Politics of Belonging and Alienation: Underprivileged Communities' Experiences of the False Bay Nature Reserve

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Declaration

I know that plagiarism is wrong and that I cannot use another author's work and pretend that it is my own. This thesis is my own work. I used the APA in-text (2022) referencing style for in-text citations and the reference list. This work has not previously been submitted in whole or in part for the award of any degree.

Robin Breedeveld: Signed by candidate Date: 25/08/2024

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"Our legacy won't be how pretty our gardens looked; our legacy will be how our gardens and other managed spaces woke us to a revolution of belonging in this world, a renaissance of ethical thinking that helped us evolve into our fullest potential as stewards of life and gardeners of our own hearts" (Vogt, 2017).

Abstract

This thesis examines the experiences of underprivileged local communities surrounding the False Bay Nature Reserve in Cape Town, focusing on their sense of belonging or alienation. Conservation efforts often inhibit local communities' sense of belonging to nature, as they are seen as detrimental to conservation goals. This human alienation from nature conservation is prevalent across Africa due to a history of colonialism, racial discrimination and processes of exclusion. This further marginalises communities already facing spatial, social and economic exclusion in townships. Drawing on a diverse body of literature, this thesis examines concepts of alienation and belonging in human-nature interactions in the False Bay Nature Reserve. It employs qualitative methods, including in-depth interviews and ethnographic methods such as participant observation, to capture local voices and perspectives. The findings indicate that the underprivileged township communities living around the False Bay Nature Reserve experience strong feelings of alienation and non-belonging. Several factors emerged through the study, including the structural and spatial organisation of the nature reserves in the context of the so-called coloured townships; communities' precarious economic circumstances; and deeply rooted identity crises alienating the coloured communities from their heritage and connections to nature. The study, however, also identifies various initiatives that aim to enhance belonging to nature, such as Environmental Education (EE), community organisations, and employment opportunities in the nature reserve. In addition, Rastafarians in the community serve as custodians of both nature and indigenous knowledge, helping to restore the community's relationship with nature and its indigenous identity. This thesis suggests that the lingering colonial legacy of urban nature conservation in Cape Town results in a violent and alienating relationship between nature and surrounding local communities. However, it also identifies community-focused initiatives and pathways for reconciliation. By capturing the experiences of a wide variety of community members, this thesis provides an analysis of deeply personal experiences and informal interpersonal interactions with nature that define belonging or alienation to the nature reserve.

Key Words: Urban nature conservation, Alienation, Belonging, Cape Flats communities, Marginalisation

List of abbreviations

CFR	Cape Floristic Region
COCT	City of Cape Town
EE	Environmental Education
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
FOZR	Friends of Zeekoevlei and Rondevlei
LLA	Living Landscapes in Action Project
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
PCO	People and Conservation Officer

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Around the world, people are increasingly disconnected from nature, especially in urban areas where nature has made way for housing, office spaces, malls, roads, and other infrastructure. In 2018, 55% of the global population lived in urban areas, and this percentage is anticipated to increase up to 68% in the next 25 years (United Nations, 2018). In response to the decline in biodiversity and the climate crisis, many governments and private landowners have created nature reserves to protect nature from what is understood to harm them: people. However, it is essential for people to feel connected to nature in order for them to care about its preservation. Paradoxically, nature reserves might exacerbate feelings of detachment and alienation from nature, though this might not manifest in the same ways across different communities. Communities' experiences of belonging to nature vary depending on the historical, spatial and cultural context of the community. This thesis examines the False Bay Nature Reserve, an urban nature reserve in Cape Town, and argues that nature reserves can worsen alienation from nature, especially amongst people who already feel marginalised and alienated from mainstream society.

Pillay (2005) writes that "conceptions of belonging are both central to the violence of South Africa's past, and the relative peace of South Africa's present" (p. 12). "To belong is to have a sense of connection; it implies familiarity, comfort and ease, alongside feelings of inclusion, acceptance and safety" (Koot et al., 2019, p. 346). During colonialism and Apartheid, the South African government proactively included some and excluded others (Pillay, 2005), which had profound consequences for underprivileged communities of colour. African scholars and writers such as Achille Mbembe (2001), Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1998) and Mamdani (1996) wrote about African citizens and how the postcolonial state obscures their sense of self-determination, autonomy, identity, and therefore belonging to their own state. As Nyamnjoh (2023) writes, "debates on citizenship, identity and belonging […] are often deeply entwined with dynamics of inclusion and exclusion around rights, obligations, and entitlements" (p. 350).

In Southern Africa, "claims to belong frequently invoke unique relationships to the land and nature" (Koot et al., 2019, p. 346). In South Africa, colonialism and Apartheid led to land dispossession and racially motivated spatial segregation. As much as nature reserves and conservation sites are created to protect biodiversity and ecosystems, they are also spaces that can be used to exclude people. Many nature reserves in South Africa became legally protected entities when the Apartheid government dispossessed indigenous communities of their land and its use for their livelihoods. In some instances, nature reserves were even used for Afrikaner

nationalist military training (Graham, 2015), conveying strong messages about who belongs to the land and who does not. As Gressier (2010) writes, "inherent to belonging is always the potential for its opposites: insecurity, alienation and exclusion" (p. 245).

In Cape Town, there is a persistent, and very apparent, spatial and social inequality that continues to "exclude racialised and disadvantaged communities from nature reserves through structural inequity" (Tozer et al., 2020, p. 6). Black communities in Cape Town's townships often experience high levels of poverty, unemployment, crime and other socio-economic challenges, and have limited access to nature reserves. This is ironic given that most of the urban nature reserves are on the doorsteps of these townships. In contrast, civil society initiatives to protect nature and increase civic ownership of nature are often white and upper-class (Tozer et al., 2020). As Tozer et al. (2020) point out, "there is a politicised tension between poverty alleviation and nature conservation in Cape Town that positions the question of inclusivity in nature governance at the heart of ongoing post-apartheid transformations" (p. 6). Although humans are increasingly disconnected from nature worldwide due to global developments like digitalisation and urbanisation, it is primarily underprivileged communities of colour that continue to be excluded both from accessing the reserves as well as managing them. This further marginalises these communities (Duffy et al., 2019). This thesis examines the experiences of underprivileged township communities next to the False Bay Nature Reserve, aiming to shed light on the dynamics of alienation from or belonging to nature.

1. Background: Situating the False Bay Nature Reserve and the Cape Flats

Cape Town is one of the most unequal cities in the world, and at the same time, it is a diverse city with many cultures, languages, and ethnicities. The townships that were designated for people of colour during Apartheid, still determine the spatial and socio-economic layout of the city. In Cape Town, alienation and belonging to nature are observed in the context of spatial, social, and economic marginalisation, which adds to the complexity. When considering nature and biodiversity in Cape Town, Table Mountain National Park with its rare fynbos vegetation is often the first to come to mind. There are, however, as many as 24 nature reserves, rich in biodiversity, within the City of Cape Town (COCT) that are managed by the city and are part of the wider Cape Floristic Region (CFR). The nature reserves and their management are shown in the map below.

Figure 1

Note. Map from City of Cape Town, 2008

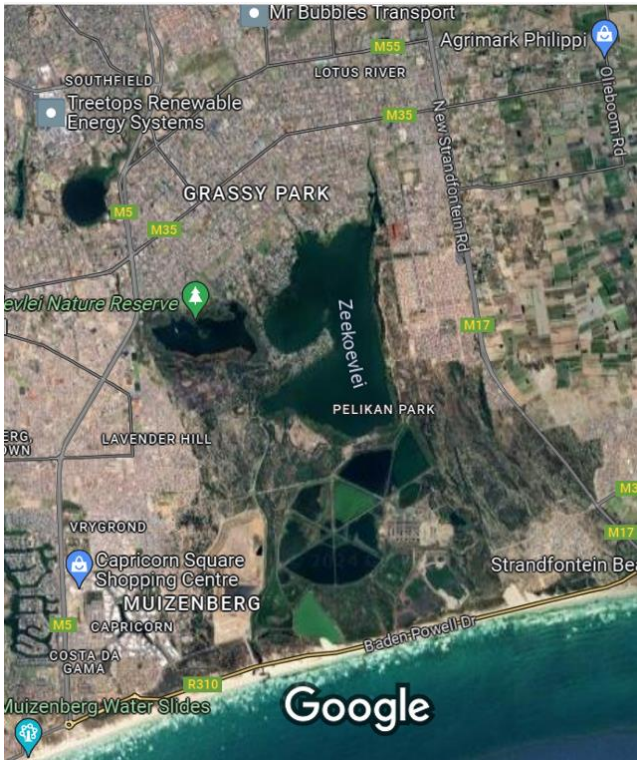
Many of these nature reserves are not in affluent, well-known parts of Cape Town, but in the so-called Cape Flats, often described as "Apartheid's dumping ground" because people of colour were forcibly removed from areas surrounding Table Mountain to "make way" for white people and translocated to these areas. About two-third of Cape Town's residents live in the townships in the Cape Flats (Graham, 2015).

One of the nature reserves in the Cape Flats is the False Bay Nature Reserve, which has six sections: Rondevlei, Zeekoevlei, Strandfontein, Pelican Park, Slangetjiebos and Zandwolf Coastal Section. It is part of the wider False Bay Ecology Park (Cape Town Green Map, 2024). The Rondevlei and Zeekoevlei wetlands, which are by far the biggest and most visited sections of the reserve, host around 278 indigenous plant species, including some that are endangered, and 237 bird species. Hippos were reintroduced in Rondevlei (Fynboslife, 2020). Along the eastern and southern borders of the reserve, many people live in the densely populated townships of Lavender Hill, Lotus River, and Vrygrond.[1] The maps below show the Rondevlei

[1] Also referred to as Capricorn.

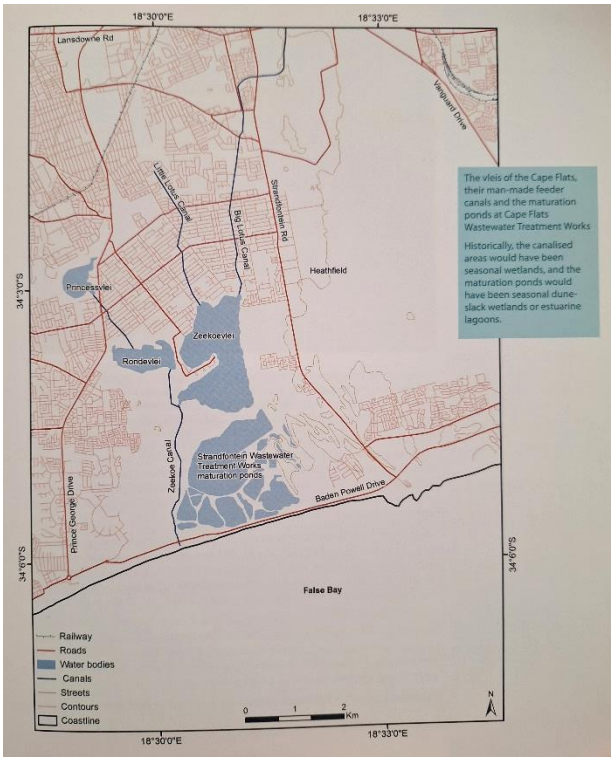
and Zeekoevlei nature reserves and the surrounding neighbourhoods (from left below to right above): Vrygrond, Lavender Hill, Grassy Park and Lotus River.

Figure 2



Note. From Google Earth

Figure 3



Note. From Brown & Rembuluwani (2009)

Before the Apartheid regime declared Rondevlei and Zeekoevlei protected wetlands in 1952, the Khoisan used them for livestock grazing, woodcutting, and fishing (Bam, 2021). The reserves' design was politically motivated: in the 1970s, many residents in the area were forced to sell their land to the state to build an additional "apartheid highway to Muizenberg", today the M5. It served to physically divide Grassy Park and Lavender Hill, areas designated for so-called coloured people, from the Rondevlei Nature Reserve, which was reserved for white people (Gillespie et al., 2021, p.5). To this day, neighbourhoods such as Lavender Hill and Grassy Park are still inhabited by coloured people. The historical legacy of Apartheid's spatial segregation and racial oppression reflects a pattern of alienation where land was repurposed without consulting communities of colour. The history of the townships surrounding the False Bay Nature Reserve warrants an assessment of the complex dynamics of alienation and belonging to the nature reserve today.

2. Research problem: alienation and belonging

Pre-Apartheid, the Khoisan indigenous communities of Rondevlei had close relations with the nature reserve (Bam, 2021; Gillespie et al., 2021). However, the dispossession of their land and the establishment of townships disrupted the way humans lived with and took care of nature (Gillespie et al., 2021). Although there is limited academic literature to describe the disruption in Rondevlei and Zeekoevlei specifically, this sentiment is well represented in the following quote by Bam (2021):

> [Rondevlei] was a place of quintessential indigenous Khoi and San knowledge and ritual practices because it was surrounded by medicinal fynbos. […] But it was always disputed land, a nuisance factor for 'whiteness' – because it was so close to the nature reserve (Bam, 2021, p. 30).

The City of Cape Town pushed local and indigenous communities out of the False Bay Nature Reserve and forcibly evicted coloured people from all over Cape Town into designated townships such as Lavender Hill and Grassy Park. Bam (2021) and Gillespie et al. (2021) write that this, inter alia, led to the loss of indigenous knowledge of flora and fauna in the reserve, suggesting an alienation of the inhabitants from nature.

Alienation implies "estrangement", a disconnect between humans and nature or a declining relationship between them. Some are in favour of reduced interaction between humans and nature in order to limit harm and for nature to restore itself (Cafaro et al., 2017; Mogg et al., 2019; Wuerthner et al., 2015). Other scholars counter this discourse, arguing that "humans are a part of nature, not separate from it" (Costanza et al., 2007, p. 522). They argue for a sense of belonging of humans to nature, the stark opposite of alienation. Achieving a sense of belonging amongst surrounding communities is important: Costanza et al. (2007) and Soga & Gaston (2023) claim nature conservation has not been as successful as it could be due to the mainstream belief that people essentially inhibit environmental sustainability (Agrawal & Gibson, 1999). It has been argued and proven by multiple scholars that a more integrated approach to nature conservation yields positive results for both humans and the preservation of nature (Rasolofoson et al., 2017; Robinson, 2006; Soga & Gaston, 2023). For that reason, the agency of local communities should be put at the centre of conservation practices (Rasolofoson et al., 2017). As Adams & McShane (1996) write: "the future of conservation lies in getting the cooperation, understanding and participation of the local people" (p. 139).

The Cape Flats "remain poor, have high unemployment, crime and substance abuse rates" (Graham, 2015). This creates stark inequalities with the previously designated white areas of Cape Town around Table Mountain. These socio-economic problems have

implications for human interaction with nature: research shows that Cape Flats inhabitants were not engaging with local nature parks because of a lack of safety and the prevalence of crime and violence (Graham, 2015). Human alienation from nature is prevalent across the African continent due to the long history of colonialism, racial discrimination and exclusion that marginalised communities (Duffy et al., 2019). As Duffy et al. (2019) state: "conservation can mirror and recreate past injustices, which risks alienating inhabitants of conservation spaces. […] Militarised conservation tactics in specific contexts in South Africa often resemble apartheid-era counterinsurgency practices" (p. 68). Literature has shown that in many cases in Africa, nature conservation alienates humans from nature and that it can happen in violent and exclusionary ways (Awuh, 2016; Brockington & Igoe, 2006; Ramutsindela et al., 2022; Riddell, 2013; Nustad, 2011), raising critical concerns about environmental justice (Huff & Naess, 2022). Many of these preceding studies have aimed to capture the social impact on local communities living around nature conservation areas. There is, however, a lack of understanding of how the wider spatial and socio-economic marginalisation of township communities influences alienation from nature. The field of political ecology captures the complex interaction of politics, history, the power of institutions and conservation. This is particularly important to address in cases with complex colonial histories of racial segregation and oppression, like in the Cape Flats.

