voices. There's outsiders who know what we do here and stuff. That*

gets put onto social media and things like that. So it all, it's a help. I just hope the judge at the end of the day is gonna see that." (Boeta Nazeem, 2023)

Similarly, Ismael feels that repairing the fire-damaged ceiling is an opportunity to demonstrate to the City their capacity to manage a building.

"We fix it out of our own, then we show the City that we can handle this place. Especially that piece now. If we can fix that piece [of broken ceiling from fire damage], its gonna be like, 'Joh, but these people can do these things.' You know what I mean?" (Ismael, 2023)

The third notion of 'reaching' also implies that a radical argument is being made with the co-design, one that can be seen as far-fetched when considering the type of urban development policies and strategies traditionally explored by the City. While there are examples from cities like São Paulo where local governments have engaged with occupations to regularise the occupation into social housing, the co-design would be a radical proposal for the City of Cape Town to consider, having never explored co-design with occupying communities before. This third notion of 'reach' portrays the 'leap' or 'stride' that is being made, for the residents to demand to be engaged on their alternative proposal as legitimate, everyday planners with ideas and future visions for the redevelopment of the site.

I employ the term 'reaching for the state' to demonstrate what happens when occupying communities are faced with state dis-engagement and the threat of eviction, taking the decision not to wait for their futures to be decided on their behalf. As opposed to waiting passively or submissively, residents at CGH have developed organic and planned strategies to manage the building from the bottom-up, and they have been planning the future remodelling of the building on their own terms.

The reach for the state represents the resident's effort to sustain the occupation into the future despite dis-engagement and the threat of eviction. In this reach, the co-design process has relied, in part, on the core group's collective labour as evidence of resident-led management of a building, because this evidence is useful in demonstrating the resident's capacity to be engaged.

This represents the use of the collective labour at the everyday scale to serve a political objective: evidence of the capacity to be engaged, through demonstration to the state and to the public. Thus far, this is a successful strategy because it cannot be denied – the residents have, indeed, developed mature strategies to respond to the challenges of living at an occupation, sustaining them at the everyday scale, despite state dis-engagement and structural precarity.

However, there were also tensions and frustrations that were apparent among some of the core group, which had been ongoing since before I began my fieldwork, related to the use of their labour as demonstration. Facing ongoing challenges in participation, resources, transparency and representation, these residents felt that their labour was devalued at the everyday scale, while glorified at the political scale for its role in demonstrating to the public and to the state their capacity to be engaged on the co-design.

> *"But that co-design, it's got nothing to do- it's just been spoken words. … And through that garden, we can stay here, because that is something that is alive. That can tell the City we are living here. There's people making a living here. But it starts with us here. … I was really also, I was really disappointed. Because, you put the effort in and then, and its not even here - I would like to say also leadership here. The leadership can talk, but you [she points at me] can tell them more about that garden than them being in that garden, or knowing what to do. Because that garden is only view and eyes for the cameras at the end of the day. Because they don't know what the hell I'm going through there." (Melissa, 2023)*

> *"The thing with the co-designing is just a face for the people, to tell the people outside, 'Oh, there's a co-design.'" (Faldilah, 2023)*

The notion of 'reaching' explains the presence of the state in the co-design despite their active dis-engagement from the co-design. Second, it captures the resident's active effort to be engaged and their ongoing attempts to call on the state, demonstrating that the residents still believe there is a role for the state in the co-design. Last, the notion of 'reaching' captures the 'leap' or 'stride' that is being made – from occupier to planner, and from occupation to affordable housing opportunity.

The reach for the state has been an attempt to sustain the occupation into the long-term. The reach has relied, in part, on existing evidence of a system of resident-led management, provided by the structures put in place by the core group. As demonstration to the public of their capacity to be engaged, the collective labour at the everyday scale comes to serve a political purpose. In the reach for the state, however, tensions have been generated internally, which in turn has led to distrust in the co-design among some of the residents. The co-design is, therefore, not a unified vision among CGH residents.

In the following chapter, I discuss the findings in relation to the theoretical framework.

Chapter 5: Discussion

In response to southern urban scholar's (Miraftab, 2009; Bhan, 2019) calls to decolonise planning imaginaries, and building on emerging understandings of the labour of everyday survival in occupations as equally political labour (Scheba and Millington, 2023: 3; Saaristo, 2022; Cirolia et.al, 2021; Burgum and Vasudevan, 2023; Vasudevan, 2015a; 2015b; Bhan, 2019), I have taken occupations seriously as an existing housing model. I have pried open this model as it has unfolded at CGH, and unpacked what it has taken to make and sustain the model at the everyday and political scales. In doing so, I have taken occupiers seriously as planners, using their collective labour as a lens through which to understand this 'making and sustaining.'

The findings have detailed the development of mature strategies among the core group to respond to crises like the risk of fire, to keep the community safe socially and structurally in the building, to respond to police violence, raids and criminalisation, and to meet community needs at the scale of financial and food security. Moreover, the model of occupying and sustaining home through collective labour has also come to serve a political objective in the resident's ongoing efforts to co-design the occupation as affordable, social housing alongside the City. The findings have shown that, in the context of state dis-engagement and the threat of eviction, residents have been actively 'reaching for the state' through the co-design process, drawing on the collective labour as central evidence which demonstrates their capacity to be engaged. Taken together, these strategies have been key to sustaining the occupation over the last 7 years.

In this section I draw connections between themes identified in the ethnographic reflections and findings provided above. In doing so, I am motivated by the literature on infrastructural labour, affect and repair, but am equally in discussion with southern urban planning literature. Throughout, I expand on the concepts offered by Scheba and Millington (2023) in their contribution to the development of a southern urban vocabulary, as advocated for by Bhan (2019). As an effort to take repair seriously, as a practice that could inform housing policy, I build on the three sub-themes identified in Chapter 2, section 2.3. *Tracing labour and embodiment.* I build on these themes as potentially useful additions to the southern urban vocabulary on

occupations, and as potentially significant lenses to examine how to enhance, secure and scale repair as an existing mode of housing practice (Bhan, 2019). These themes include '*Improvisation as anticipation and speculation'*, '*Embodied expertise'*, and '*Exhaustion: gender and care'*. I also make one additional contribution, on '*Reaching as a transversal logic*.'