In this thesis, I argue that those living in underprivileged township communities around the False Bay Nature Reserves experience strong feelings of alienation. This has multiple dimensions such as the spatial and structural alienation from the nature reserve, the precarious socio-economic circumstances communities are faced with, and deeply rooted identity crises that alienate the coloured[2] community from both heritage and nature. The structural and spatial dimension of alienation is interconnected with the cultural dimension of alienation, as shown in *Geographies of Exclusion*¸ where Sibley (1995) adds a more identity-based factor to the conceptualisation of spatial marginalisation. Sibley argues that dominant, elite and powerful social groups exercise control over other groups by creating "socio-spatial boundaries", resulting in the marginalisation of the non-dominant group (Trudeau & McMorran, 2011, p. 441). This directly relates to the creation of different social identities, as it assumes one identity

[2] During Apartheid people were put into different categories on the basis of their skin colour. The people that had African, Bantu descent were categorised as "Black", and those that were mixed race and often with lighter skin tones but not white were categorised as "Coloured". They may have indigenous Khoisan, African, European and Asian ancestry and are intermixed. In South Africa, coloured people have a distinct culture, language (Afrikaans), and heritage. More about this community and terminology for this group of people will be discussed in Chapter 4: Methodology, section 5.

group to be the normative group, and the other group to be "the other". There are many examples and studies of spatial and political marginalisation in Cape Town (Swilling, 2010); however, we lack knowledge on how communities living around the False Bay Nature Reserve experience the reserve and nature and how it influences their daily lives. Such an understanding is important when moving away from alienation to belonging and engagement with nature, which is of utmost importance if we aim to preserve nature sustainably and inclusively. This study takes the unique case of the False Bay Nature Reserve and the under-researched surrounding communities as a starting point to understand how urban nature conservation continues to exclude and marginalise communities.

3. Research questions and objectives

This thesis aims to examine the following overarching research question:

- How do the underprivileged local communities around the False Bay Nature Reserve experience nature conservation, and how are they affected by it?

This research question includes the following sub-questions:

- What is the effect of the spatial and structural organisation of the False Bay Nature Reserve on the marginalisation of local communities and their sense of belonging to nature?
- What is the impact of the False Bay Nature Reserve on local communities' sense of identity and heritage?

The aim of this study is:

1. To identify what contributes to local communities' sense of alienation from or belonging to the False Bay Nature Reserve;
2. To capture the voices of local people who have been systemically marginalised in debates around urban nature conservation;
3. To understand how the structural and spatial organisation of the False Bay Nature Reserve influences communities' interaction with nature;
4. To stimulate rethinking of urban conservation.

4. Chapter outline

This thesis seeks to understand experiences of alienation of communities living around the False Bay Nature Reserve. The communities are estranged from nature, both caused by and resulting in the marginalisation of these communities. The alienation can be understood

through two dimensions: 1) **the spatial and structural barriers to** the reserve and 2) the loss of **identity and heritage,** which is closely connected to a loss of belonging to nature. These layers make up the two empirical chapters. The structure of this thesis is as follows. Chapter 2: Methodology, discusses the methods used to undertake this study, as well as ethics and the researcher's positionality. It also reflects on the use of terminologies such as *coloured*. Chapter 3: Literature Review, gives an overview of the existing literature illustrating what effect conservation in Africa has had on alienation and belonging to nature. It positions this thesis' focus on a community in the Cape Flats as a valuable addition to the literature by showing how multiple layers of socio-economic marginalisation intertwine with nature conservation. Chapter 4: Conceptual Framework, defines key concepts such as alienation and belonging, which provide the theoretical contributions of this thesis by showing how experiences of alienation can be assessed using qualitative indicators. Chapter 5 is the first empirical chapter, which discusses how the spatial and structural factors of the False Bay Nature Reserve influence local inhabitants' belonging to the reserve, as well as initiatives to reconnect communities to the reserve. Chapter 6, the second empirical chapter, analyses the deep underlying layers of identity and culture that affect local communities' feelings of belonging to the reserve. Chapter 7 discusses the research findings by connecting the empirical chapters to the conceptual framework, answering the research question and drawing the conclusions of the study.

Chapter 2. Methodology

This chapter explains and justifies the methodological approaches, ethical issues and the researcher's positionality. Because this thesis aims to capture people's experiences with nature, qualitative research is the most appropriate approach as it is "concerned with how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced, produced or constituted" (Mason, 2002, p. 3). Participant observation and in-depth unstructured engagements were used to capture social complexities and are "flexible and sensitive to the social context in which data are produced" (Mason, 2002, p.3). In total, 26 participants were interviewed. Data collection took place between July and mid-September 2023. The different collection and analysis methods are explained in the following sections.

1. Unstructured interviews and storytelling

This study adopts qualitative and ethnographic research. The interviews were conducted one-on-one and in groups. Out of the 26 interviewed participants, 17 interviews were recorded and transcribed. The other nine were informal conversations that were not recorded or thematically analysed but support the findings. Flexibility was crucial in the context in which the data were collected as participants could raise their own topics, allowing the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics at play. The casual conversation structure of the interviews allowed the broad scope of the research question to be explored.

In research, it is useful to investigate how an individual's story connects and is constructed within the overarching societal narrative (Murray, 2018). This study therefore paid specific attention to multi-layered narratives. As Murray (2018) states: "in interpreting the narrative account we can take into consideration the interpersonal context within which the narrative interview was conducted, the organisational setting and the broader socio-cultural narrative with which the narrator engages" (p. 10). In this context, the spatial and structural setting of the nature reserve and the townships were of great importance.

Price (2004) stresses that the unequal power structures in landscapes and geographies must be understood from people's narratives about their experiences and relationship to the places they live in. Price argues that we must ask and listen to how people relate to their spatial positions and to what extent they experience marginality or belonging. This aligns with the Khoisan concept of "deep listening" (Bam, 2021) and is a means of doing justice to indigenous heritage and traditions of storytelling. As Murray (2018) writes, "providing the participant with the opportunity to articulate their story, which in other settings may have been ignored, can often be beneficial for the narrator" (p. 8). It gives the participant agency in a world in which

it might otherwise be limited. Indeed, some of the research participants in Lavender Hill expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to show the human and communal sides of their community countering the stereotype that they are 'all gangsters'.

2. Participant observation

Participant observations took place in three main stages. The first was during holiday programmes for children from surrounding communities organised by the People and Conservation Officers (PCOs) working for the COCT. This took place during six days in July: three days in Rondevlei and three days in Zeekoevlei. The holiday programmes provided insight into the work of PCOs to enhance engagement between communities and the nature reserves. The second stage of participant observations was done with a local community organisation in Lavender Hill, which organises after-school programmes for children. One of these programmes took children from Lavender Hill on environmental outings outside of the neighbourhood, including to the False Bay Nature Reserve. Observations were also done at the community centre, which engaged in on-site environmental projects such as building a community garden. The last stage of participant observations was done while visiting Zeekoevlei and Rondevlei independently. During these visits, it was observed who visited the reserves, what they engaged in, and how reserve staff interacted with them.

3. Thematic analysis

Transcriptions of the interviews were analysed using inductive thematic coding, i.e. data was analysed without any expected result or pre-established theory. The codes that came up were then analysed in terms of their meaning in the wider context. Thematic analysis:

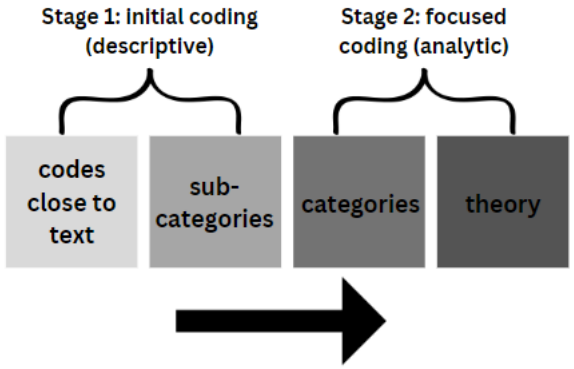
> Involves discovering, interpreting and reporting patterns and clusters of meaning within the data. Working systematically through the texts the researcher identifies topics that are progressively integrated into higher-order key themes, the importance of which lies in their ability to address the overall research question (Ormston et al., 2014, p. 271).

NVIVO software was used to systemically code the transcribed interviews and organise the data into themes, also called coding. The first step of coding is *descriptive coding*: the words participants use to describe a certain phenomenon are not changed and the codes remain similar to the initial raw data. The second step is *focused coding*, which rearranges codes into subthemes informing theoretical concepts related to the literature reviewed in this study (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2015; Ormston et al., 2014). Figure 4 below offers a visual representation of the coding stages. Figure 5 gives an overview of all the clusters or sub-

categories of the initial codes that were used in NVIVO. The *files* refer to how many interviews a code occurred in, and *references* refer to how many times a code occurred in total.

Figure 4

Stages of coding



Note. Source: researcher. Concepts belong to Charmaz & Belgrave, 2015).

Figure 5

Overarching categories and sub-categories

Codes

Name	Files	References
Theme 1 GOVERNANCE	16	203
Cluster 12 Spatial Planning of the City	15	58
Cluster 4 Management of the Reserve	14	118
Cluster 6 Colonial History	7	27
Theme 2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES	16	241
Cluster 1 Crime and unsafety	16	86
Cluster 2 Employment	11	46
Cluster 3 Survival	12	33
Cluster 7 Housing	9	76
Theme 3 LOCAL COMMUNITY, IDENTITY AND CULT	16	556
Cluster 10 Community Initiatives & Stakeholder	14	143
Cluster 11 Degree of Connection Nature & Peo	16	192
Cluster 8 Awareness and Exposure	15	108
Cluster 9 Identity	12	113

Apart from the coding stages identified above, there are five crucial steps to undertake in thematic analysis: 1) familiarisation, 2) building a thematic framework, 3) indexing and sorting, 4) review, and 5) summarising (Ormston et al. 2014). In the first step, the researcher becomes familiar with the data and employs initial descriptive coding. The second step entails organising the descriptive codes into sub-themes. The third step merges some of the sub-themes

into broader categories and requires analytical thinking to ascribe meaning to the previous merely descriptive codes. The fourth step is the most analytical, where the researcher critically evaluates the themes and categories and relates them to existing theories. In the last step, the researcher summarises the data. The data will be organised non-cross-sectionally (Mason, 2002) i.e. the themes identified in one data set will not be applied to another, so the analysis remains inductive. The analysis, however, requires comparison across data sets to assess which theories and themes can be generalised and related to wider theory (Ormston et al., 2014).

4. Selecting participants

Data collection took place between July and September 2023. Initially, the aim was to select participants mostly from Grassy Park and only sparingly from Lotus River and Lavender Hill for safety reasons. As a middle-class former township, Grassy Park was expected to be more accessible for research. However, especially in Lavender Hill, the community leaders proved to be very approachable, open and welcoming. As Fassinger & Morrow (2013) state, "the use of gatekeepers or stakeholders, community members or leaders who can vouch for and facilitate entry of outsider researchers can be particularly helpful" (p. 78). The researcher easily connected with trusted community leaders in Lavender Hill, who facilitated further connections within the community. This is known as snowball sampling of participants, which is an effective approach when dealing with marginalised communities.

Part of the research success in Lavender Hill was due to a counter-reaction to the neighbourhood's negative stereotyping; participants often expressed the desire to show the other side of Lavender Hill: that of a loving, warm and tightly connected community. Community leaders were well connected, which contributed both to the safety and effectiveness of the research. For that reason, most of the research was collected in Lavender Hill and Lotus River. Appendix B provides an overview of the interview participants. The additional value of focusing on Lavender Hill is the new information gleaned on a neglected and stigmatised neighbourhood in terms of academic research.

The interviews took place in public libraries, youth community centres, or people's homes, depending on their preferences and safety concerns. Some of the interviews, such as with conservation officers and other people working for the COCT, were held in the nature reserve itself. In a few instances, participants were met in a mall as it was impossible to visit the participants in their homes due to safety concerns. All the interviews were conducted in English.

5. Defining and reflecting on terminology

This thesis focuses on underprivileged local communities around the False Bay Nature Reserve. It is crucial to define what is meant by an underprivileged local community. Those who live in Zeekoevlei, a small wealthy neighbourhood directly bordering the nature reserve, also identify as locals. However, this thesis refers specifically to the local communities that belong to the Cape Flats townships, as they have experienced racial marginalisation and socio-economic challenges that create contested relationships with the nature reserve. The presence of these dynamics informs different, and arguably more complex, feelings of alienation or belonging to nature.

Most of the research participants identify as *coloured* as this research took place in Lavender Hill and Lotus River, which are former coloured townships. However, the coloured community is very diverse and ever-changing. In addition, there are also coloured communities that are middle- or upper-class, who might not relate to what the Cape Flats coloured communities describe as defining factors for their community. Few demographic and economic changes have taken place in Lotus River and Lavender Hill since the end of Apartheid; some community members even argue their circumstances have worsened since the end of Apartheid. Grassy Park, on the other hand, has become a racially diverse community where people live in middle-class circumstances. While this thesis is not an analysis of the many meanings and layers of the coloured identity, it is important to spend some time understanding the history of the coloured community and the term itself.

Ambiguity of the term coloured

The term *coloured* is highly contested and regarded as controversial by some. Petrus & Isaacs-Martin (2012) write that the coloured identity "has been associated with negative stereotypes as a consequence of a narrow racial and ethnic understanding of the identity that views it as fixed" (p. 100). For many people, the category coloured was created by Apartheid and for Apartheid: a way of dividing coloured populations from the Bantu-speaking African population and a way of limiting political mobilisation. Apartheid specifically used racialised identity in a fixed, essentialist and narrow way to achieve political and social oppression over people of colour. However, as Adhikari (2009) writes:

> Coloured identity is also very much the product of its bearers who, I would argue, were in the first instance primarily responsible for articulating the identity and subsequently determining its form and content (Adhikari, 2009, p. ix).

As we can see throughout history, the use and connotations of the term coloured changed. Adhikari (2009) writes that as early as the late 19th century, people in the Cape started identifying as coloured to distinguish themselves from a variety of other African ethnic groups who rapidly migrated to the Cape as a result of the diamond and gold mining developments in South Africa (p. xi). When Apartheid ended, a number of coloured people rejected the term coloured and preferred identifying as black due to the belief that the term was an Apartheid creation and tool. Some identified as black for ideological purposes, to oppose the categorisations made by Apartheid, and some for political purposes, to claim "special privileges by virtue of being African" (Besten, 2009, p. 151). Indeed, in many ways, postcoloniality in South Africa made coloured people feel more marginalised than before democracy (Adhikari, 2009, p. xv), for example due to Bantu-favouritism (Besten, 2009, p. 149). This sentiment was reflected in the data collected for this thesis; participants felt their struggles were not heard due to *black empowerment* policies. As a response, some coloured people started to identify as indigenous Khoisan.

Another option in this thesis would thus be to refer to the coloured population as indigenous, referring to their Khoi-San ancestry. However, many more racial identities are mixed into the coloured demographic, especially in the Cape where there is Khoisan heritage, European heritage as well as enslaved people's heritage from other parts of Africa or Asia, like Madagascar, Malaysia or Indonesia (Adhikari, 2006; Adhikari, 2005). To thus refer to them as merely indigenous Khoisan would be a simplification of reality. Lastly, it is important to note that those who are in a position to challenge the term coloured are often relatively well-educated people of higher socioeconomic status (Besten, 2009, p. 139). Those who live in precarious conditions in the township do not often reject or criticise their coloured identity; in many instances, they express a sense of pride to be coloured.