First, I make the case for the infrastructural repair at CGH as functioning through improvisation, which is enabled by anticipation and speculation, generating a learning which produces practical knowledge. Here I am largely expanding on the arguments made by De Coss-Corzo (2021). In the second section, I present the knowledge base generated from infrastructural repair as an embodied expertise that is worth deep consideration in any redevelopment effort of CGH, or any other occupation. Here, I build on De Coss-Corzo (2021), Scott (1999) and Björkman (2018). I contribute to the literature on infrastructural labour, repair and affect by characterising the labour of home- and life-making at an occupation by a sense of intimacy and slowness.

The literature on affective infrastructures, and infrastructures of affect, is useful in explaining the core group's impetus to act, as well as the general resident's tendency towards withdrawal from participating in the collective labour at times due to exhaustion. Ramakrishnan and O'Reilly (2023) offer 'labour' - as "the building, reworking, maintaining, and repairing of infrastructure" – to the affective infrastructures conversation. The authors argue that, as a reparative act, labour has transformative potentials when paired with an ethics of care. In the third section, I build on Ramakrishnan and O'Reilly (2023) by arguing that not only do the transformative and prefigurative potentials (Jeffrey and Dyson, 2021; Silver, 2014) of the labour need to be considered, but also the exhausting, frustrating and unequal dimensions of the labour as it plays out in practice. I develop this discussion through articulating the ways in which positionality weaves through the labour, and contributes to disproportionate exhaustion among the core group.

These propositions highlight the political potential inherent in the everyday labour of surviving in occupations, if taken seriously in re-development efforts, and if accounting for the exhausting dimensions of the labour as well. In the final section, I discuss the more overtly political labour

that has been sustaining the occupation into the future: the labour of reaching for the state. In the final section, I position 'reaching' as a mode of state engagement that can be read through Caldeira's (2017) transversal logics, arguing that the labour of reaching encompasses (1) reaching for information, (2) reaching for engagement and (3) reaching for legitimacy.

5.1. Improvisation as anticipated and speculated

Drawing on scholars of repair (Graham and Thrift, 2007; Jackson, 2015; Mattern, 2018), and building on the notion of infrastructural labour (Gidwan, 2015; Gidwnani and Maringanti, 2016), Scheba and Millington (2023) introduce the concept of 'infrastructural repair' as those affective and political practices of life- and home-making at an occupation. They include the retrofitting, re-purposing and re-placing (Cirolia et al., 2021) of materials to re-make and infuse the site with meaning, noting also the resident's material improvisations as crucial in accessing basic services and connecting the building to the grid (Scheba and Millington, 2023).

Material improvisations were, indeed, a dominant feature of how the labour functions in the garden and the MTT. This is demonstrated in the garden with the repurposing of materials like wooden planks and 2L bottles to border the soil beds; milk bottles to create labels; and poles and unfurled soil sacks to stabilise the plants. In these spaces, improvisation is crucial for anything to get done - amidst a lack of resources, what can be quickly and easily accessed and used is more likely to be chosen as the 'right' material for the job (Bhan, 2019: 646). Thinking infrastructural repair through the garden, where I spent a number of weekends, gave me a high-level perspective of the role of improvisation in the functioning of the collective labour.

Conversely, my one deep engagement in the ceiling with the MTT afforded me the opportunity to stay with this moment of repair (De Coss-Corzo, 2021) and to unpack it in great detail, revealing unique intimacies in the logics that enable on-the-spot improvisation. Thinking Quintin's use of crumbled plastic through De Coss-Corzo's (2021) 'patchwork' has the potential to highlight a range of intimacies happening at moments of repair. Rather than suggesting that patchwork urbanism is necessarily playing out here with Quintin in the ceiling, I mobilise the concept to think

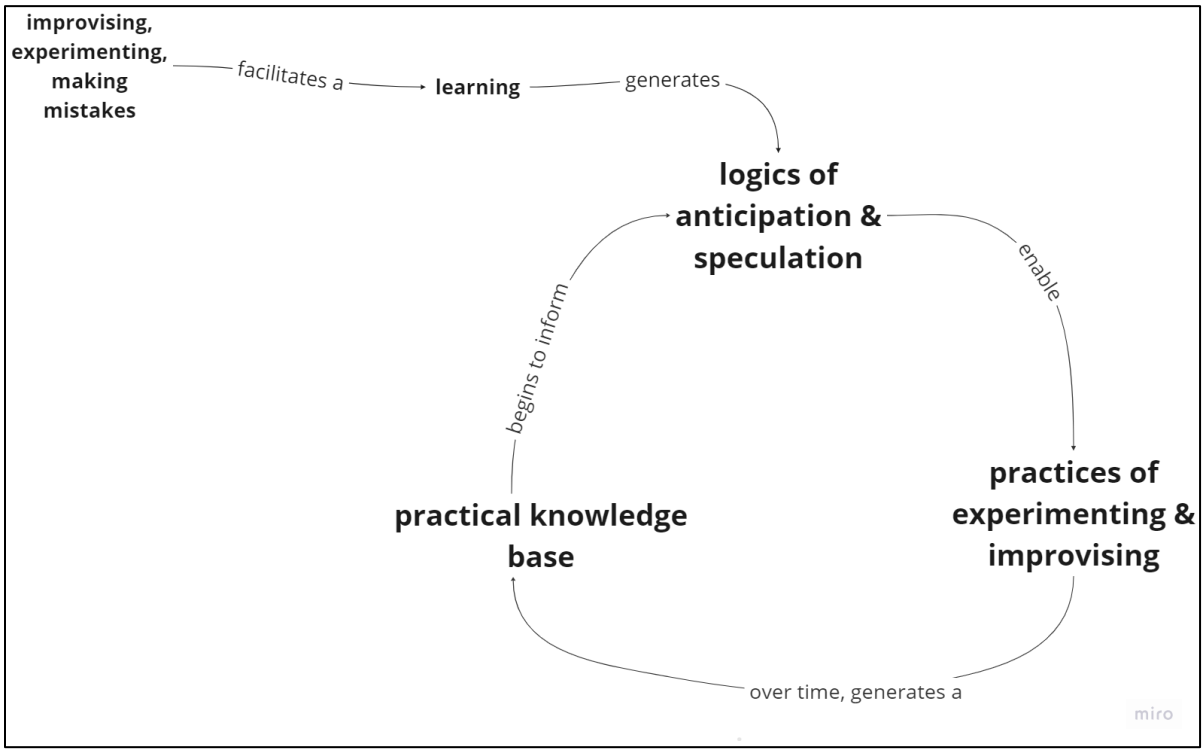
through the forms of repair that may be playing out with his crumbling up of plastic. Patchwork (De Coss-Corzo, 2021) - in that it stays with the moment of repair - asks very specific questions which open up practices of infrastructural repair (Scheba and Millington, 2023) for deeper analysis of how they function.