This thesis recognises the contested meanings of the coloured identity and that the term coloured is deemed derogatory and offensive by parts of the population. However, because of the challenges and nuances mentioned previously and, importantly, the fact that most interviewees identified as coloured, the term is used throughout this thesis. During interviews, participants expressed ideas and experiences of what being coloured means, and these meanings would change and have different connotations if swapped for black, Khoisan, or any other term. In using the term coloured, it is stressed that this is a fluid identity; heritage and lineages in the coloured community are versatile, dynamic, and ever evolving. The term is used in this thesis with respect, recognising the many meanings the term may have for different

people of the community. In this thesis, references to the *local community* or *local people* refer to the coloured communities that live around the nature reserves that are part of the Cape Flats.

6. Ethical considerations

Anonymisation of interviewees is used throughout this thesis. The collected data has been processed with care, stored securely and not disseminated other than for the use of this thesis. The researcher adhered to the General Data Protection Regulation and the right to privacy at all times (Mason, 2017). The study passed the ethics committee at the University of Cape Town with reference number [SOC2023/22]. The confirmation of ethics approval is included in Appendix C.

In order to treat participants with honesty and respect, I committed to being "culturally competent" (Fassinger & Morrow, 2013, p. 71). This included fitting the interviews to participants' "educational and linguistic levels" (Fassinger & Morrow, 2013, p. 80). In the beginning stages of this thesis, it was suggested that all interviewees sign the informed consent form, to be found in Appendix A. However, in the field, it was found that some of the research participants could not read or write. Wynn & Israel (2018) stress that in some instances, informed consent forms "may mask unethical research, and may often be inappropriate for legal, cultural, political or historical reasons" (p. 795). Consent forms often include inaccessible language and jargon (Mitchell & Irvine, 2008). For that reason, ethics must not only be reflected in the signing of forms and other bureaucratic requirements but also in the researcher's overall moral approach and intention. In qualitative research, the social context is often too complex to be captured in consent forms (Miller & Boulton, 2007). Consent forms might even recreate and exacerbate the unequal power relations between the researcher and the participant. For that reason, the signing of consent forms was treated very carefully, meaning that sometimes forms were not signed out of respect for participants who could not read and/or write. Nevertheless, every participant was informed about the study and the purposes of the research before the interview took place. It was also stressed that they had the choice to participate and the right to withdraw from the study at any point. Moreover, San Code of Research Ethics formulates a valuable set of ethics that must be adhered to in any situation where a researcher deals with underprivileged communities. This code requires researchers to adhere to fairness, respect, care and honesty (South African San Institute, 2017). This includes not using patronising language or scientific jargon and recognising and respecting community leaders and positioning oneself humbly and with genuine curiosity.

There were also some ethical considerations pertaining to safety. Data was mainly collected in Lotus River and Lavender Hill which are ridden by gang activity. As such, being a white foreign woman, I had to pay specific attention to my safety as well as the risk my presence created for the participants. Precautions included staying in contact with the outside world while collecting data and using trusted community leaders as guides both in the field as well as travelling. Community leaders would inform me if there was increased violence in the neighbourhood.

7. Reflexivity and positionality

Identity

As this is a qualitative research study, it is unavoidable for subjectivity to influence and shape the data collection and the study in general. To reduce the effects of researcher bias, it is crucial for me to reflect on the relationship between myself as the researcher, the interviewees or the *observed*, and the unequal power relationships that might arise (Mason, 2002). According to Bengry (2018), access to neighbourhoods such as Lavender Hill is "limited to those possessing certain personal attributes […] insider and outsider positions are predicated on […] the relative cultural proximity between researcher and researched" (p. 102-3). For this research, the cultural proximity was smaller because of my positionality in the field. Not only am I not from the area, but I am also foreign, white, female and well-educated. In many ways, I have privileges that the people I engaged with did not. As Fassinger & Morrow (2013) point out, this can create "cultural mistrust on the part of research participants" (p. 72). Mistrust can be reduced or eliminated when relationships are cultivated, for example, by actively participating in "learning about the community and community members, being visible and becoming known, participating in and contributing to community activities, and generally becoming involved in the life of the community" (Chamberlain & Hodgetts, 2018, p. 679). Through the personal relationships I established with community leaders, I managed to achieve this. My position as an outsider was generally met with enthusiasm and interest, and I was warmly received in the community.

In reflecting on my positionality, I grappled with many paradoxes. This study aims to capture communities' experiences, including the descendants of indigenous Khoisan who have undergone historical processes of exploitation, oppression and displacement. Most of the land on which the Khoisan lived in the 1600s in Cape Town was taken by Dutch farmers. The Cape became a colonial territory of the Dutch, in which indigenous people were oppressed and enslaved. The historical processes of marginalisation that I am trying to unravel in this thesis

regarding conservation thus started with my ancestors. Furthermore, I am writing this dissertation to obtain my master's degree at the University of Cape Town. With regards to indigenous peoples, UCT and the land on which it is built is controversial. Indigenous peoples lived on the slopes of Table Mountain before the Dutch appropriated their land. UCT was built on this land when it became Cecil Rodes' estate. This stolen land became the very space today that allows me to write this dissertation. The Dutch also appropriated indigenous ecological knowledge and presented it as their own (Bam, 2021). In her book, Bam (2021) illustrates how UCT used to facilitate institutionalised whitewashing of indigenous knowledge. This resulted in the "strong legacy of cultural imperialism of universities across South Africa" (p. 7). I wrote this dissertation with my Dutch educational background doing research at UCT. I recognise my inability to do justice to indigenous knowledge due to this outsider perspective. In making sense of these painful paradoxes, I chose to approach this research as a personal exercise of unlearning European colonial thinking.

Unintentionally affiliated to the community centre

Although the community leaders I connected with helped me gain safe access, my affiliation with them also impacted how I was perceived. Some community leaders were affiliated with a foreign-funded community centre I used as a safe location for interviews. It soon emerged that there was conflict between this NGO and other community leaders in Lavender Hill, and later friction developed between some of the community leaders and the centre itself. This brought my independence as a researcher into question by some and affected my position in the area, resulting in some community leaders not wanting to meet me. On the one hand, the community centre thus guaranteed my access to the community by facilitating a safe interview space, and on the other hand, it also inhibited some other possible connections.

8. Limitations of the study

There are a few limitations to this study. The first is the safety aspect, which required me to use the community centre as a base, which affected my position in the area as discussed above. Secondly, as an outsider, I might not have asked the right questions, phrased them the right way, or picked up on certain nodes of information. My interpretation of the data is also influenced by what I perceive to be important (Chamberlain & Hodgetts, 2018). Lastly, because participants were selected by means of snowball sampling and referrals, it is possible that the data is biased towards the input of people in the community who hold a relatively powerful position. This chapter has shown how the research was approached and shed light on the

position of the researcher. The next chapter, the Literature Review, discusses the existing body of research and the research gap that this thesis aims to fill in.

Chapter 3. Literature review

1. Introduction

This chapter offers a critical overview and evaluation of scholarly work that guided the research question: How do the underprivileged local communities around the False Bay Nature Reserve experience nature conservation, and how are they affected by it? A thematically structured assessment of the literature makes the research gap that this question aims to address clear. The literature review starts with a historical overview of how people have been separated from nature, and it provides alternative world views. Secondly, literature shows that exclusionary and potentially violent conservation is political and institutionalised, which can perpetuate marginalisation of communities. Lastly, this chapter addresses literature that has already specifically been written on nature reserves in Cape Town and identifies the research gap that this thesis aims to contribute to.

2. Historical background of the separation between people and nature

Human-environment detachment is a result of historical developments (Leemans et al., 2007). The roots of the dichotomy can be traced back to the European Enlightenment era in which a so-called "civilised individual or society" included a distancing from the natural world (Grove, 1996). Non-European populations were often portrayed as uncivilised and savage, and their livelihoods, which were intricately linked with nature, formed a significant part of that (Graham, 2015). The Eurocentric detachment persists today within a neoliberal framework where nature is predominantly viewed as a resource for economic gain (Borras & Franco, 2010; Kashwan et al., 2019). In contrast, many indigenous peoples from the Global South offer alternative perspectives regarding land beyond monetary value, including emphasising ancestral and socio-cultural connections (Borras & Franco, 2010). An example of this is *Buen Vivir*, an ideology originating from indigenous communities in Ecuador and Bolivia, which refers to the cohabitation of people with nature and criticises the endless capitalist pursuit of economic growth (Gudynas, 2011, p. 441). Similarly, Büscher & Fletcher (2019) developed the concept of convivial conservation. Essentially an ideology and vision for the future, convivial conservation aims to restore human/nature relations and move away from capitalist extractivism of nature.

Multiple discourses influenced the way academics and conservation practitioners understand nature conservation. Conservation policy has always been tightly intertwined with global development policy. Most of these discourses argued strongly in favour of separating

humans from nature, as humans were understood to be the root of environmental degradation (Büscher & Fletcher, 2019; Roe, 2008). When the international debate focussed on local and indigenous participation in conservation, it was met with strong scepticism. It was argued that community participation "channels funding away from conservation, and […] has minimal effect on biodiversity protection" (Roe, 2008, p. 496). Attempts to integrate humans with conservation were abandoned to focus on the main aim: the protection of biodiversity. This meant the continuation of fenced-off nature reserves and the exclusion of communities. Evictions and displacement of people due to conservation only received academic attention after 2003.

Büscher & Fletcher (2019), Adams & Hutton (2007) and many other scholars argue that nature conservation must be analysed from a political-ecology lens. In the case of Cape Town, human alienation from nature has been a clear political decision initiated by colonial forces and exacerbated by the Apartheid regime. Scholars such as Büscher & Fletcher (2019) and Leemans et al. (2007) argue that there is a need to situate conservation in broader political economic and social contexts. The field of political ecology "acknowledges and mediates variegated political positions of different actors within a fundamentally 'uneven' conservation terrain" (Büscher & Fletcher, 2019, p. 290). It allows nature reserves to be recognised as political institutions that may have inherited colonial legacies. Political ecology is, therefore, a valuable lens to understand the alienation and belonging of underprivileged communities of colour in Cape Town's urban nature reserves. Furthermore, scholars such as Grove (2009) argue that there is a need to examine how conservation shapes people's subjective, personal experiences and identities. He suggests combining political ecology with post-structural political ecology and critical geopolitics. This combination of theoretical lenses will enhance our understanding of how environmental issues influence who is included or excluded in society, who *belongs,* and how people form their environmental identities. This thesis and in particular chapter 6 will reflect on notions of identity shaped by ecological environments, drawing on Grove's (2009) argument.

3. Colonial foundations and modern challenges: the politics of nature conservation in South Africa

As with any other spatial demarcations and boundaries, nature reserves and parks are created by institutions held by political elites. As Dahlberg et al. (2010) write:

> Conservation is about much more than ecological values such as biodiversity and ecological goods and services. It fundamentally concerns how we perceive landscapes,

> how we place differential values on different landscape components, and who gets to decide on these values. Thus, conservation has been and is still very much about issues of power (p. 211).

In South Africa, nature reserves were created by colonial powers with little to no consultation of local and indigenous populations. Access to land became racialised, oppressing and marginalised people of colour at the expense of white domination and access to nature reserves for their own interests (Cock & Fig, 2000; Dahlberg et al., 2010; Nustad, 2011). Cock & Fig (2000) refer to this as "colonial conservation" (p. 23). Coloniality within conservation is characterised by environmental racism, where people of colour were not allowed to access nature parks and were denied authority to decide over their environment and livelihoods (Cock & Fig, 2000; Kepe 2008; Buscher et al 2022). Environmental racism stereotyped indigenous people and people of colour, reinforcing the idea that they cannot take proper care of the environment around them (Ramutsindela et al., 2022, p. xiii). Agrawal & Gibson (1999) write that black and indigenous groups were seen as "obstacles to efficient and 'rational' organisation of resource use" (p. 631). Furthermore, conservation was carried out primarily by Afrikaner nationalists, and conservation areas also served military Afrikaner nationalist goals. They were "exclusively concerned with preserving biodiversity, to the neglect of human needs and social issues" (Cock & Fig, 2000, p. 23), laying the foundation for the alienation between humans and nature in South Africa up to this day. In their book, *The Violence of Conservation in Africa: State, Militarization and Alternatives*¸ Ramutsindela et al. (2022) argue that conservation in Africa inherently has a violent character. According to them, conservation areas manifest gatekeeping and rely on "the use of force or some form of coercion" (p. xiii). Many nature reserves in South Africa are physically enclosed by fences or other geographical organisation choices. Koot et al.(2024) write that the "physical-geographical enclosures" of nature reserves in South Africa "are reinforced by class, racial enclosures and ideological enclosures" (p. 123), showing that spatial choices are not neutral.

In post-apartheid South Africa, conservation legislation and goals are defined by the law which is still, to a large extent, based on racialised and oppressive colonial foundations of nature conservation. As Dahlberg et al. (2010) write, South African conservation policy does not adhere to the local social reality of racialised poverty, dispossession and loss of heritage and culture (p. 214). South Africa's conservation landscape remains characterised by "top-down institutional structures [and] unequal power relations" (Dahlberg, 2010, p. 214; see also Agrawal & Gibson, 1999; Ramutsindela et al., 2022; Riddell, 2013). These exclusionary institutions cause a lack of self-rule and self-governance for local populations. Although post-

colonial nature reserves have inherited much from colonial conservation efforts, they are also making "considerable efforts […] to redress these historic injustices [which is] part of the transformation process within the national parks system and the broader society" (Cock & Fig, 2000, p. 22). These transformation processes characterise post-colonial nature conservation in South Africa in the 21st century. Cock & Fig (2000) describe that the model of conservation is increasingly moving towards a more "indigenous, community-based model of conservation which focuses on human benefits and sustainable utilisation" (p. 24). There are, however, also scholars who argue that initiatives to co-manage conservation sites in South Africa have been unsuccessful, discouraging or disappointing, only contributing to a smarter cover-up of unequal hierarchies of power in South Africa (Kepe, 2008). Furthermore, Kepe (2009) argues that the success of co-management of biodiversity in South Africa is inhibited by the "reluctance of social actors to acknowledge and engage with the issues of race" (p. 871).

Despite organisational changes, Cape Town's nature conservation, like the rest of South Africa, still grapples with profound colonial legacies and relations which did "not just vanish with the end of direct or indirect colonial rule" (Graham, 2015, p. 15). Graham (2015) writes that the specific context of nature reserves in Cape Town is still characterised by "highly exclusionary and racialised practices of nature conservation perpetuated through colonial and postcolonial eras" (p. 22). Most of the nature reserves in the Cape Flats are managed by the City of Cape Town. Generally, municipal management styles are non-collaborative, executed top-down placing scientific expertise above the experience of nature. This experience encompasses nature as having spiritual, cultural, and social value. It has been shown that the dispossession of indigenous land for conservation purposes has led to a decline in biodiversity and indigenous agricultural knowledge systems (Graham, 2015), further perpetuating marginalisation of indigenous and local people. For this reason, scholars such as Agrawal & Gibson (1999), Riddell (2013) and West et al. (2006) are proponents of analysing nature / human relations while focusing on the institutions, politics and power hierarchies in place.

Although Bonet-García et al. (2015) argue that there can also be benefits to nature conservation for the local community in the form of "more ecosystem services" (p. 222), Graham (2015) and Igoe (2006) point out that not everyone in society equally benefits from these ecosystem services. According to Kumar & Yashiro (2014), there is a "socioeconomic asymmetry" (p. 178) when it comes to gains from conservation, as the poor do not benefit as much economically (Brockington, 2003; Ramutsindela et al., 2022). Besides, looking at nature reserves from the perspective of having to provide services does not sufficiently acknowledge that for many indigenous peoples "landed property rights are not *things*; they are *social*

relations between people" (Borras & Franco, 2010, pp. 8-9). The institutionalisation of nature as owned by the state creates a situation in which nature reserves are detached from their social context. Stevenson (2006) writes that:

> For many state managers, it is easy for the resources they "manage" to become "management units", or entities of and to themselves, i.e., to appear as if they are substances or things created (and therefore manageable) outside of ecological, social/cultural, political and other realities of which they are a part […] critically important issues such as economic equity, social justice and cultural sustainability inevitably become someone else's problems to be dealt with outside the realm of ERM [environmental resources management] (p. 168).