Patchwork asks *Why did Quintin have the piece of plastic lying around in the ceiling in the first place?* It was a big piece of black, hardened plastic, about the size of a black bag. He tore numerous pieces off to fill in numerous small holes. It had been in the ceiling already, on the ceiling floor beneath the breakage that we were fixing; likely placed there by Quintin the previous day when he was patching up an adjacent breakage. It served a purpose aside from being torn up for patching - it was to catch dripping paint formula, preventing the paint from damaging or staining the ceiling floor. The plastic became embedded in the ceiling at the moment of repair, when the "imperative of repair demanded creativity and improvisation" (De Coss-Corzo, 2021), calling on patchwork as Quintin's best possible solution.

De Coss-Corzo suggests that patchwork is enabled by anticipation and speculation, as experiences with previous patchwork allow one to anticipate and speculate on, for example, what materials may be needed, in light of what usually happens. When Quintin called on Jason to pass him some of that plastic, it was evident that, although he was improvising, he had done this before. The plastic was there for its double-function. Through Quintin's improvised use of plastic to patch up the smaller holes in the ceiling, we can unpack how improvisation does not always mean coming up with new solutions on-the-spot. Rather, improvisation is enabled by a sense of anticipation and speculation. Having learned from previous experiences improvising and experimenting, the core group is able to anticipate and speculate on what the day's work may look like, which materials may be needed, and how they may quickly and easily access those materials. We can also see Melissa's re-use of materials in the garden through this sense of anticipation and speculation, having learned from previous experience with what works and what doesn't work to border off soil beds and to keep away the cats - though not to get rid of them completely, because that would cause a problem with the rats!

As such, I extend Scheba and Millington's (2023) 'infrastructural repair' to include the logics of anticipation and speculation which enable improvisations. This extension suggests that an 'improvisational' learning is at play: having learned from previous experiences in-practice, the core group is able to anticipate and speculate, enabling practices of experimentation and improvisation in the labour (see Figure 18 below). I align, therefore, with scholars who have suggested that improvisation and experimentation generates a knowledge base (Graham and Thrift, 2007: 5) - about the labour, the materials that may be useful, and the spaces being operated in. In turn, this practical knowledge base begins to, over time, inform the anticipatory and speculatory decisions made.

Figure 18 Diagram representing the reinforcing relationship between experimenting and the generation of knowledge, generated by the researcher, 2023



In the following section, I discuss the forms of knowledge that are generated from this 'improvisational' learning as practical knowledge (Scott, 1999) and embodied expertise (Björkman, 2018). Moreover, I argue that because of this embodied expertise, the collective

labour of infrastructural repair is carried out with a deep sense of intimacy, and a slowness at occupations.

5.2. Embodied expertise

The core group with whom I engaged had developed a clear and in-depth knowledge base about the building and the community at CGH. For example, Quintin and Ismael illustrate below how City plumbers have left repairs at CGH unfinished because they lack the practical knowledge (Scott, 1998) of the building and its spaces required to perform repairs.

> *"The thing is, they bring 4 plumbers, why can't they take people here? Cause we know the whole layout of this place already, so we can tell you exactly where to turn, where to go straight. We know it, they don't know it." (Ismael, 2023)*

> *"We know the building by now. We are 7 years here, so we know the ins and outs of this building. If you tell me, we must go power off, there's a fire breaking out, I know immediately where to go and how. Other plumbers come here, they say it's too difficult, cause you have to go in this cavity I showed you. You must climb in there… He should go further through, but he packed up, he said 'No, I'm finished'. Otherwise the people would sit without water." (Quintin, 2023)*

The knowledge base generated from improvised learning, as demonstrated by Quintin and Ismael above, aligns with Scott's (1996) 'practical knowledge.' This is a knowledge base which has been developed over years of "close and astute observation" of (Scott; 1996: 324) and engagement with the building, its infrastructure network, its spaces and the community. As such, this is a knowledge base which has been made 'in practice'; through labouring in spaces, becoming a highly localised knowledge base that is shared among the core group (Scott; 1996: 315, 316, 317, 324; De Coss-Corzo, 2021). This practical knowledge has become embodied to the core group (Scott; 1996: 315), becoming what Björkman (2018) has termed an 'embodied expertise.'

Embodied expertise, a form of practical knowledge (De Coss-Corzo, 2021: 241), is generated from the resident's collective labour 'in practice' and in space. The core group's embodied expertise is

also drawn on in the performance of collective labour. As Quintin says, *'I know immediately where to go … you have to go in this cavity I showed you. You must climb in there.'*

The body is crucial to the performance of the collective labour, as the body contains the archive of practical knowledge - the awkward angles in which Jason must bend his neck in order to see if all the small holes have been patched up is an exercise of determining which materials may still be needed to complete the job. After using the neck to ascertain the remaining damage, Quintin and Jason can decide if they need to draw on the materials they brought along out of anticipation and speculation.

Indeed, the core group's sense of deeply knowing the building and the community was made apparent to me through my own body. All of the times I had to ask where something was, or be reminded where something was kept, or those times that I did the wrong thing made it apparent to me that I remained an outsider lacking an embodied understanding of the space. There were numerous times when I would be walking next to someone and, because they knew where we were going and I did not, they might have turned right, while I kept walking straight. Stumbling back to catch up with them again indicated something mundane and perhaps obvious: that the residents know the space, and I do not; they have been living here for 7 years, and I have not; and they have learned the space, where I have not.

As with public worker's practices of patchwork urbanism in Mexico City (De Coss-Corzo, 2021: 241), the core group at CGH also share differential degrees of embodied expertise; some having developed the skills to perform the collective labour more than others. Practical knowledge is often passed on through apprenticeship (Scott, 1996: 316), with Faldilah and others always learning from Melissa; and with Quintin teaching Jason and other young men like him; and Boeta Nazeem struggling to find others who are interested to learn how to run the Feeding Scheme. At CGH, in addition to the learning that takes place in practice, residents also volunteer skills that they already have from domestic labour, prior or existing work, and learn through external networks who volunteer information and suggest training and skills development workshops.

Scott (1996: 324) argues that the marginal economic status of practitioners of practical knowledge is an impetus for close and astute observation of their local environments, contributing to the generation of a practical body of knowledge. Read in this light, the resident's exclusion from the formal housing market, their existence in a state of 'waithood' for subsidised housing opportunities, and their embodiment of the challenges of living in an occupied building has, taken together, necessitated that they improvise on the repurposing and reusing of materials. Moreover, the City's active dis-engagement has meant that the residents have had to learn the building and its spaces in practice, through trial and error, relying only on each other and the space, developing a highly localised embodied expertise in the process.

This 'body of knowledge' ranges from emergency to long-term crisis management strategies; networks of support, aid, knowledge sharing, care, community parenting, income generation and personal development opportunities; and daily strategies of care and behaviour policing informed by resident's personalities and positionalities. As Bhan (2019: 646) reminds us, rather than being the domain of a particular profession or field, "those practitioners with reputation or experience have knowledge that can be accessed … repair can hence be seen as a mode of practice that draws upon forms of public and proximate knowledge. This does not mean that this knowledge is not complex, but that it is available in a variety of contexts and can be accessed from a variety of people."

I argue that the resident's embodied expertise constitutes a body of knowledge worth deep, meaningful engagement by any effort to redevelop the site as affordable or social housing. Moreover, engaging meaningfully, both with the residents at an occupation, and with their terms of engagement, should be considered best practice for regularising occupations as affordable or social housing. Occupied sites that have also been earmarked for affordable or social housing developments should be engaged with as such – as sites that have been laboured into homes in material and affective ways, generating visions which span into resident's futures at the site. To engage with the body of knowledge developed by the residents at CGH means understanding the logics informing the collective labour which has sustained the occupation as a home and as a

political practice over time, and the importance – or not – of these dual functions to the resident's futures at the site. This means making an engaged effort to understand and work with, not against, established rhythms that have sustained the occupation over time. In other words, "taking repair seriously within policy means examining different modes of enhancing, securing and scaling repair as an already existing mode of housing practice" (Bhan, 2019: 647).

Thus far, I have discussed the forms of knowledge that are generated from the 'improvisational' learning at CGH as a kind of practical knowledge (Scott, 1999) known as embodied expertise (Björkman, 2018). Further, I have showed that a mature body of knowledge informs the collective labour practices, and sustains life at the occupation over time. I have argued that this body of knowledge ought to be engaged with and taken seriously in any affordable or social housing redevelopment of the site. Throughout, I have played with De Coss-Corzo's (2021) notion of 'patchwork' to build an argument for the logics informing the functioning and practice of the collective labour at CGH as anticipated and speculated improvisation.

But the infrastructural repair (Scheba and Millington, 2023) being performed at CGH, while similar to patchwork in that it is improvised, anticipated and speculated, and a form of embodied expertise, remains distinct from patchwork in a number of ways. Where patchwork is performed by public workers, infrastructural repair is performed by marginalised urban dwellers. Second, where patchwork is performed in relation to the municipal water grid, infrastructural repair is performed in a building which is the home of the practitioners.

5.2.1. Intimacy and slowness

CGH has been home to the residents for almost 7 years at the time of writing, and those most actively participating in the collective labour have been labouring for and in home for a great portion of this 7 years. They have been doing so alongside neighbours, friends, and family.

My expectations when arriving to the kitchen for the first time, or to the MTT ceiling repairs, contrasted greatly with the atmosphere that I found in these spaces of collective labour. Where I had expected to find a hustle-bustle environment in the kitchen, or a loud and masculine

environment in the MTT, I was met with an intimate atmosphere. This atmosphere was facilitated by the established relationships among the residents, and their sense of being 'at home' and comfortable in the space, which contributed to the intimacy and slowness that infused the space and the labour. Moments of stillness, softness, quiet and mundanity take up a large portion of the day's labour, including moments of laughing together, skinnering, or sharing family stories. As opposed to the hard and fast organising that came to mind when I first thought about these spaces, the collective labour at CGH is intimate, and slow. As Quintin says, *"Here we try to create something, on our own - not as a movement, but as residents that stays here."* This is not to romanticise this work, nor these spaces, but to note the sense of mundanity that permeates the labour; as it does in our own homes when we are cooking, cleaning, gardening or fixing.

Extending infrastructural repair's (Scheba and Millington, 2023) retrofit, repurposing and replacing (Cirolia et al., 2021) practices to include patchwork's anticipation, speculation (De Coss-Corzo, 2021), practical knowledge (Scott, 1998) and embodied expertise (Björkman, 2018) opens up new lenses for analysing repair practices and their functioning and contribution to sustaining an occupation over time. What this analysis has done is to take further Southern urban literature's understanding of improvisation as a mode of southern urban planning (Silver, 2014; Caldeira, 2017; Bhan, 2019), by revealing the body of knowledge that is generated among practitioners from everyday improvisations and experimentations. I have shown how this body of knowledge plays a role in sustaining an occupation over time. This analysis has also recognised repair - in its material and affective sense – as generating a mature body of knowledge worth meaningful engagement in any redevelopment of an occupation as affordable or social housing.

I contribute to the literature on repair by characterising the labour of home- and life-making at an occupation by a sense of intimacy and slowness, and suggest further research explore this further. Performed in the intimate space of the home, however, the collective labour sustaining the occupation can easily be romanticised or valorised, which risks perpetuating gendered relations of care and exhaustion (Scheba and Millington, 2023). In the following section, I discuss

the role of gender, care and exhaustion in sustaining the occupation over time, drawing attention to the exhausting, frustrating and unequal dimensions of the labour as it plays out in practice.

5.3. Exhaustion: gender and care

Despite not being an initial lens of analysis, gender did play a notable role in either enabling or inhibiting the functioning of the labour. In the kitchen, maintenance and security and safety teams, more traditional gender roles were in place, however implicitly, which guided the functioning of the labour. Wife chopping and cleaning the veggies and chicken necks, and husband handling the big buckets and pots, gendered roles seem to support the functioning of the labour in the kitchen. But people also do what they feel comfortable doing or find joy in. Boeta Nazeem found joy in preparing the spices, for example, and what does gender have to do with that? Though not closed off to women's participation, the MTT and SSTT consist only of men, who deliberate in men's meetings, and who perform the traditionally masculine roles of tinkering, fixing, protecting and safe-keeping. Men's meetings also seemed to perform a productive role for the occupation, in pooling ideas and skills to inform repairs. In these spaces, while the responsibilities that people took on were not explicitly informed by their gender, and one's gender did not prevent or force them to take on any specific responsibilities, socialisation may play a role in determining people's comfortability performing certain responsibilities over others.