The fact that nature conservation areas are state-owned and managed with limited consultation with local communities creates problems specifically in post-colonial Africa as African states struggle to break free from the legacy of colonial policies influencing natural resources (Ramutsindela et al., 2022). The lack of attention to the institutionalisation of conservation, its violent nature, and the complex political and historical dynamics of conservation articulate a clear gap in the research (Awuh, 2016). This section discussed how colonialism institutionalised separation of humans from nature through the creation of nature reserves. This is necessary background to fully understand politicised belonging and alienation from nature in Cape Town. The next section discusses where this study fits in the wider academic research.

4. Study contribution

So far, this literature review has established that conservation institutionalises the separation between humans and nature, leading to a disconnect or alienation. Furthermore, conservation in post-colonial Africa has prevalent violent and exclusionary features inherited from colonial practices. A growing number of studies capture the conservation experiences of local communities in Africa (Agrawal & Redford, 2009; Awuh, 2016; Bonet-García et al., 2015; Brockington, 1999; Brockington & Igoe, 2006). Dahlberg et al. (2010) write the following about South African nature reserves:

> Through removals, fences, game guards and laws against poaching and trespassing, reserves and parks became highly secured areas to be kept safe from threatening outsiders, i.e., the local black people. To these communities denial of access rights meant a loss of vital livelihood resources, and an alienation from an integral aspect of cultural identity that negatively affected social cohesion and local knowledge systems (p. 212).

The enforced disconnect between humans and nature by the South African colonial government exacerbated a loss of indigenous knowledge of flora and fauna and medicinal use of plants. Although scarce, there is some evidence suggesting this is also the case in the False Bay Nature Reserve (Bam, 2021). Bam's (2021) research shows how Rondevlei held profound indigenous value and was deeply connected to Khoisan knowledge and cultural rituals.

The Cape Flats Nature Partnership published the book *Growing Together, Thinking and Practice of Urban Nature Conservators.* In this book, Pitt & Boulle (2010) interview a range of urban nature conservators in Cape Town, including conservators that operate in the False Bay Nature Reserve. They express a shared vision for the Cape Flats Nature: a vision of "[putting] people in the middle of nature […] and to find a way of forging a relationship between them that is mutually beneficial and self-sustaining" (Pitt & Boulle, 2010, p. 25). The book offers a fascinating look into the experience of urban nature conservators, their ideals and their daily challenges. Pitt & Boulle (2010) stress that it is vital for conservators to establish personal relationships with the surrounding communities, to network, and to establish a deep understanding of the community and their views and experiences of the nature reserve.

The abovementioned book captured the experiences of nature conservators themselves. There have also been some elaborate qualitative studies of local people's experiences with nature reserves in Cape Town. Ashwell (2010) wrote about teenagers' connection to nature in Cape Town and concluded that "the great majority of youth from all socio-economic groups related positively to nature" (p. 11); however, Environmental Education initiatives are ill-equipped and much remains to be done to utilise these teenagers' interest in nature. There have also been more political assessments of conservation in Cape Town. For example, in her book on the Macassar Dunes/Wolfgat reserves, Graham (2015) studies how colonial discourses on conservation shape the Macassar Dunes and Wolfgat nature reserves. Not only does she show how colonial legacies influence modern-day conservation in Cape Town, but she also shows how this is challenged and renegotiated by local people through collaborative management initiatives. She argues that through informal and personal interactions, unsupervised and unmanaged "conservators and community participants are re-defining what it means to be 'post-colonial nature conservators' in Cape Town" (Graham, 2015, p. i). She opts for future research to dive into these informal spaces of interaction, such as interactions between the reserves and churches or schools. She writes: "Attention to these kinds of interactions would enable deeper consideration of the politics and processes of what it means to belong, to be responsible and to reconcile across contested postcolonial divides" (Graham, 2015, p. 217).

This thesis aims to contribute to this gap identified by Graham (2015) by capturing the voices of local communities in the study of nature conservation in South Africa (Musavengane & Leonard, 2019). Although Bam (2021) identified custodians of indigenous knowledge in Rondevlei, there is a lack of understanding of how underprivileged communities such as Lavender Hill and Lotus River experience the False Bay Nature Reserve. These township communities' sense of belonging to or alienation from nature is particularly important as it is influenced by wider historical processes of marginalisation in Cape Town encompassing both spatial-structural factors and social and cultural factors. By focusing on a wide variety of community members and their experiences of the nature reserve, this thesis enables a deeper analysis of informal and interpersonal nodes of communication and interaction that define belonging or nonbelonging to the nature reserve. The next chapter, the conceptual framework, discusses the concepts of alienation and belonging and their place in this study.

Chapter 4. Conceptual framework

This chapter discusses key concepts of belonging and alienation and how these relate to post-colonial state power and thereby guide the study.

1. Alienation

Beginning with alienation, this concept refers to being disconnected, estranged and detached from nature. This thesis draws primarily on Seeman's (1959, 1971) conceptualisation of alienation, which identifies five different components: ''powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation, and self-estrangement'' (p. 783). These are summarised below, drawing from Kanungo (1979).

Table 1

Components of alienation

1	Powerlessness	A sense of powerlessness involves a perceived lack of power, autonomy and control over significant life events, and a failure to influence political systems and institutions.
2	Meaninglessness	Meaninglessness occurs when an individual cannot anticipate social situations or the consequences of their actions. They lack ''real responsibility and decision making'' (Kanungo, p. 1979, p. 123)
3	Normlessness	Normlessness arises when individuals have to resort to socially disapproved behaviour to reach their goals. Unable to conform to existing norms they deem ineffective, they may form their own norms, leading to a sense of separation or alienation from wider societal norms.
4	Isolation	Related to normlessness, isolation stems from disconnecting oneself from social norms. This results in ''normlessness or cultural estrangement [creating] loneliness and rootlessness'' (Kanungo, 1979, p. 123).
5	Self-estrangement	An individual is self-estranged when they participate in activities that lack intrinsic rewards and motivation but serve to fulfil external needs, such as financial means or safety and security (Kanungo, 1979).

Apart from Seeman, who conceptualises alienation in its broadest sense, some scholars theorise about alienation from nature specifically. Marx argued that human beings are alienated from nature because "under capitalism [their] direct relationship is removed" (Dickens, 2002, p. 67). According to Marx, the capitalist mode of production creates indirect relationships between humans and nature. Capitalism prevents humans from appreciating nature in its own right as it is reduced to a commodity, something to be possessed.

Appreciating nature in its own right would allow people to be engaged with or engaged *in* nature. Vogel (2014) explains that in most modern academic literature, alienation from nature means two things. Firstly, "we have lost our understanding and appreciation of nature's independence from us, of what might be called its *otherness*" (Vogel, 2014, p. 88). This view is similar to Marx's view that recognising and appreciating nature's independence from us would mean man does not *possess* it for the goal of capital accumulation. In this view, nature is autonomous and something humans cannot completely control (Vogel, 2014). The second view states that alienation from nature also means that we have forgotten that "we too are part of nature and that nature is in fact the source of everything we are and do" (Vogel, 2014, p. 89). According to Vogel (2014), alienation from nature is about the human failure to acknowledge and appreciate that nature is independent of us and beyond our control, while we are also interdependent on it and part of nature.

In the modern day, the possession over nature that Marx conceptualised as alienation from nature is reflected through the increasingly "managed" and supervised natural world (Soper, 2016). In essence, any institutionalised form of nature implies an estrangement from nature, as nature is understood as something to be possessed, controlled and managed. As Soper (2016) writes: "the so-called alienation is such that we (supposedly) can only feel comfortable about getting 'back in touch' in highly mediated ways" (p. 83), such as through parks and nature reserves. Within these institutionalised forms of nature, some groups of people could be considered less alienated than others. This is important to be aware of when examining the degree of alienation experienced by marginalised communities in particular. Soper (2016) uses the example of "walkers, cyclists, climbers, bird-watchers, so-called nature lovers generally […]: these types might all in virtue of their close engagement with the natural environment be said to be less alienated than others" (p. 84). Accessibility to institutionalised nature and interest in nature are key indicators determining the degree of alienation.

As captured in Seeman's indicators of alienation, *powerlessness* implies that one can also be alienated from the very institutions themselves (Kanungo, 1979). In his book *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, Mahmood Mamdani

(1996) describes power relations between the post-colonial African state and the African *citizen* in Uganda and South Africa. He argues that a certain continuation of colonial power through institutions resulted in some people in the post-colonial society enjoying more agency, power, and essentially *citizenship* than others. The *others* are excluded, subjected and alienated from their institutions and struggle to fully exert their political rights and agency and shape post-colonial politics (Mamdani, 1996). Nature Reserves in Southern Africa must be understood as post-colonial institutions which, as Mamdani (1996) argues, alienate those who have been subjected to the colonial state in the past.

Another indicator of alienation from nature is loss of knowledge about nature, also termed "cognitive estrangement" (Soper, 2016, p. 82). As established in the literature review, institutionalised nature conservation has often been accompanied by forced evictions of indigenous peoples and, thus, loss of indigenous knowledge. This speaks to the asymmetrical effect of alienation from nature, which suggests that indigenous peoples are more alienated due to a loss of their knowledge and cognitive memories of indigenous vegetation and its medicinal purpose. Importantly, alienation must be understood as a concept encompassing social and natural dimensions (Castree, 2001; Choquet, 2021). Alienation from nature and alienation from oneself and one's identity cannot always be easily separated. Choquet (2021) argues for more nuanced analyses of people's subjective experiences of alienation and how these experiences relate to the broader natural environment.

2. Belonging

The opposite of alienation, according to Kanungo (1979), would be *involvement.* An involved person would experience opposites of powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation, and self-estrangement. Kanungo (1979) writes that involvement implies that there is a strong interest and that one actively participates. It involves notions of self-esteem and self-concept, which means that one identifies with, in this instance, nature. Whereas interest, participation, self-esteem and self-concept are essential to understand individuals' relationship to nature, Cajax & Berman's (2010) conceptualisation of *belonging* is most useful for this thesis as it is applicable to Cape Town's racialised realities, defining belonging as a result of processes of exclusion and inclusion:

> Experiences of belonging are a culmination of mediating influences of exclusion and inclusion on spatial, symbolic and social relationships. Boundaries of belonging, marked through processes of exclusion and inclusion, are often experienced as highly racialised, gendered and economic realities. […] it generally involves a sense of connectedness,

positive interaction with social others, and a highly complex performance of identity (Cajax & Berman, 2010, pp. 17-22; see also Nyamnjoh, 2023).

Cajax & Berman (2010) regard belonging as a constantly changing experience that is shaped by the context (environmental factors) as well as personal and cultural factors. Importantly, belonging is a "subjective feeling of value" (Mahar et al., 2013, p. 1026). Related to Mamdani's *Citizen and Subject,* which exposes the alienation of indigenous people from post-colonial institutions, Allen et al. (2021) stress that "struggles to belong are particularly evident in minorities and other groups that have been historically marginalised" (p. 89). Allen et al. (2021) point out that much of this struggle is caused by the dispossession of land. There is thus a "politics of belonging"; political powers decide who belongs and who is alienated. Belonging should not only be understood as a phenomenon that occurs on the micro and individual levels but also related to wider macro decisions at state-level.

3. Belonging and alienation to nature as political

Delport & Lephakga (2016) write that:

> The politics of space in South Africa […] cannot be thought of separately from the concept of alienation. South Africa is a space whose existence is predicated upon a relationship of alienation to its located place. South Africa, like most other settler colonies, is a space that was created through occupation and alienation: the occupation of a territory and the alienation of the indigenous people from this occupied territory. This relationship of alienation is not only observable in the physical reality engendered by this occupied space but also by its social reality (p. 1).

One of these political spaces is nature reserves. In South Africa, nature reserves are post-colonial institutions (Graham, 2015), which regulate the inclusion and exclusion of people on a political level. To understand the political aspect of belonging, it is useful to consider the concept of "biopolitics of settler colonialism". Originally, biopolitics was a concept by Foucault, referring to the power the state has to shape the human body, human behaviours and codes of conduct (Foucault, 1982). Scholars of colonialism have elaborated on biopolitics in the context of settler colonialism. They stress that settler colonialism uses Western politics, which is organised hierarchically, to subject certain groups of people, as well as certain forms of life, to what they deem "more superior" groups of people and forms of life (Dietrich, 2017; 2018). This biopolitical sphere undermines and oppresses social and political systems that view all forms of life, including nature and the land, as interconnected and equal (Dietrich, 2017; 2018). Biopolitical settler colonialism directly oppresses what scholars deem indigenous ways

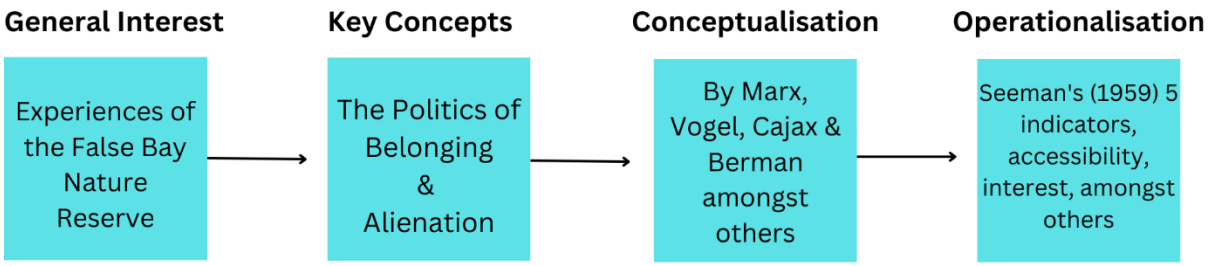
of thinking about the land and nature. Furthermore, scholars who discuss the biopolitics of settler colonialism describe how biopolitics is used in settler colonial states to gain control over indigenous lands and depoliticisation of indigenous people.

Scholars of settler colonialism's biopolitics mainly focus on Canada or the US (Belcourt, 2018; Brodie, 2012; Dietrich, 2017; Stinson & Lunstrum, 2022), however, it can be extended to South Africa. Colonial nationalism and the colonial nation-state are built on the biopolitical oppression of indigenous peoples by enabling the coloniser to take land "on which the colonial nation-state can take root" (Stinson & Lunstrum, 2022, p. 571). Creating a sense of national and communal belonging is thus necessary for state building, as Anderson (1983) theorised in his book *Imagined Communities.* If state building is colonial, the "colonised" individual is instantly not subject to belonging in the same way as the settler coloniser is. Dietrich (2017) shows how biopolitics facilitate the private ownership of land as favoured over indigenous communal ownership. In this way, land and nature are separated from humans. Indigenous ways of being, which stress the interconnectedness of all life, including nature, are excluded by means of biopower. Stinson & Lunstrum (2022) describe that in multicultural nation-states, institutions such as nature reserves take into account and include indigenous groups "but do so on their own exclusionary, asymmetrical terms, underscoring a perverse politics of recognition" (p. 571). Often, impoverished indigenous groups only get to participate on certain terms and are subject to "politics of recognition" rather than actual active decision-making. In short, the biopolitics of settler colonialism show how alienation and non-belonging are enacted through state politics and how indigenous populations can collectively experience non-belonging as a result of colonial political decisions.