The Garden, however, was a space where gender relations were contested and struggled over. Men were needed in the garden to perform some of those more strenuous tasks, but the gardening team consistently struggled to get more men to participate. These challenges led to frustrations among the gardening team, but they were also recognised as challenges beyond the garden team, and among most residents at the occupation. For example, at the Garden Re-launch Event in July 2023, the youth choreographed and performed a dance for the public and resident attendees. While the girls performed a dance to 'Work' by Rihanna, the boys sat on chairs to their side and watched them dance. When the performance was over, the resident who volunteers as head of the after-school youth day-care informed everyone that the performance intended to

draw light to the need for men to participate in the gardening, and stop 'watching the women work' in the garden.

That Melissa and Faldilah had to 'do everything' in a space thought of as collective and community-based; due to a lack of participation in general and a lack of male participation more specifically, were leading causes of frustration and exhaustion among the gardening team. Frustrations and bouts of exhaustion and burnout led to pauses in the gardening labour, which could last anywhere from a few weeks to a few months. These challenges have hindered the garden's capacity and potential to realise its ideal vision - a circular relationship with the kitchen, and self-sustainability for the CGH community.

As social reproductive labour, the infrastructural repair in the garden is "burdened by sharpening socio-spatial inequalities" (Doshi, 2017: 126; Corwin and Gidwani, 2021), with gender directly related to the devaluation (Rodríguez-Rocha, 2021: 7) of the gardening labour. But beyond gender playing a role in the collective labour, and beyond the infrastructural repair being socially reproductive labour, there is an ethics of care which extends beyond the task teams and their structure and functioning, to permeate resident's relations with one another. And in permeating resident's relations with one another, this ethics of care also generates exhaustion among the core group.

5.3.1. A cup of sugar

The labour of infrastructural repair is as much about material re-arrangements as it is about the various forms of care that support infrastructure in its life-making capacity (Scheba and Millington, 2023: 10). This ethics of care is seen in the cup of sugar that Aunty Nadeema is happy to give to the kids when they knock on her door, the community parenting that is encouraged among the adults, the behaviour policing, and the shoulder to cry on that is offered or requested in times of distress. These 'labours of love' are crucial in sustaining the community in that they support a network of care, aid and solidarity. In this sense, when "paired with an ethics of care, repair can be transformative" (Ramakrishnan and O'Reilly, 2023: 93).

Resident's age, culture, gender, personality and leadership position in the occupation also play a role in informing who is relied on for care, and the kinds of care strategies imposed. Women in leadership positions, or among the core group, are most often relied on for a cup of sugar, or a shoulder to cry on or converse with in cases of domestic disputes. Men like Ismael, who residents like, respect and fear, use their position among the community as a tool to maintain order by means of 'friendly disciplining,' mitigating the risks of the criminalising narrative about occupations. Aunty Nadeema, similarly, by her very presence in a room, demands a certain level of respect as an older aunty in the coloured and Muslim culture. These socio-cultural dynamics are part and parcel of the ethics of care, or the labour of love, supporting life at the occupation. But this ethics of care also contributes to the core group's exhaustion.

5.3.2. An over-extension of the body

The residents with whom I spent time - being the most active members participating in their teams - constantly expressed a difficulty getting other residents to commit to participating in the various labour needed to sustain the occupation. The struggle of a lack of participation was well-rooted at the time of Herold and De Barros' (2020) research at CGH. The core group are also those residents who are most trusted by other residents for a cup of sugar, or for advice. They are those residents who the kids will listen to when told to go inside, or to stop misbehaving.

The core group is not only stretched for capacity at the scale of the labour, they are also relied on by the community for other, more interpersonal, care roles. The exhaustion that they experience is not only a product of the labour, therefore, but of an 'over-extension' of the body beyond the labour, and towards the community's everyday needs. In practice, this 'over-extension' is happening through the circulation of an ethics of care. However happy the core group is to perform this role, it nevertheless contributes to their exhaustion. This aligns with scholars who have noted the labour of repair as a "'felt' experience," performed by the body, recognising the "physically strenuous and exacting" toll that the labour takes on the body (Ramakrishnan and O'Reilly, 2023: 93, see also Doshi, 2017). Exhaustion and burnout has led to

withdrawal from the labour, aligning with Emejulu and Bassel's (2020, 2023) findings on black women activists in the UK.

Some residents in the core group thought that their ties to the Woodstock/Salt River/District Six areas, and that they were of the first residents to move into CGH, signifies their greater dedication to the RTC movement and, thereby, their greater commitment to participating in collective labour. This draws a link between sense of place, length of time living in the occupation, commitment to the movement and participation in the collective labour. Taking this link as true would mean thinking of the collective labour of the core group as 'motivated by affective investment' (Ramakrishnan and O'Reilly, 2023: 92, 93; Bosworth, 2023). In other words, an impetus to act is generated from an emotive response to dispossession.

It was indeed the case that Melissa and Faldilah were driven by affect in their continued committed to gardening. If an affective investment to infrastructure enables the performance of the collective labour, then it also contributes to sustaining the occupation over time. But the ethics of care also generates exhaustion among the core group, when there are no other hands willing or able to participate, and the body must over-extend itself.

In portraying exhaustion as an 'over-extension' I do not mean to discount those factors contributing to exhaustion, such as, the precarities of living in an occupation, the everyday surveillance (or the more spectacular violence) of the state, nor the commitment to movement rules, meeting attendance and participating. Rather, I extend these contributing factors to include the ethics of care which circulates and permeates the everyday labour of life- and home-making at the occupation. In doing so, I am recognising this ethics of care as also motivated by the affective remembering of life in Woodstock, before dispossession, when community life involved borrowing sugar from neighbours, crying together, looking after each other's kids, and sharing meals. This ethics of care has both emancipatory and exhausting potentials. It is both an impetus to act, and a generator of burnout and withdrawal.

In its insistence on remembering, it is the foundation of Scheba and Millington's (2023) 'labour of refusal.' In its potential for prefiguring more meaningful engagements between residents and the state - by engaging in the now with neighbours, friends and family - it is one mode of enacting Scheba and Millington's (2023) 'prefigurative labour'. I align with authors who argue that labour, as a reparative act, has transformative potential when paired with an ethics of care (Ramakrishnan and O'Reilly, 2023). Here I think about care's reflection of an affective investment; signalling a commitment to sustaining life at an occupation, and as an enactment of prefigurative labour (Scheba and Millington, 2023). I would also argue for recognising care's exhausting potentials: as rooted in remembering life before dispossession, and; when there are no other hands who are willing or able to participate, in the over-extension of the body. But despite exhaustion, burnout and withdrawal tendencies, the core group continue to put one foot in front of the other, continuing to show up to their task teams.

5.3.3. Defiant and hopeful endurance

Scheba and Millington's (2023) labour of defiant and hopeful endurance connects those practices of co-design with those everyday practices of community-building that work to resist displacement in the present and heal generational wounds associated with past displacement. They note that these are everyday practices which cut across spaces, and also surface powerfully in moments of pressure, such as the recent fire and police raids in 2022.

Although the authors note the internal pressure of the fire, much of this labour is positioned as in resistance to injustices perpetrated by the state. For example, they draw on the co-design process as a response to eviction concerns, or, they present CGH as a site of healing for generational wounds by an affective mode of repair that is made evident through the networks of care that sustain the occupation. The authors look between the community and those official logics that foster dispossession, for tensions that, despite which, residents continue to put one foot in front of the other in practice of the labour of defiant endurance.

I suggest that mobilising Ngwenya and Cirolia's (2021) tradition of not just looking between the state and communities, but also among the state and among communities, offers new insights into the labour of defiant endurance. Looking among the CGH community, the core group always drew a difference between themselves, and the residents who were not willing or able to actively participate. The degree of affective investment (Bosworth, 2023; Ramakrishnan and O'Reilly, 2023) among CGH residents led to conflicting rationalities (Watson, 2003) stemming from what it takes to stay at an occupation: participation and commitment, or only the need for a home. These caused tensions among the residents.

Tensions were already well rooted among the CGH community when I began my fieldwork, and the residents had iteratively tried to mitigate these tensions over the years. I have outlined some of these challenges, such as lack of participation, gender relations and exhaustion, but these issues extend to issues of transparency, accountability and representation in the resident-leadership dynamics, and issues of safety related to drugs at the occupation. I argue for an extension of the labour of defiant endurance to include these internal challenges that, despite which, residents continued to put one step in front of the other (Scahill and Kaba, 2021 in Scheba and Millington, 2023), in hope for improvements to the urban experiment that is life at CGH. Melissa makes this sentiment explicit,

> *"Some people also have lost hope. Some people have this, really, there are people who have lost hope…Because I'm telling you, there's been people being there for this occupation, I've been running with them, and there is people who was losing hope - on the structure, on the rules, different things. For instance, you are my leader, I bring [you] the thing [issue/complaint], you don't notice it [or do anything about it], tomorrow it's someone else [doing the same thing]. We want the government to hear us, but we doing the same story here… There's a deep, deep, deep, deep, deep, deep side in the story of the occupation. For me, it's like,... I'm doing it for my own knowledge. And the second part is, ya there is lies, but still I'm gonna continue because I'm hoping for a better outcome at the end of the day. Because, like I was saying, you meet people on this political things and doors can open for you…" (Melissa, 2023)*

The political role of the collective labour in reaching for the state, and the tensions generated from this double-role also reflected deeply rooted tensions; specifically among the gardening team. Despite these internal tensions and challenges, the core group continued to put one foot in front of the other; returning to the labour even if after weeks of withdrawal from burnout. This aligns with the literature on affective investment, and its tendency to be an impetus to act, and a signal of resignation (Bosworth, 2023). In other words, the core group's affective investment in CGH, the movement, and the Woodstock neighbourhood, is both their reason for participating in the collective labour in such a committed way, and a contributor to their exhaustion, burnout and withdrawal as they over-extend themselves.

Rather than arguing that people who have all the odds stacked against them will continue to put one foot in front of the other, I am arguing that if this collective labour is to be considered crucial in sustaining the model of occupation, then we ought to consider the exhausting and frustrating dynamics of the labour as well. Questions that arise should be how to mitigate the negative potentials inherent in an affective investment to repairing infrastructure, and how to take care of those relied on for care.

Thus far, I have discussed how the labour of everyday survival in occupations is, indeed, equally political labour, as it holds prefigurative potentials for housing delivery models, if engaged meaningfully and with account for the disproportionate exhaustion rendered to occupying residents. But aside from everyday labour having political possibilities and potentials, there is also an overtly political labour sustaining the CGH occupation into the long-term: the labour of reaching. In the following section, I discuss 'reaching for the state' as a mode of state engagement that can be read through Caldeira's (2017) transversal logics.

5.4. Reaching as a transversal logic

I have employed the phrase 'reaching for the state' to demonstrate what happens when occupying communities are faced with state dis-engagement and the threat of eviction. Taking the decision not to wait for their futures to be decided on their behalf, the CGH residents have

'reached for the state' to sustain the occupation into the future. As demonstration to the public of their capacity to be engaged, the collective labour at the everyday scale comes to serve a political purpose. However, this dual role of the labour – in its capacity to contribute to resident's everyday lives, and project into the future an alternative housing model – has also generated tensions internally, which has led to distrust in the co-design among some of the residents.

Below, I present the reach for the state according to three aspects, naming these the reach for information, the reach for engagement, and the reach for legitimacy. Elaborating on these three aspects, I discuss the notion of 'reaching' as a transversal logic guiding the resident's approach to state engagement, building towards an argument for considering 'reaching' as a labour in and of itself as it works collectively to sustain the occupation into a secure future. Finally, I make suggestions for realising the full potential of the co-design effort, through attending to some of the existing, deep-rooted challenges that the core group experiences at the everyday scale.

5.4.1. The reach for information

First, as a result of the state's dis-engagement, the residents have had to 'reach' to find and draw on what is known about the City's social housing plans for the site, using this information to inform their counter-proposal. In this reach for information, the occupation side-steps planning laws and the property market while simultaneously operating within them (Caldeira, 2017: 3) – relying on external networks of professional planners, architects, lawyers, and researchers, but also on City-commissioned documents to substantiate and guide the development of the proposal.

I have argued that, despite their dis-engagement, the City is not altogether absent from the co-design, but exists in a diluted form through the official logics drawn on from City-commissioned documents. As opposed to their outright absence from the planning of CGH, therefore, official logics of planning are engaged transversally. The co-design has cut across established systems of planning - it has engaged and been guided by planning laws, policies and norms by including City

documents in the co-design, but it has also challenged and redefined planning as it principally counters the top-down social housing model.