4. Operationalisation of experiences of belonging and alienation

Whereas quantitative research implies measuring variables, qualitative research is not measurable in numbers. However, this chapter has defined the key concepts of alienation and belonging and provided some indicators that help make sense of individuals' experiences of the False Bay Nature Reserve. The diagram below illustrates the conceptualisation of the key concepts explained in this chapter.

Figure 6



The conceptual framework outlined in this chapter serves as a tool to examine empirical materials collected for this study. By using the concepts of alienation and belonging, this thesis delves into the nuanced experiences of communities surrounding the False Bay Nature Reserve. This framework enables an examination of the manifestations of alienation through powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation, and self-estrangement, as well as the factors contributing to belonging within this context. This chapter explored how these experiences relate to post-colonial state-power dynamics. This framework plays an essential role as a key theoretical contribution of this dissertation, enriching the understanding of the complex dynamics between marginalised communities and nature conservation in a post-colonial urban setting. The next chapter provides the spatial and structural evidence of alienation.

Chapter 5. Spatial imprisonment in the False Bay Nature Reserve and attempts to restore belonging

> *"We know that if we're going to cross that fence, the police will be called, law enforcement will be called. We could be jailed for trespassing. I mean, what is, isn't the whole Cape Town and its colonisers just trespassers on our land? Land is not supposed to be a prison that suffocates people. I've never been in prison, but I can imagine, you know, Lavender Hill is a prison. You have all these grey blocks, no greenery, you know, that is why we have all this violence because we can't access breathing space, the land. All these reserves, those are breathing spaces to be connected to. Nature, to go put our feet in water, and to see all these animals. So, we are imprisoned, our freedom taken away because we can't access our own land."*[3]

1. Introduction

As Donaldson et al. (2016) write, parks designed during apartheid use tools of exclusion that are entrenched in contemporary socio-spatial ordering of the city. This chapter presents the lived experiences of township communities surrounding the False Bay Nature Reserve, examining the structural and spatial barriers to the reserves. In the quote above, this community member from Lavender Hill expresses a sense of "spatial imprisonment" in his community. The symbolic use of Lavender Hill as a prison shows a strong sense of disconnection, powerlessness, and hopelessness; imprisonment is imposed by barriers that restrict access to the land and the nature reserve. In doing so, he symbolically illustrates the continuation of colonial powers that enforce his alienation from the land and nature. The quote shows how, for him, alienation from nature is not just about the space, but it is deeply political and intertwined with struggles for autonomy and liberation. As Mushonga & Matose (2020) write: "violence initially manifests in structural and symbolic forms before developing into physical harm" (p. 3).

As discussed in the conceptual framework, belonging and alienation are political. In post-colonial states, institutions such as nature reserves inherit structural injustices that alienate certain groups of society from the institution. One of Seeman's (1959) indicators of alienation

[3] Interview 14, Lavender Hill, 10 August 2023.

is a sense of powerlessness, which arises when an individual experiences a lack of power, agency, autonomy and control − in this case over the nature reserve and a failure to influence how the political system is managed. Alienation and belonging are mediated through spatial and symbolic relationships (Cajax & Berman, 2010, p. 17).

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first discusses structural apparatuses such as fencing, private security, and free entrance, and how these are experienced. The second section discusses the initiatives by the COCT to engage the community with the reserve. The conclusion synthesises how the communities' experiences relate to politicised and racialised senses of alienation and belonging.

2. Spatial planning and experiences of imprisonment

This section explores the spatial structure of the False Bay Nature Reserve and its impact on the surrounding communities' experiences of belonging to or alienation from nature by addressing fencing, private security and the free entrance fee respectively.

Fencing

Büscher & Thakholi (2024) point out that fences are "always political", and "often work out to represent forms of infrastructural violence that support or represent structural forms of racialised spatial injustice" (p. 2). This does not necessarily imply that fences should be removed, but depending on the context, fences can be "softened", meaning they do not represent ownership and property rights – and therefore who belongs and who does not – but merely a physical border. Softened fences reduce infrastructural violence and make the ecological and social world intertwine more effortlessly. Basing their argument on Achille Mbembe's "logic of enclosure", Koot et al. (2024) furthermore write that physical-geographical enclosures (e.g. fences) are "reinforced by class and racial enclosures and ideological enclosures" (p. 123). According to Mbembe (2017), the post-colonial world today is "deeply shaped and conditioned by the […] forms of religious, legal, and political life built around fences, enclosures, walls, camps circles, and, above all, borders" (p. 24). As Koot et al. (2024) argue, these physical enclosures are based on race, class, and ideology. This creates a situation where geographical enclosures such as fences represent and perpetuate symbolic and ideological violence (Mushonga & Matose, 2020). This section discusses how the local communities experience fences and how they are integrated with class, race, and ideology.

Rondevlei hosts a small population of hippopotamuses and is, therefore, entirely gated. Fencing is, however, not implemented homogeneously. While there is a double wall bordering

Lavender Hill, one made out of concrete, and the other a traditional pillared fence, the upper-class neighbourhood of Zeekoevlei has a see-through fence. Fencing is necessary for the mutual protection of residents and wildlife, but it also sends a strong symbolic message about who belongs and who does not. Participants often expressed conflicting feelings about the fences. On the one hand, they acknowledge the necessity of fences to protect endangered species and the ecosystem and to provide safety for the communities living around the reserve. It also is regarded as a barrier to keep criminal activities out of the reserve. In some instances, this was perceived as very positive by community members, as is seen in the following quote from a resident of an informal settlement in Lavender Hill[4]:

> The gangsters took some of the pillars away, went in there and go dump bodies there. They went and dumped bodies there […] Yeah, they actually found a body two years ago burned out in the nature reserve. So they got through that fence. That's why they put up that other fence, you see. That is to keep us out of there, the gangsters out of there, you see […] the rangers are not trying to keep people out, they want to keep the animals in and are trying to preserve the nature to future generations like my grandkids. That's the main purpose of the wall or the fencing […] it's more safety for the rangers and safety for us.

This participant further explained that it is justified that some wealthy communities, like the Zeekoevlei community, are not separated from the nature reserve by a fence. She argues that people from her community are always "out to destroy", unlike the wealthy communities in Zeekoevlei.

Contrary to her overly positive view of the fencing, many others from the surrounding communities expressed opposing views. One of the community leaders from Lavender Hill[5], who was involved in a community centre at the time of the interview, expressed discontent with the fencing as it symbolises inaccessible bureaucracy attached to the reserve's management. He voiced the following:

[4] Interview 13, Lavender Hill, 22 August 2023.
[5] Interview 10, Lavender Hill, 11 August 2023.

> I think it's all got to do with red tape. You know, there's too much red tape, you know, the government has cut off the nature reserve from the community with the high fences. And it's also got to do with the fact that our animals will get harmed. You know if we just gonna have open spaces you've got 300 birds, certainly our kids will just hurt the animals. But it's got to do with the red tape. There is just too much red tape man. I think nature and human beings should be one, you know. […] Even with our youth centre, the separation from the community to the centre, that's because of the fact that there's been a divide taking place, you know. A fence, between nature and our communities - that was a divide, and currently also a fence between our community and the youth centre – also a bit of a divide.

Interestingly, this community leader equates the fences around the nature reserve to those around their community centre. He presents a dilemma: on the one hand, the community would love to get rid of the fence, which creates structural violence and inaccessibility. On the other hand, they see that their reality of gangster-driven insecurity and violence does not allow for a daily life without it. Later in the interview, this community leader stressed that "The fence should be there. Definitely. More control, access control. If there was no fence, all would have been destroyed".

The fence creates a compelling visual aspect of lawful authority. Throughout data collection, many stories were shared of people jumping the fence – mostly as children. Some adult participants, including Rastafarians, shared that they still occasionally jump the fence to harvest indigenous plants for medicinal purposes or because they have a strong interest in nature. One of the participants from Lavender Hill[6] stated the following:

[6] Interview 11, Lavender Hill, 13 September 2023.

> Life here was good until they fenced it off. We couldn't catch fish anymore, couldn't hunt anymore. everything has just been fenced off, you can't go and take out your natural medicine you can't go in if you're unemployed come and hunt something to eat or to live from. And you can't go and explore nature with your children or with your friends and so on discovering and speaking about life what it was all about. But all these things have been, all these things have been taken away. […] That was recently with a fire when I went to go check up on the Falcons. But we jumped over the fence on this side. We didn't go in on that side. I had a baby Falcon that was burned and I tried to rescue him.

The participant expressed frustration that he is kept from engaging with the nature reserve because of the fence and its management. He occasionally jumps the fence to rescue falcons, but he experiences hostility from the nature reserve, which regards his engagements as illegal. Many other participants told stories of their adventures as children when they would shoot birds to cook, fish in the reserve, or harvest wood from the reserve. Participants knew these activities were illegal and would constantly be on the lookout for police vehicles.

The symbolism conveyed by the fences becomes most apparent when contrasting participants' feelings about the Princess Vlei Nature Reserve with those about the False Bay Nature Reserve. Princess Vlei, a 5-minute drive from the False Bay Nature Reserve, is not managed by the City but by a democratic body of community members that put (Khoisan) heritage at the core of conservation. The example of Princess Vlei presents a clear example of how to increase custodianship by the community.[7] According to participants, traditional Khoisan rituals are still taking place in Princess Vlei, and the reserve occasionally organises a flea market for community members to sell their artefacts. Research participants expressed that this contributes to community engagement and helps people sustain their livelihoods, and they would like the same initiatives to take place at the False Bay Nature Reserve. Participants experienced Princess Vlei as more open, friendly and inviting, and the absence of fences around the reserve greatly contributed to that. For this reason, Princess Vlei is more often chosen as a venue for community activities. One of the participants, who identifies as Khoisan,[8] stresses:

[7] Interview 15, Lavender Hill, 2 July 2023. Male community elder speaking.
[8] Interview 14, Lavender Hill, 10 August 2023.

> "I think that fencing is violent, and I mean, just comparing now, comparing Zeekoevlei now to Princess Vlei, there's no fences in Princess Vlei, you know. There is a sense of freedom, you can just go there whenever, and Zeekoevlei, Rondevlei, has got all these fences."

In the case of the False Bay Nature Reserve, a lack of democratic access to decision-making could suggest a lack of indigenous governance and agency (Borras & Franco, 2010) in nature conservation which can cause further marginalisation of local communities. Their meaningful participation can be achieved by decentralising conservation practices (Agrawal & Gibson, 1999), as observed in Princess Vlei.

Through informal conversations with rangers from the False Bay Nature Reserve, it became clear that the social issues connected to the fencing are not unknown to the nature reserve's employees. One of these rangers wished that locals would visit more often and stressed that it is crucial for the nature reserve to "actually reach out to these communities and say, we're putting up this fencing to protect you guys and to protect us as well". Although many of the rangers acknowledged that fencing creates a symbolic barrier to access, the responsibility to overcome this hindrance is put on the community. Brook et al. (2006) write that "for local people […] alienation from the game reserves began with the fencing issue" (p. 231). Fencing does not only create human separation from nature by exerting physical barriers but also "ideologically and mentally through processes of alienation" (Büsher & Thakholi, 2024, p. 4). From the empirical material collected, it is clear that the fences surrounding the False Bay Nature Reserve are not just interpreted as barriers for safety, but they are "hardened" as Büsher & Thakholi (2024) say in reflecting property and ownership rights. This relates to a number of Seeman's (1959) indicators of alienation. Firstly, it relates to powerlessness and meaninglessness, where individuals do not have autonomy, responsibility or control over the nature reserve. Secondly, it relates to normlessness, where individuals resort to socially disapproved behaviour to reach their goals, for example, by jumping the fence illegally to get access to nature. Because of this symbolic violence and power hierarchies that the fences represent (e.g. the criminalisation of jumping the fence), the fences create alienation amongst local communities from nature.

Private security, hostile interactions and obscure notions of illegality

Similar to the previous section, private security is a physical-geographical enclosure. As Koot et al. (2024) argue:

> Enclosures are much more than "conventional" material spaces for conservation that allow for inclusion or exclusion for particular groups of people […]. As Mpofu-Walsh (2021) also highlights, complex legal, governance, digital and other mechanisms inform and cut across material enclosures such that they continue to overlap with two other prominent forms of enclosure [class and racial enclosures, and ideological enclosures (p. 126).

This section reflects on private security in the False Bay Nature Reserve and the complex legal mechanisms of permits and how this reflects class, race and ideological enclosures.

The COCT uses the private security company Quemic in the nature reserves. They are especially visible in Zeekoevlei where they control access at the boom gate and patrol the reserve. Apart from Quemic employees working in the reserve itself, many law enforcement vehicles enter and exit as they have an office at the back of the reserve. Although they do not necessarily have a designated function in the reserve, the visibility of law enforcement vehicles communicates that the reserve is not a publicly accessible space.[9]

Figure 7:

Law enforcement vehicles at the gate

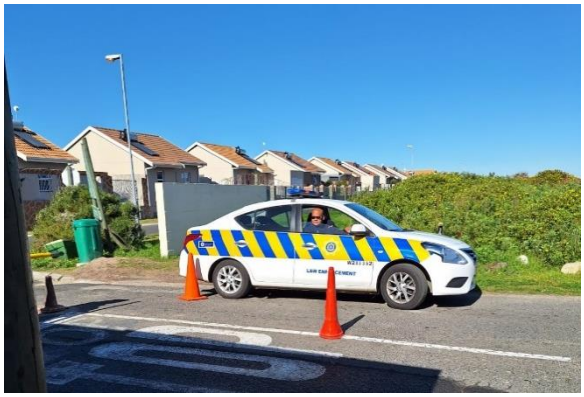


Figure 8:

Entrance gate at Rondevlei

Quemic is employed by the COCT to protect both visitors and nature against criminal activity, ranging from illegal harvesting of endangered species to robberies of visitors. Six

[9] Anecdotally, this was well illustrated by an Uber driver picking me up from Zeekoevlei after data collection. Upon pick up, he seemed confused and asked: ''For what is this place? Law enforcement?'' When he learnt it was an openly accessible nature reserve he answered: ''Oh, when I got here I just thought, maybe it's a private group and I can't just get in.''

research participants explained that the fences and security severely limited their interaction with nature due to the new notions of illegality this creates. They told stories that, as children, they would hunt in the nature reserve, catch fish, cut wood, or harvest plants to support their livelihoods. Additionally, they used to collect indigenous medicine in Rondevlei & Zeekoevlei to treat illness.[10]

Some respondents expressed strong opposition to these legal barriers as it is opposite to their traditional way of living and right to self-determination.[11] They argued that the reserve is keeping them from living an integrated life with nature and that it should rather tackle issues of global capitalist resource exploitation and not interfere with their land and indigenous ways of harvesting plants and fishing. According to participants,[12] the Khoisan were always able to protect nature themselves and preservation was never necessary. Capitalist exploitation of natural resources and the introduction of alien species resulted in the need for nature reserves in the first place. Interviewee 14 stressed that "we were custodians for thousands of years", and that capitalist businesses overfish or overharvest, as opposed to indigenous Khoisan, who sustainably fish using fish traps.[13]

Additionally, hostile interactions between the Quemic security guards and local children playing in the reserve were observed. Over the course of six days in July 2023, the PCOs working for the City of Cape Town organised a holiday programme for children. As part of participant observation for this thesis, I attended and observed the holiday programme. While the holiday programme was taking place with children who signed up for the programme, there were also children playing in the reserve who were not part of the COCT's programme. These children were seemingly from surrounding communities, played in the bushes, and wandered off the designated paths to approach the waterside. The rangers would respond to them by shouting at them, telling them that they were not allowed to be there and that they needed to stay on the designated paths. This happened multiple times with different groups of children.