5.4.2. The reach for engagement

The 'reach' for engagement shows that the residents still see a role for the City in the co-design, actively calling on the state to join their discussions and consider an alternative to the top-down social housing model. The co-design has defied formal spaces where they have proved unjust and limiting (Miraftab, 2009: 37), seen in the decision not to wait patiently for the state to engage, nor to deliver them housing, but to put together a proposal and establish relations with other stakeholders such as architects, urban designers, lawyers, and researchers. But the co-design has also sought to use formal spaces where they may be advantageous (Miraftab, 2009: 37), continually calling on the state to engage with them, to attend their gatherings, and to visit the space. This 'fluidity' of spatial practices (Miraftab, 2009) also resonates with Caldeira's notion of transversal logics: cutting across established planning systems.

As opposed to the quiet, out of gaze nature of the occupations documented by Bayat (1997) across the Middle East, the CGH residents have not only sustained the occupation in the everyday, immediate sense through developing mature strategies of collective labour, they have also experimented with local governance and administration (Caldeira, 2017: 9) to plan the future redevelopment of the building. This is not to say that the reach for engagement does not happen in land occupations in urban peripheries, or in land or building occupations that were not linked to an NGO from the outset. Indeed, these kinds of occupations similarly engage with the state in transversal ways for site upgrades and basic services, urbanising neighbourhoods and cities, but

at CGH there is a more overtly political call being made for a new kind of affordable or social housing model which legitimises the occupier as a planner.[26]

5.4.3. The reach for legitimacy

The co-design's fundamental demand – to be engaged as legitimate planners, with an established embodied expertise of the site – is a significant reach for legitimacy. This is not a reach that seeks to claim legitimacy by any means necessary; it is not an insurgent claim. Rather, this is a plea to experiment and play with the existing models of delivering affordable and social housing in the city, and to consider an alternative model *with* and *for* the residents currently occupying the earmarked site. Such a regularisation policy is unchartered territory for the City of Cape Town.

Of course, the City can be set aside entirely, and, indeed, the co-design is exploring entrepreneurial routes, such as registering as a social housing entity and incrementally building up their capacities and resources to build family units. The co-design is exploring various possible routes to realise long-term housing security at the site. Whether the City engages with them or not, the co-design continues to explore different possibilities, just as it continues to invite the City to engage with them. The reach for legitimacy is, therefore, not an effort to be seen as legitimate by any state or other body, it is an effort to establish long-term housing security: to manifest an alternative model that caters to the gap market and to the resident's material and affective housing needs.

Although framed as a decision not to wait, the co-design manifests in the same 'state of limbo' associated with waiting for housing in a South African context (Oldfield and Greyling, 2015). Operating in a "terrain where the state is both present and absent and citizens are legitimate and

[26] There are specificities that distinguish CGH from peripheral land occupations, and from other inner city building occupations in Johannesburg for example. Although, not much can be said further in this regard without a comparative study, which I suggest further research explore into.

illegal" (Oldfield and Greyling, 2015: 1110), it is in the temporalities and politics of waiting that the CGH residents have been shaping their futures at the site.

In this section, I have discussed 'reaching' as a transversal logic guiding the resident's approach to state engagement. The discussion has presented reaching as a labour in and of itself, if a more overtly political labour, as it works collectively to sustain the occupation into a secure future through reaching for information, reaching for engagement, and reaching for legitimacy. Reaching can be seen as a more overtly political labour because of its objective to map onto the future resident's material and affective ideas and visions, and because of the way it seeks to re-create a more desirable model for delivering subsidised housing to low-income groups.

Its use of the collective labour in demonstration to the state and to the public shows that, although reaching has political objectives, it remains in dialogue with the everyday scale – indeed, reliant on it. This reliance comes with tensions, however, which threaten the success of the reach as it creates friction among the community, and highlights diverging ideas for the future. I suggest that the leadership at CGH would benefit from scaling up, and financially acknowledging existing repair practices in the task teams, which would enable the labour of reaching by mitigating frictions, enabling the political role of the collective labour at an even greater scale.

Chapter 6: Summary and Conclusion

Land and building occupations are one of the most pervasive models of accessing housing and basic services across the global south (UN Habitat, 2022; Silver, 2014; Caldeira, 2017; Bhan, 2019). Motivated by efforts to decolonise planning, and planning imaginaries (Miraftab, 2009; Bhan, 2019), this dissertation has taken their pervasive quality as grounds to enquire into occupations as existing models of housing provisioning – taking occupations seriously as models of housing provisioning, and taking marginalised urban dwellers seriously as everyday planners. Following from recent literature that has established the labour of everyday survival in occupations as equally political labour (Scheba and Millington, 2023: 3; Saaristo, 2022; Cirolia et.al, 2021; Burgum and Vasudevan, 2023; Vasudevan, 2015a; 2015b; Bhan, 2019), the dissertation has asked, '*What is the role of collective labour in sustaining an occupation over time at the everyday and political scales?*'

Enquiring into occupations as models of housing provisioning, the notion of 'the labouring body' (Ramakrishnan and O'Reilly, 2023) has proved useful as an empirical site; providing an attentive, intimate and embodied reading of southern urban planning and repair practices, as a conceptual site; tying together disparate bodies of literature on southern urban planning, infrastructures, repair and affect which, alone, would be insufficient for this study, and as a methodological tool; insisting on the use of the body – of the researcher, and their participants – to generate data.

The research was conducted at the Cissie Gool House building occupation in Cape Town, through five months of ethnographic fieldwork including participant observation, deep hanging out and interviews. The study was limited to four of the occupation's spaces of collective labour – the kitchen, the garden, the maintenance team and the security and safety team. The use of my own body as a methodological tool meant spending time contributing to the labour, learning from doing, being in the spaces of collective labour, and paying attention to all of my senses. This methodological approach contributed to generating an attentive, intimate and embodied understanding of the everyday and political making and sustaining of the occupation.