Conversing with the rangers showed that they take their role as rangers with a pinch of salt, continuously mocking their activities: "We do not even sweat in this job. We do not even have guns or anything. We just stick out our hand".[14] Their boredom was apparent; shouting at

[10] Interview 10, Lavender Hill, 11 August 2023.
[11] Interviewee 11, Lavender Hill, 13 September 2023; Interviewee 14, Lavender Hill, 10 August 2023; Interviewee 16, Lavender Hill, 27 July 2023.
[12] Interviewee 11, Lavender Hill, 13 September 2023; Interviewee 14, Lavender Hill, 10 August 2023.
[13] Interviewee 11, Lavender Hill, 13 September 2023; Interviewee 14, Lavender Hill, 10 August 2023.
[14] Interviewees 22 and 23, Zeekoevlei, 8 July 2023.

the playing children was the only remotely exciting or productive thing they would do at work. When asked why the children were not allowed to go play in the bushes and near the water, the rangers first pointed out that the water was not healthy, that they would get sick, and that it would be for their safety.[15] However, soon after, one of the rangers said: "even if the water would be healthy they would not be allowed, because they do not have a permit".[16] Requiring children to have a permit to play seems to create notions of illegality that are inhibiting the community's engagements with nature.

Not only are children required to have permits to play in the reserve, one also needs to apply for fishing permits. Mushonga & Matose (2020) argue that permits can be deeply problematic as they embody structural violence in various ways. They write that permits are powerful tools used as "props to control and discipline the behaviours and practices of resource-dependent people" (Mushonga & Matose, 2020, p. 4). Furthermore, permits and regulations are often inherited from "colonial structures of spatial authority in which institutions […] have become structural boundaries between human and natural bodies" (Mushonga & Matose, 2020, p. 4). This is highly applicable to the Lavender Hill and Lotus River context as the institutionalised regulations tied to the nature reserve create a stark contrast between township life and the nature reserve, though they are bordering each other. Lastly, Mushonga & Matose (2020) stress that these conservation models only work by alienating marginalised people, suggesting that permits allow little room for belonging.

[15] In the Zeekoevlei there are high levels of methane in the water. It is indeed bad for one's health to eat fish from this water or to swim in this water. Previous years, those who have a permit would be allowed to fish in Zeekoevlei. Applications for the permit are to be submitted at the main office. Fishing is now completely prohibited.
[16] Interviewee 22, Zeekoevlei, 8 July 2023.

On 16 January 2021, the violence of institutionalised boundaries between people and nature became clear as the Red Ants, a private security company hired by the COCT, started firing tear gas and shooting rubber bullets and informal settlers at the border of the Rondevlei Nature Reserve (Thebus, 2021). One of the interviewees, quoted below, shared her story of being evicted from her informal shelter at the border of Rondevlei when she had nowhere to stay with her four children.[17] According to her, approximately 60 to 100 squatters in the area lost their homes.

> In Rondevlei, especially the backyard dwellers, it was most of us that got chased away. They even shot rubber bullets at us, tear gas to get off the land that we were trying to build on. It was actually very bad. Even [my daughter] was caught in that, because I lost her during the night there with all that commotion that was going on and then when everything was settled, I just heard her call "Mommy, Mommy", out of the dark there, because there is no electricity. And I was like, "I'm here!" because I didn't know where [my daughter] was. She had to hide away there in the bushes. Quite a few people were hurt there with the rubber bullets and the tear gas. […] They literally threw down all the parts that I did have and quite a few of us that didn't finish building our place got thrown down. […] it's just that somehow I started to feel like yeah, South Africa has so many open lands, so many places, a reserve for this and a reserve for that. But there is nothing reserved for people who need houses and things like that. […] the nature reserve is quite big, they already have a section where tourists don't come. I mean literally they could just section some pieces off and give the land so that people can build houses on there.

In addition to the intentional violent eviction of informal dwellers next to Rondevlei, more participants told stories of jumping the fences of the nature reserve in their childhood and being

[17] Interview 9, Lavender Hill, 29 July 2023.

shot with rubber bullets by private security, such as the conversation below with a grandfather and son held in Lavender Hill.[18]

Son:	Yeah. They shot at us a few times.
Uncle:	And there were people killed already, by security
Researcher:	Really?
Uncle:	Yeah, especially now that the securities get robbed and all that.
Researcher:	But they shot at you also [question directed at the son]?
Son:	Yeah, I was still young. With rubber bullets.
Researcher:	And why did they do that?
Son:	Just to get us out.
Researcher:	Why are the rangers supplied with rubber bullets?
Son:	I don't know.
Researcher:	Do you think it's necessary?
Uncle:	Yes, I think it's necessary. How else are you going to get them away? Because they will get robbed also, and they got hurt. They carry rubber bullets but they get robbed by people with real guns. They have to protect themselves.

The extract above illustrates that although security officers may have (had) access to rubber bullets to protect themselves, they have also used them against children who were on the premises illegally, reflecting the "hardened" property rights (Büscher and Thakholi, 2023). Interestingly, the elderly participant does not regard the bullets as a problem. He deems the safety of the security guards so important that rubber bullets used against children are justified.

During this holiday programme, paradoxes in the City of Cape Town's approach to connecting children to nature were clearly observed. On the one hand, the COCT created a holiday programme to restore kids' connection with nature. On the other hand, local children playing in the reserve were regarded as illegal without a permit. This observation shows that the COCT employing security guards causes hostility towards local children. The same hostility was experienced by many of the adults from Lavender Hill and Lotus River, who remembered being shot with rubber bullets as children. It shows that interaction with nature is only permitted under control and surveillance, which is in line with what Soper (2016) writes:

[18] Interview 15, Lavender Hill, 2 July 2023. Male community elder and son speaking.

"The so-called alienation is such that we (supposedly) can only feel comfortable about getting 'back in touch' in highly mediated ways" (p. 83). Mushoga & Matose (2020) write that permits can be a form of structural violence, which is also observed here. The boredom that the security guards expressed contributes to the increased control over visitors. In the image below, the security guards and children are pictured interacting.

Figure 9:

Quemic Security Guards

The argument that Quemic security guards need to be able to protect themselves and therefore need to be able to defend themselves is valid due to the prominence of criminal activity around and in the nature reserve. Quemic security guards are both recruited and employed from all over the city and rotate between the various nature reserves in the COCT. Some of the participants, especially community elders, mentioned that hiring security guards from other parts of Cape Town is unproductive when it comes to guarding the reserve from gangsters.[19]

[19] Interviewee 2, Lotus River, 2 September 2023; Interviewee 15, Lavender Hill, 2 July 2023; Interviewee 16, Lavender Hill, 27 July 2023. Quote from Interview 16.

They expressed the missed opportunity in recruiting locals, who are more respected by the gangsters in the community:

> I've noticed from the community's side, there's certain people that the people will respect. I won't ask people from the outside to come and work at a place like that. I will use this community people to work there. They are going to maybe put up their fences, but the people that is already there, they must employ them to look after the place man. […] I know the gangsters. They don't respect the guys that is coming from other places. It's dangerous and they not going to do the job proper […] if you observe you will actually notice that they do nothing because they have learned how to safeguard themselves, they must look after themselves.
>
> I would rather employ that kind of person that people respect. I won't employ people that is going to shoot at them and that is going to fight with them. I won't. It just don't work. […]
>
> In the nature reserve, if the guys that are supposed to be looking after it to protect the area I think they also need to know why is that thing there? You cannot only employ them because they must look after the place, security, you understand.

This extract adds an extra dimension to the issues with Quemic. First of all, the security guards face issues of safety from gangsters. The community elder quoted above describes that, in his view, this could be avoided if security officers were hired from Lavender Hill as they have more respect for "their own people".[20] Consequently, the danger the security guards face necessitates rubber bullets, which in turn leads to a violent response to "illegal" locals in the reserve, even children. Secondly, the security guards experience a large degree of irrelevance in their jobs and feelings of boredom. As the community elder expresses in the extract above, those who are employed "also need to know why that thing [the reserve] is there". In other words, they need to have buy-in in the reserve, understand its importance and be emotionally invested in connecting it to the surrounding community. This would be easier to achieve if

[20] Quote from interview 16, Lavender Hill, 27 July 2023. Sentiment was confirmed by my Uber drivers from Lavender Hill who would transport me in and out of the area. They would never face issues with the gangsters as tend to keep respect for 'the hardworking man', and a recognition of the good impact these 'hardworking men' would have on their community. At the end of the day, even gangsters would want their community to be doing better, according to community members.

security guards were employed from surrounding areas. This is in line with Seeman's (1959) indicator of alienation: self-estrangement. Self-estrangement means an individual engages in an activity to fulfil external needs such as making a living, without intrinsic motivation. The security guards themselves are alienated from nature and, therefore, unable to improve local communities' sense of belonging to nature. This argument shows that employment for the sole purpose of increasing security and paying someone a living wage is not enough to achieve conviviality between communities and nature reserves. Employing private security enhanced the structural problem of not belonging.

Both the conservation officers and the community expressed that there is a disconnect between social needs and the conservation aspects of the False Bay Nature Reserves. One of the rangers at the gate said hiring Quemic "frees up our staff to do conservation, [so that we do] not have to look after social issues".[21] This is in line with Stevenson's (2006) argument that Western notions of nature have created apolitical and decontextualised management structures, ignoring the social context in which nature conservation takes place. Similar to the fences, this relates to Seeman's (1959) indicators of alienation: powerlessness, meaninglessness, and normlessness. Both through the fences and private security, the community experiences feelings of exclusion and alienation from the nature reserve. As Koot et al. (2024) argue:

> Racial inclusion and exclusion are for a large part emphasised through nature […] borders […] symbolise much more than physical and geographical segregation; they are also social and psychological barriers, preventing people from thinking they can move upwards. (pp. 131-2).

This quote brings us to the next section, which discusses the misconception in communities that there is an entrance fee to access the nature reserves. The nature of this misconception becomes clear through the "social and psychological barriers" Koot et al. (2024) describe above.

An entrance fee, or for free? A collective misconception

Another finding that suggests local communities lack a sense of ownership and involvement in the False Bay Nature Reserve is the widespread misinformation that occurs regarding the entrance fee. Every interview participant from the community, except those who are employed in the nature reserve, thought they had to pay to access the nature reserve. In reality, the nature

[21] Interview 6, Anonymised, 10 July 2023.

reserve has been free of charge for a number of years. Before that, the fee was R15 for adults and R8 for children. Participants felt that the COCT was not doing enough, or anything at all, to connect the reserve to the community. One of them said: “They are keeping the community out. So if you want to come in, you must pay.”[22]

This was a widely held assumption, even among influential and well-known community leaders who have connections with many people in and outside their neighbourhood. When the participants were told that entrance to the False Bay Nature Reserve was free, they would respond with surprise or even denial.[23]

Participant 11: I don't communicate with these people much anymore, because they don't allow me to go in. You have to go, on the other side, we have to pay.

Researcher: It's actually for free, now.

Participant 11: I know last time we had to pay, I can still remember. That's when I just gave up hope. Not really gave up hope. But sometimes you've got that feeling and like, what can I do must I go on, must I leave it.

Researcher: Why don’t you want to communicate with them anymore?

Participant 11: Doors been closed for too long. You have to communicate with a man to come. People being shut, shut up. You just stay there. You understand? We say you're not coming in. So you're not coming.

[22] Interview 10, Lavender Hill, 11 August 2023.
[23] Interview 11, Lavender Hill, 13 September 2023; see also Interview 2, Lotus River, 2 September 2023.

The uniformity of the misunderstanding about the entrance fee proves that much more complex factors are at play. This is perpetuated by the nature reserve's inability to communicate effectively with the community through appropriate mediums of communication. Most participants stressed that the nature reserve must advertise and advocate better. According to officers in the nature reserves, attempts to spread information by putting flyers up at public libraries, the nature reserves themselves, and supermarkets in Grassy Park were largely ineffective. In some neighbourhoods, such as Lavender Hill or Vrygrond, there was no information dissemination at all. But most of all, the statement "doors have been closed for too long" by the participant above indicates that physical-geographical borders solidify class and racial enclosures, with lingering impacts on psychological and ideological barriers (Koot et al., 2024). The fencing and security contribute to the exclusive image of the reserve. This aspect is recognised by officers of the nature reserve. Below, a conservation officer[24] described how fencing created a "bad image" of the nature reserve with the communities:

> If you go to a place and there's like a whole entrance gate, I think you automatically assume that you have to pay to go inside. They feel that they are suddenly not allowed to go into the area where they could previously go and now they see us as the bad guys where maybe our intention was to protect them from any animals and dangerous things from getting into the communities. But now they view us as bad people and this puts a negative eye on nature conservation. I think that's what might put people off from visiting a nature reserve. There's negative things, putting up these fences near their homes, and now they can't walk into areas where they could before. And that gives us a bad image.

Even though the interviewed reserve officials expressed their aim to keep the reserve accessible to the surrounding communities, the removal of the entry fee was not implemented with the intention to enhance accessibility:

> That simply has to do with the fact that the gatehouse isn't geared to handle cash. There are certain standards that the building needs to be in so that we can take cash. That's the only reason.

[24] Interview 18, Anonymised, 18 August 2023.

The reserve official's[25] disclosure reveals that the fees were removed purely for convenience. A major factor contributing to the misconception about the costs is how coloured people have been treated throughout history when trying to access natural spaces. As Mushonga & Matose (2020) write:

> Symbolic violence is underwritten by symbolic power, which as we shall show, is "inculcated through instruction, habit and routine… that incline people to act and react to policing in certain ways" (Loader, 1997, p. 3) (p. 5).

These refer to the ideological enclosures Koot et al. (2024) describe. As shown in the previous section, people are used to not having access, being policed, and having high fences and private security that inhibit their access. This "habit and routine" explains why the coloured community would assume that there is a fee to the nature reserve, which also does not have an image of being free of charge. Participants often argued that the coloured identity is inherently connected to "having to pay": "We have this idea, nothing is for free. Whenever there is something nice to have, we think it is going to cost money, which we don't have".[26] Another interviewee said: "Everyone if they see something nice, a nice place. I know you must pay there to get in there".[27] Many participants felt nature was only for upper-class people. Since the Apartheid government took control of the nature reserve in 1952, people's collective assumption that "nice" spaces in the city are not for the common public good increased. There is a collective memory amongst the coloured community that they do not belong in nature reserves, which is deeply rooted in Apartheid policies of alienating people from their natural spaces.

The fact that the entire community misconceives the nature reserve's fees indicates significant alienation. As captured in Seeman's indicator of alienation, powerlessness implies that one can also be alienated from institutions themselves (Kanungo, 1979). That seems to be the case here. There is a lack of *involvement* (Kanungo, 1979), which inhabits feelings of belonging. In the next paragraph, the consequences of Apartheid's spatial planning will be discussed and how this results in stigmatisation of the community by the City of Cape Town, which is in turn reflected in how the nature reserve engages with the community.

[25] Interview 6, Anonymised, 10 July 2023.
[26] Interview 24, Grassy Park, 12 July 2023.
[27] Interview 1, Lotus River, 13 August 2023.

Lavender Hill and "the dark side of conservation": stigmatisation of a community

As mentioned in the previous sections, fencing and private security are used in the nature reserves because of a severe security threat. Apart from jumping the fence to rob visitors in the park or attack someone from a rival gang, people would also steal parts of the fence, creating an opportunity for criminal activities by gangs from Lavender Hill. Security officers referred to crime in the nature reserves as the "dark side of conservation": "where you have communities that give you problems where they use the nature reserve as a burial site".[28] It is especially gangsters from Lavender Hill that create this dark side of conservation. The interviewed officers expressed fear of the western border. They and the private security Quemic do not patrol on that side of the reserve, as it is too close to where the gangsters hide their guns and drugs, and they are not certain about their actual hiding location:[29]

> Maybe they are standing on a hill there and now they are watching us. I think my colleagues came too close to where they were hiding their stuff. So they were shooting on them. And the Quemic guys, who has like the brown overall on, the security, they don't have guns they only have pepper spray. So they have to run.