The findings show that the core group of residents who volunteer their labour have developed mature strategies; blending between planned and organic strategies and often cutting across spaces, which have sustained the occupation over time by responding to various challenges related to living at an occupation. Strategies include prevention strategies, rapid responses, future planning and long-term strategies to respond to crises like the risk of fire; community parenting and networks of care to keep the kids safe; daily repairs, new infrastructural connections and modernising projects to maintain the safety of the ageing building; peer-to-peer behaviour policing to de-criminalise the stigma placed on occupations; and strategies to incentivise participation to meet financial and food security needs. These strategies have sustained the occupation at the everyday scale. As crucial evidence to the state, and to the public, of a model of resident-led building management, the strategies of collective labour have come to serve a political objective in the occupation's co-design process. Faced with state dis-engagement and the threat of eviction, the occupation's co-design process has 'reached for the state' in attempt to sustain the occupation into the future.

Motivated to bring infrastructural labour, affect and repair into the orbit of southern urban planning, I have advance four main contributions in the discussion:

1. Where improvisation has been noted among southern urban planning scholars as a method of planning (Silver, 2014; Caldeira, 2017), the notion of labour reveals the sense of anticipation and speculation (De Coss-Corzo, 2021) that enables improvised repair practices at CGH. As such, improvisation and experimentation generates a knowledge base among practitioners (Graham and Thrift, 2007).

2. The knowledge generated from everyday repairs to infrastructures becomes embodied to practitioners, constituting a form of practical knowledge (Scott, 1999) known embodied expertise (Björkman, 2018). This embodied expertise is worth unpacking, understanding, and engaging with meaningfully in any co-design or redevelopment of occupations as affordable or social housing. I have also contributed to the literature on

repair, to characterise the infrastructural repair by a sense of intimacy and a slowness, noting the mundanity that permeates the everyday performance of the labour.

3. Where labours of love are crucial in sustaining the community in that they support a network of care, aid and solidarity, the ethics of care circulated by the core group also contributes to the core group's exhaustion. The exhaustion that they experience is not only a product of the labour, but of an 'over-extension' of the body beyond the labour, and towards the community's everyday needs. This is especially a challenge in light of low participation in the collective labour, and low participation is a particularly gendered struggle in the garden. Resident's age, culture, gender, personality, leadership positions and commitment to the movement also inform who is relied on for care, and the kinds of care strategies imposed. This ethics of care has both emancipatory (Ramakrishnan and O'Reilly, 2023; Jeffrey and Dyson, 2020; Scheba and Millington, 2023) and exhausting potentials. It is both an impetus to act, and a generator of burnout and withdrawal (Emejulu and Bassel, 2020; 2023; Bosworth, 2023). Nevertheless, the core group continued to show up, despite bouts of withdrawal, and despite ongoing internal challenges and tensions, in practice of the labour of 'defiant and hopeful endurance' (Scheba and Millington, 2023), hoping for improvements to the urban experiment that is life at CGH.

4. The labour of everyday survival in occupations is, indeed, political labour, as it holds prefigurative potentials for housing delivery models, if engaged meaningfully and with account for the disproportionate exhaustion rendered to occupying residents. But aside from everyday labour having political possibilities and potentials, there is a more overtly political labour sustaining the occupation into the long-term, which I have called the labour of 'reaching'. As a transversal logic (Caldeira, 2017) guiding the resident's approach to state engagement, 'reaching' works collectively to sustain an occupation into a secure future by (1) reaching for information, (2) reaching for engagement, and (3) reaching for legitimacy.

The lens of 'the labouring body' has shown empirical, conceptual and methodological value in the enquiry into the making and sustaining of occupations at their everyday and political scales. The lens has revealed the mature strategies of collective labour which have sustained the occupation at the everyday scale, and the political possibilities inherent in this collective labour, in its capacity to sustain the occupation into the future; amidst, and despite, state dis-engagement, the threat of eviction and structural precarities. As such, the study's insistence on the use of the body to generate data has facilitated a more attentive, intimate, and embodied enquiry into, and documentation of, southern urban planning and repair practices. In so doing, 'the labouring body' has tied together disparate bodies of literature on southern urban planning, repair, infrastructures and affect, which, alone, would be insufficient to hold this study together.

In light of the empirical, conceptual and methodological contributions of the lens of 'the labouring body', the dissertation advocates for an 'embodied turn' in the study of southern urban planning and repair practices, which would greatly advance the project of decolonising planning. That is to say that, as scholars of southern urban planning, infrastructures, and repair, it is not enough to simply recognise residents in occupations as planners, and thereby stop the project of decolonising planning by validating the everyday planner; as I argue scholars of southern urban planning have done. Moreover, it is not enough to only engage with the transformative, prefigurative, future-making potential of the labour, as the literature on repair has done. Rather, and especially as scholars motivated by scholar activism, we should engage more attentively with the actual 'labour' that is performed by the everyday planner – and ask questions like, what does it take to perform this labour, what is its physical and emotional toll on the body? What is its potential to make, sustain and repair infrastructures and communities in material and affective ways, and are there any adverse effects of the labour on the body, or to the sustenance of the model? The knitting together of these bodies of literature would really take the project of decolonising planning to a more mature point.

Further research following from this embodied turn are encouraged to enquire into occupations in their own geographies as models of housing provisioning, remaining in dialogue between the

everyday and political scales. Comparative studies between occupations within or across geographies would be valuable in shedding light on the specificities within occupations, and the similarities across occupations, which allow them to be sustained at both scales over time; or those specificities and similarities which threaten their sustenance. Moreover, future research should enquire into the sense of intimacy and slowness that may permeate the labour in its everyday performance at other occupations. For example, there could be a deeper relationship between the development of an embodied expertise, the sense of intimacy and the slowness with which the labour is performed, and an affective attachment to an occupied space.

But embodied enquiries into occupations are not a terrain limited to academics – state and professional planners should be concerned with how occupations are sustained over time as well. The embodied expertise held among residents in an occupation will prove to be of value in efforts to redevelop occupied sites as affordable or social housing; that is, if these new developments are to contribute to spatial justice. Although policies to regularise and co-design occupations into social housing with the residents of an occupation are not commonplace in Cape Town, regularisation and co-design policies present a just pathway towards delivering social housing. There should be further research into models of regularising and co-designing occupations, and local governments like the City of Cape Town should consider these models, play with them, and experiment with possibilities using local financing arrangements and South African law, to inform best practices. State and professional planners should see value in engaging with everyday planners, and scaling and working with the rhythms which show evidence to sustain an occupation. In light of the exhaustive potentials inherent in an affective investment to infrastructures, I suggest some guiding questions for policy and research: questions that arise should centre on mitigating the negative potentials inherent in an affective investment to infrastructures, and how to take care of those who are disproportionately relied on for care.

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