Another officer described the area next to the western border as a "no man's land" where the City does not have control over the criminal activities. The interviews with employees at the nature reserve revealed an overarching negative experience with the Lavender Hill community. The same negative experiences were shared about the informal settlement Xakabantu, bordering Vrygrond, at the Slangentjiebos section of the nature reserve. These narratives and discourses seem to result in the communities of Lavender Hill, Lotus River and Vrygrond being largely excluded from the community outreaches that the reserve does. Although gangsterism and crime are serious social issues, the communities tend to be stigmatised as a whole.

As discussed in the conceptual framework, the stigmatisation of the township communities surrounding the False Bay Nature Reserve helps to understand the dynamics of belonging and alienation. In his book *Citizen and Subject*, Mamdani (1996) explains how colonial power is inherited through institutions such as nature reserves, where people of colour remain excluded, subjected and alienated from their institutions. Indeed, the stigmatisation of

[28] Interview 18, Anonymised, 18 August 2023.
[29] Interview 12, False Bay Nature Reserve, 7 August 2023.

the township communities is of such an extent that they are not full citizens but merely subject to the nature reserve. The COCT is, however, trying to create meaningful engagement with underprivileged local communities, which is discussed in the next section, including the employment opportunities created in the nature reserves through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP).

3. Initiatives to improve community engagement

In post-apartheid South Africa, nature conservators are increasingly adopting transformative practices to reconnect local communities to nature (Graham, 2015). In recent decades, the False Bay Nature Reserve has similarly started initiatives to enhance community engagement. Examples of such transformative practices in the False Bay Nature Reserve include the Environmental Education (EE) by Nature Connect, holiday programmes by the COCT, the Friends of Zeekoevlei and Rondevlei (FOZR) and local employment programmes. These practices are not fully "decolonised" or democratic, however, we can understand them as moving away from "colonial conservation" (Cock & Fig, 2000). This section of the chapter starts by discussing environmental education activities, then touches upon the Friends of Zeekoevlei & Rondevlei (FOZR) community-based non-profit organisation, and lastly discusses the transformative power (and limitations) of employment opportunities in the nature reserve.

Environmental Education

Environmental education (EE) was the tool most often mentioned by conservation practitioners to engage with the community. EE in the False Bay Nature Reserve is implemented by Nature Connect and the City of Cape Town. Nature Connect is an NGO that aims to increase the connectivity between local populations and the natural world by putting people at the centre of conservation. They do not only focus on conservation but also on youth development and job opportunities. At the COCT, environmental education is mainly executed by the People and Conservation Officers (PCOs), who host education programmes for local schools in the reserve.

For this thesis, I had the opportunity to participate in and observe the holiday programmes organised by the COCT. These programmes revolve around EE learning and activities and are organised during the winter and summer holidays. The People and Conservation Officer (PCO) explained: "You know, historically, the surrounding communities are not really connected to the reserve. So the goal of the programme is to bring them back

in."[30] The target audience was Pelikan Park, Zeekoevlei and Grassy Park. Posters for the programmes were placed at reserve entrances, local supermarkets and community Libraries. Notably, Lavender Hill was completely excluded. Participation is free of charge. However, parents have to drop their children at the nature reserve, for which a vehicle is necessary. Most participating children were from Pelikan Park and Zeekoevlei, with a few children from Grassy Park. There were none from Lavender Hill or Lotus River. I was told that the previous holiday programmes were as scarcely attended as this one, "probably because people don't know about it".[31] One of the parents of the children told me that "word of mouth is very powerful"[32] and that flyers in supermarkets and public libraries are not successful.

Officers of the nature reserve stressed that they wished to be more involved with the Pelikan Park community, but they did not have the same sentiment regarding Vrygrond, Lotus River and Lavender Hill. This difference in attitude is also experienced and felt by the community. A participant from Lavender Hill stressed the lack of respect for people from Lavender Hill and other surrounding areas. According to him, the reserve never reaches out to their communities. He felt that "it's Apartheid actually, if you think about it, we keep those that side, you can kill each other on that side. We don't give a shit. As long as we protect the reserve".[33] Conversely, an officer of the False Bay Nature Reserve stressed:[34]

> It's not just, like I said earlier, it's not them and us. it's part of your life to have something like this, it makes sense to have something like this. So you want people to have a connection with nature. So that they look after it and use it and enjoy it.

There is, therefore, a disconnect between the False Bay Nature Reserve's intended communication with communities and how it is received by underprivileged communities.

In reflecting on the holiday programmes more substantively, it is notable that the children were only immersed in nature for a limited time, mostly during the 20-minute break. During the programme itself, they were restricted to the designated asphalt roads. Although EE is a great initiative with good intentions, the contents of the programme did little to inspire the youth. The programme could just as well have taken place in a setting away from nature, such

[30] Interview 6, Anonymised, 10 July 2023.
[31] Interview 24, Grassy Park, 12 July 2023.
[32] Interview 24, Grassy Park, 12 July 2023.
[33] Interview 14, Lavender Hill, 10 August 2023.
[34] Interview 6, Anonymised, 10 July 2023.

as in a classroom. It raises a question about who defines what education is and what not.

Maila & Loubser (2003) argue that environmental education in South Africa should include indigenous knowledge systems and that it is a missed opportunity to regard it only as part of the Arts and Cultures. This marginalises indigenous knowledge as the powerful and higher class determines which form of knowledge governs society. The lack of indigenous knowledge education in the False Bay Nature Reserve fits Koot et al.'s (2024) conceptualisation of "ideological enclosures". Structural forms of power in the False Bay Nature Reserve, such as fences and private security, result in standardisation and normalisation of Western culture and EE. When asked if any Khoisan knowledge is being taught to future generations, an officer of the False Bay Nature Reserve answered that "through us, there isn't much of that happening. But there are groups that have come into the reserve that use the reserve on their own, and then offer that kind of knowledge to the community".[35]

Currently, EE is only focused on the youth, but the False Bay officers stressed that EE can trickle down to the parent as well and that this is the desired outcome:[36]

> Whenever school kids come in, I always use it opportunity to tell the kids: tell your parents to come with you. It's free. So, they understand that there's very little that you can do that is free. So and sometimes you see that, you know, that a kid comes in and they're like, yeah, I was here with the school. So that's quite amazing. And that they make the effort to come back and get their parents to come with them.

Ashwell (2010), who studied EE in urban nature reserves in Cape Town specifically, shows that belonging to nature can be stimulated by allowing children time to appreciate their surroundings in sensory ways. According to Ashwell (2010), "programme presenters aimed to help youth to develop a sense of 'belonging' by allowing them time to appreciate their surroundings in quiet, sensory ways" (p. 228). In the observations for this thesis, there was little space for that. As discussed in the section above on private security, children who did this by themselves without supervision would be turned away in a hostile manner. The holiday programmes thus showed potential for including local communities, however, there is a need for EE to be more centred on different ways of knowing and a variety of knowledge systems.

[35] Interview 6, Anonymised, 10 July 2023.
[36] Interview 6, Anonymised, 10 July 2023.

There seems to be a slightly different approach to EE by Nature Connect. The facilitators were, first of all, from surrounding communities and highly motivated to connect the children to the nature reserve. They were also well aware of the limitations of EE. An interviewee from Nature Connect stressed people from his community are:[37]

> All fairly disconnected because of the encounters. If I say encounters I mean like, if you look at Rondevlei itself, Rondevlei has one PNC officer, one education officer. You see, and that education officer is basically split around everywhere.

He argues that the nature reserve should elect youth ambassadors from each surrounding neighbourhood to encourage community engagement. In that way you would create feelings of agency and belonging in the community. Nature Connect also has programs in which learners are exposed to different environmental activities over seven years, adopting a more long-term approach. Afterwards, learners can get involved with Nature Connect as facilitators, ensuring economic opportunities for local communities. The City of Cape Town seems to consider EE almost exclusively in terms of the environment without considering social and human issues (Stevenson, 2007). Nature Connect takes a more human-centred approach. Evaluations of EE organised by Nature Connect compared to the City's EE programs would be valuable. Overall, it can be concluded that the EE programmes observed during data collection insufficiently created feelings of belonging. There was little engagement with indigenous knowledge and heritage, and the overall approach of the holiday programmes did not recognise children as "part of nature" (Vogel, 2014), but only allowed them to interact with the reserve in highly mediated and institutionalised ways.

Friends of Zeekoevlei and Rondevlei

The FOZR describes itself as "an apolitical, community-based non-profit organisation that aims to assist the nature reserve authorities to protect the much-threatened flora and fauna that make this corner of the Cape Flats their home" (Zeekoevlei.co.za, 2024, para. 1). It was established in 2006 and aims to reach all the communities that affect the Zeekoevlei waterbody. In an interview, a FOZR board member explained that FOZR is working with the City to achieve their common goals and to keep the City accountable when an issue is not addressed properly. When the COCT does not adhere to their promises or responsibilities, FOZR uses the

[37] Interview 12, False Bay Nature Reserve, 7 August 2023. Officer from Lotus River speaking.

power of the media to add pressure. The board member explained that in the past, FOZR was a small group of about 18 locals from Zeekoevlei. However, FOZR attendees have increased, and they saw involvement from Woodstock, Khayelitsha, Gugulethu, Hannoverpark and other areas in their litter cleanup projects.

The interviewed board member lives in Zeekoevlei. He explained that growing up in the Cape Flats, nature didn't exist for them in his community. Because of this lived experience, he has knowledge of local communities, which adds value to his work as a board member for FOZR. He stressed that it is of utmost importance to involve underprivileged communities:[38]

> So that they take ownership of the cause of the issues. But the way it is done is important and it should not be a "top down" approach but inclusive so that the holistic value chain is owned by all.

Stressing inclusivity and sustainability, this board member of FOZR puts conservation at the heart of local communities. During the interview, he cautioned that it is hard to involve underprivileged communities from the Cape Flats as their priorities lie elsewhere: survival. To show them the natural beauty that is so close by, he likes to invite locals from the Cape Flats on a boat ride through the vlei. He highlights that it is easy for the Zeekoevlei community to be involved and engaged, as the vlei is in their backyard. In clearing alien species and replacing them with indigenous ones, they not only protect the environment, but they also make sure their backyard is not overgrown by aggressive alien reeds. Furthermore, the vlei needs to be protected for recreational activities such as the yacht club. The interviewed board member stresses that in clearing alien reeds, the residents of Zeekoevlei put in a lot of private financial assets. This is not covered by the COCT. As much as this shows the involvement and passion of the Zeekoevlei residents, it also implies that these options are not present for underprivileged township communities. There are also communities with which FOZR avoids engagement. An example of this is the informal squatter camps in the Slangentjiebos section of the nature reserve. The interviewed board member stressed that their existence is illegal and "it is known as a very dangerous area".[39]

Through FOZR community involvement, as well as intentions to make nature accessible to all, have positively evolved from 2006 up to now. FOZR has undergone

[38] Interview 19, Zeekoevlei, 6 September 2023.
[39] Interview 19, Zeekoevlei, 6 September 2023.

transformations and is helping the nature reserve move away from outdated and exclusive colonial conservation practices. However, FOZR does not hold any real power over the City. FOZR and the COCT have an arrangement in which, as observed in other studies as well, "local people's" input is often relegated to that of "consultation" or "advisory status" (Graham, 2015, p. 40). As it is not an equal power-sharing arrangement, the opinions and views of locals are easily ignored. We can see that FOZR negotiates this cleverly by involving the media, which they use to put pressure on the City to keep its promises. Another limitation, as the board member also identified, is the extent to which underprivileged community members are able to engage with nature given the substantial differences in socioeconomic privileges. However, throughout the research, it became clear that community leaders in Lavender Hill had never heard of a community organisation such as FOZR. Increasing interactions between FOZR and community leaders, especially from underprivileged areas like Lavender Hill and the informal settlement in Slangentjiebos, could be beneficial to increase belonging to the nature reserve. The current lack of engagement contributes to the stigmatisation of these communities and heightens the divide between the affluent areas of Zeekoevlei and the impoverished neighbourhoods. As Musavengane & Leonard (2019) write:

> There is a need for conservation groups to also include the previously marginalised in leadership structures and to incorporate indigenous knowledge systems. This will assist in changing the perception of marginalised people that particular persons dominate conservation (p. 135).

Although the FOZR is a good start to improve community engagement, it experiences difficulties in creating an increased sense of belonging amongst underprivileged township communities. To a certain extent, FOZR is still operating in relative isolation, one of the indicators of alienation by Seeman (1959).

Employment opportunities in the nature reserve

As mentioned in the literature review, alienation and belonging must be understood as concepts encompassing social and environmental dimensions (Castree, 2001; Choquet, 2021). The theory of socio-nature states that the social, the economic, and the ecological are intricately linked to the point where one cannot be treated in isolation from others. In the case of coloured townships in the Cape Flats that border the False Bay Nature Reserve, their daily reality is characterised by crime and poverty. This directly impacts the community's ability to connect with and belong to nature. In fostering community engagement with the nature reserve, it is therefore of utmost importance to address the community's pressing needs that inhibit

belonging to nature.

During data collection, it became apparent that the most vulnerable people in the communities are disconnected from the False Bay Nature Reserve and nature in general. Instead of wanting to answer questions about nature, research participants would highlight issues related to violence, gangs, drugs, and wider topics of survival. This trend primarily appeared amongst people with little formal education and who experienced high levels of direct violence in their surroundings on a daily basis. This finding supports the concept of socio-nature (Castree, 2001; Choquet, 2021). Participants continuously explained that they do not have time or space in their daily lives to engage with nature reserves:[40]

> I feel there is a big disconnect [between people and nature] because, especially in the coloured life, neh, it's like, it's that survival mode. You wake up. Go work, make sure there's a piece of bread for today, and you repeat it the next day. […] it was just, survival was always at the top. […] there is no room for the nice things, like a nature reserve.

The daily realities of crime and poverty push interaction with nature into the background. Even though children go to the nature reserve with their school, perhaps once a year, their daily realities of returning to the community remain traumatic. This becomes clear in the following quote:[41]

> I think it's a trauma of the place, you know, it's a survival, it's being in that space that that becomes that is sort of become our norm, our lived reality. And that we struggled to see reality beyond that. So we are not wanting to talk about nature, because nature is not going to protect us if there is now bullets. We don't want to talk about Rondevlei because it's not going to feed our kids and our grandkids, so we tend to now just gravitate towards immediate issues because that is our survival. And it is sad that because now we no longer see that Rondevlei has got all these fishes.

For this reason, addressing some of the socio-economic issues of the community becomes a powerful way to engage community members with the nature reserve. In the False Bay Nature Reserve, this happens in two main ways. Firstly, Nature Connect, which is supported by the

[40] Interview 1, Lotus River, 13 August 2023.
[41] Interview 14, Lavender Hill, 10 August 2023.

City, offers long-term employment opportunities for local community members and engages local school children from a young age, offering training and education to become conservation officers. Secondly, the South African government offers employment and training opportunities through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). EPWP is "a national government initiative aimed at reducing poverty through providing income relief by creating temporary work for the unemployed" (City of Cape Town, 2022, p. 4). It is operational in multiple sectors, and conservation is one of them. The goal of the EPWP is to create "community-based work". One of the officers of the False Bay Nature Reserve explained that:[42]

> On a yearly basis we get new people in to work at the reserve. So that will be about 30 people for a year working at the reserve. So they gain experience in work, but they also gain the knowledge of a space like working in a space like this.

One of the interview participants, a conservation officer from Lavender Hill, participated in the EPWP. For him, it was a life-changing experience. As a teenager, he had to leave school as his father was not providing for his family; he resolved to selling drugs on the Cape Flats. When his mom passed away, he decided to turn his life around. This was challenging as he did not have any educational background. He got an opportunity to follow an EPWP training, allowing him to leave crime:[43]

[42] Interview 6, Anonymised, 10 July 2023.
[43] Interview 12, False Bay Nature Reserve, 7 August 2023. Officer from Lavender Hill speaking.

> It was difficult for me to get in because you know I didn't have like even a certificate from school nothing to show them. Nothing. I just went there and I asked them is there any way they can give me a chance. I'm down to do anything basically, anything! But I don't want to go back to selling drugs again, I want to make a difference in my life. Because like it depends on the person if he wants to step out of this situation and make a difference. But I just thought I am just going there with my ID and with my little knowledge that I have of selling drugs [laughter]. I didn't know much because like I said I've been selling drugs for almost 10 years […] so I was like sceptical about this. I saw okay, you must not have a criminal record, and I was thinking to myself, hey, oh no, I don't know so much about this hey, but I thought to myself I'm gonna I'm just gonna apply because I don't want to go back to my community and start selling drugs again. But now I'm gonna give it chance and I asked the lady: Lady, help me to fill out the form.

This abstract from the interview clearly shows the personal impact EPWP had on this individual. Not only did he get work experience and a wage, but he also gained relevant certification he could use after his EPWP period to start his own business or apply for a permanent post in the department. He chose the latter and was successful in securing employment. Similarly, another interview participant was employed in the nature reserve through Nature Connect. Both of these individuals believe that they are not gangsters today because of the employment opportunities they received at the nature reserve:[44]

> To me, it was strictly either like, it's either you're going to be a gangster or you're going to be a hard-working man, which one do you want to be? Now, it depends on which one do you know more about. If I know how to shoot a gun the best. I'm not gonna go look for a job. I know how to do these things, I know how to kill people, why must I go look for a job. And then when I do that, I also end up in that hole […] When you are spending the rest of your life selling drugs on the Cape Flats, like try to make a living for your parents. In that, you are also gaining. In the sense of, you are gaining knowledge, about what is this, what is going on here?

[44] Interview 12, False Bay Nature Reserve, 7 August 2023. Officer from Lotus River speaking.

The stories of the two local officers show that not only does employment in the nature reserve allow people to avoid crime and create a better future for themselves and their families, but it also showcases an increased level of engagement and connection with nature. Both officers explained that the nature reserve was not accessible for them as children, either because of the fencing or because of a general lack of awareness and engagement with the reserve. The conservation officer explained in the interview that he knew nothing about nature previously and would kill any wild animal he came across. Due to the EPWP, he developed a love and appreciation for nature: "It was my safe haven so to say. It is where I got the love for nature, it all started there. Yeah, they taught us everything".[45] Now, he hopes to bring many members of his community to the nature reserve and help them appreciate it as much as he has been able to.

Taking into account the theory of socio-nature (Castree, 2001; Choquet, 2021), it is not only symbolic belonging that is important but also financial exchange and tangible ways to support one's livelihood. The quotes above show that in the context of township communities like Lavender Hill and Lotus River, the False Bay Nature Reserve has a unique opportunity to tap into surrounding communities' need for knowledge and opportunities. There is a strong demand and desire for alternative pathways and choices. Scholars such as MacMaster (2007) show that the economic exclusion of coloured communities results in poverty and directly creates leverage for gangs. Gangsterism is an easier way to make a living. However, it is most of all, a way to make meaning. If the nature reserve could tap more into the meaning-making of people's daily lives, it has the potential to be transformative.

The case of the young men from Lotus River and Lavender Hill who now work in the nature reserve shows that *meaning* as opposed to *meaninglessness* (Seeman, 1959) can be created if it includes socio-economic benefits such as employment. In this way, feelings of autonomy and control over their lives can be created through the nature reserve, enhancing engagement with nature itself. As written in the conceptual framework, belonging and alienation need to be understood as concepts that are intertwined with the socio-economic and the environmental, meaning that economic factors such as employment can be used to create belonging to nature. Cajax & Berman (2010) regard belonging as a constantly changing experience that is shaped by the context (environmental factors) as well as personal and cultural factors. One of the conservation officers explained that the EPWP was a way to "use the

[45] Interview 12, False Bay Nature Reserve, 7 August 2023. Officer from Lavender Hill speaking.

community to teach the communities".[46] This is a powerful employment method, unlike the Quemic security guards, who lack a vested interest in engaging nature with local underprivileged communities. This section has showcased how belonging to nature can be created by addressing factors of socio-economic precarity, such as unemployment.

4. Chapter summary

In line with Koot et al.'s (2024) argument, physical enclosures create class and racial enclosures as well as ideological enclosures. This manifests itself in local communities experiencing the fences and security as structural and symbolic violence, in line with Mushonga & Matose's (2020) article on different corollaries of violence. The requirements of permits create significant alienation and non-belonging to the nature reserve. Communities are alienated from the reserve to such an extent that they assume the nature reserve charges them an entrance fee, even though it is free. This is the symbolic enclosure that results from the way the nature reserves are managed. The chapter started with a quote from a community member describing Lavender Hill as a prison. This reflects the different dimensions of enclosure and alienation – a barrier akin to "imprisonment" – that the township communities experience. At the same time, it is also clear that some community members do have an interest in the reserve and desire to be part of nature, which Vogel (2014) deems an important part of being engaged with nature. However, they feel that the physical and psychological barriers of the reserve take their belonging away and illegalise some of the activities they used to engage in in the past. As a result, they engage in activities deemed illegal, such as jumping the fence. This relates to Seeman's (1959) indicator of alienation, *normlessness,* when individuals have to resort to socially disapproved behaviour to reach their goals.

At the same time, there are initiatives that mitigate the alienation experienced by local communities, as discussed in the second half of this chapter. The COCT officials identified a need to link nature back to the community, which they do through holiday programmes for children. However, it is operated in a highly mediated and structured way, allowing little space for local people to have a sense of belonging. Furthermore, its impact is hindered by the City's employment of private security which turns children from surrounding communities away if they do not have a permit. Similarly, FOZR wishes to involve many of the surrounding underprivileged communities but struggle to do so. The stigmatisation of "dangerous" and "unruly" communities complicates this. It is clear that there is a sense of powerlessness amongst township communities (Seeman, 1959) and a lack of autonomy and control over the

[46] Interview 12, False Bay Nature Reserve, 7 August 2023. Officer from Lotus River speaking.

nature reserve, which results in alienation from it. To create belonging, the socio-economic context has to be taken into account. The EPWP employment programme shows an alternative way of facilitating belonging in the nature reserve. When economic uncertainties are addressed, a structural and more sustainable sense of belonging to the nature reserve can be created. In short, this chapter has shown that spatial and structural factors of the False Bay Nature Reserve entrench alienation. However, there are initiatives to reconnect the community, and if these address the socio-economic issues, these could enhance belonging.

Chapter 6. The coloured identity and internalised notions of alienation from nature

> *"The reason why we Khoi people are, you know, seen as the most violent people, you know, it's because we miss the land. We missed the freedom of the land, we miss our animals on the land, we miss our community that existed on the land."*[47]

1. Introduction

The last chapter showed that the disconnect between local communities and the False Bay Nature Reserve is rooted in structural and spatial factors that are linked to socio-economic circumstances. However, the lack of custodianship goes beyond the spatial planning of the reserves, or poverty and unemployment. As Grover (2006) argues, conservation shapes identities. The data collected for this thesis shows that communities inherently experience their coloured identity as not being connected to nature. Trotter (2009) writes that "township life introduced a level of insecurity that never existed in their old communities" (p. 58-9), as the introductory quote above resonates. This insecurity impacted identity and broader cultural spheres of life, including connection to nature, and that these are mutually reinforcing. This chapter starts by demonstrating how the participants experienced Apartheid as the cause of alienation from nature and how that contributed to internalised racism experienced by the coloured community. The chapter concludes with a presentation of (Khoisan) Rastafarianism as a group within the coloured community that reconnects lost identities and recovers belonging through nature.

2. Apartheid and the foundations of alienation from nature

The data revealed that participants were alienated from nature in general due to historical processes of dispossession and removal. Previous research has already extensively shown how Apartheid segregated people of colour from the natural environment (Beinart & Hughes, 2007; Cocks et al., 2016; Percival & Homer-Dixon, 1998; Steyn, 2013; Venter et al., 2020), also referred to as "environmental apartheid" (Stull et al., 2016). Venter et al. (2020) point out that even today, there is a persistent lack of parks and green spaces in marginalised communities in

[47] Interview 14, Lavender Hill, 10 August 2023.

Cape Town's townships. Nature was, in many ways, used as a tool by the Apartheid government to marginalise black populations (Stull et al., 2016). This was reflected in the interviews; the words "no nature in our communities" appeared 16 times across 10 transcribed interviews. As voiced by a community leader on the disconnect between people and nature created by Apartheid:[48]

> Because of the urban management of our communities, you know, us being just dumped on this ground and just left to just defend ourselves. That is where the biggest divide between nature takes place.

The words participants chose to describe their neighbourhood were telling. Three participants referred to Lavender Hill and other townships on the Cape Flats as "a concrete jungle".[49] One of the interviewees expressed a strong sense of frustration and social injustice about the nature reserve, which he argued was used as a tool of oppression and alienation:[50]

> Rondevlei and Zeekoevlei, I think there's intentional colonial processes happening at keeping people feeling unwanted, you know. Don't come here. Don't access this, don't feel some sort of connection to this, which is really sad […] I think the colony has been very clever because now, I don't think that people think about Rondevlei anymore. We don't think about Rondevlei as being part of our identity. We don't even see Rondevlei as something that's intentionally kept away from us. They have been really clever. The colonists continue to just be very clear (Respondent LH7, 2023).

The participant made a strong connection between colonialism and his community being denied access to the nature reserves. He describes Rondevlei as being intentionally removed from people's collective memory and identity by colonists. This view of successful alienation is supported by the data collected: many interviewees were not aware that they lived next to a nature reserve, or if they were, they had never been to it partly because they inherently

[48] Interview 10, Lavender Hill, 11 August 2023.
[49] Interview 17, Grassy Park, 16 July 2023; Interview 14, Lavender Hill, 10 August 2023; Interview 4, Fairways, 10 September 2023.
[50] Interview 14, Lavender Hill, 10 August 2023.

felt it was not for them because of their coloured identity. One of the mothers in Rondevlei, who takes her children to the nature reserve together with her female neighbour, said:[51]

> We grew up in apartheid, we used to walk past the fence of the reserve and think this reserve is not for us. It's for white people. We used to have to pay for absolutely everything in that time and people don't know that things changed.

Both women knew about the reserve since they were children, however they described it as enclosed and inaccessible. The strong sense of alienation becomes apparent here. The following quote describes the lack of green spaces in the townships:[52]

> We weren't sort of regarded on that particular level of thinking in terms of greenery. Just the building was provided. The bare minimum […] if you would walk into any of these areas then you can see Apartheid spatial planning. People just grouped together.

The "not being regarded on that level in terms of greenery" ultimately had an effect on how people think about themselves, their identity, and their community as being connected to nature. Community leaders, elders, and those who identified as indigenous Khoisan illustrated a direct relationship between the loss of land and nature and the loss of identity or heritage of the coloured community. As Trotter (2009) writes, those classified as coloured experienced social segregation from their communities to a large extent. They were not only dispossessed of their land but also of their neighbourhoods and social networks. He writes: "In many ways, they had to recreate their sense of self and their social lives as their old networks were torn apart" (Trotter, 2009, p. 49). This recreation of a sense of self, according to the literature on the coloured community (Adhikari, 2009; Petrus & Isaacs-Martin, 2012), as well as the data collected for this thesis, was challenging for many and became largely based on negative historical stereotypes (Trotter, 2009).

Adhikari (2006) explains that coloured people experience racial stereotyping by African Bantu-speaking people, who see them as a mixed race with "no nationhood, no identity, no land, no culture" (p. 155). Adhikari (2006) explains that many assume that unlike coloured

[51] Interview 24, False Bay Nature Reserve, 12 July 2023.
[52] Interview 4, Fairways, 10 September 2023.

people, Africans have rich histories connected to the land and nature. This view was reiterated by the isiXhosa-speaking Quemic security guards in Zeekoevlei. They explained that in rural Eastern Cape, their connection and engagement with nature is natural, beautiful and uncomplicated. Whereas here, in the reserves they work in, nature is not "together" with the coloured communities living around the reserves. In the interviews, participants claimed that their community's separation from nature reinforces their loss of heritage and identity. This sentiment was particularly evident in the feedback from the highly educated interviewees, often indigenous Khoisan. In the following interview extract, a female Khoisan activist vividly describes the perpetuation of this disconnect of coloured people from the Cape Flats, stating that they "don't know who they are", and that the absence of nature and greenery is a significant contributor to this feeling of hopelessness and senselessness:[53]

[53] Interview 5, Fairways, 10 September 2023.

Researcher:	Do you feel like communities like Lavender Hill and Lotus River lost a connection to their heritage?
Elder:	Oh, yeah. […]
Researcher:	Is that disconnect also there because people were taken away from nature?
Elder:	Nature, nature. Places like Cape flats, no greenery, you don't see trees like you would see in other people's areas, you know, they were thrown into the arid land, Mitchell's Plain, Grassy Park. […] Disconnection of nature is that ever taken away from what they already were. Part of who they were. […] Disconnect is a very big thing. A very big thing.
Researcher:	So do you mean, when disconnect happens from nature, there's also a disconnect from identity?
Elder:	[nodding in agreement] it's a big thing. Because you go to Parkwood now, I'm sure you've been in these streets like Parkwood, you don't see a tree. Nobody sits under a tree and reflect. The Khoisan had their meetings under a tree. They didn't look for a hall, like now you have to go hire Civic Centres, who say oh no, too many meetings there today, you can't have a meeting. They didn't wait for anything. A tree was some shelter for them where they could connect and speak what they wanted to speak about. You go to Parkwood, no trees. Everybody's looking, you should go there this time of the day, you know, Robin, you will find these women hanging over the gate with their doeks on, rollers in the hair and a gown, just looking up and down, the road. What are they waiting for? They are waiting for you, Robin and for me to tell them who they are. They don't know who they are.

This extract clearly describes the correlation between the absence of nature and communities' inability to organise socially and create an identity. She uses the example of being unable to meet under a tree to illustrate the absence of possibilities to connect with one another. During the interview, she would repeat that "they are lost. They don't know who they are". The activist, who identifies as a coloured Khoisan woman, worked with coloured communities in the Cape Flats for most of her life and has often observed these feelings of being lost. She, amongst other interviewees, describes it as a generational trauma that resulted

from a loss of land and identity. She stresses that "the psyche has been damaged […] by this disconnect",[54] insinuating that the very identity of the coloured person from a subeconomic area has been destroyed. According to this Khoisan activist, her people can only be healed "once they know where they come from".

The loss of heritage and identity was also noticeable in the prevailing absence of custodians of indigenous knowledge in the communities. While authors such as Bam (2021) show that indigenous knowledge of Rondevlei's vegetation prevails among female knowledge-keepers in the Cape Flats despite the Apartheid regime's systemic attempts to strip this from them, few such custodians were encountered during this research. When asked, people argued that there is no indigenous knowledge left: "There is nothing. It's all been taken away. It's not part of history anymore", showing the success of the Apartheid regime's intentions. Other participants acknowledged their Khoisan heritage but did not know the details or traditions that belonged to it. The following quote[55] illustrates this loss of memory and heritage:

[54] Interview 5, Fairways, 10 September 2023.
[55] Interview 15, Lavender Hill, 2 July 2023.

> We as Khoi people doesn't know little things about... Yes, there are some people now that are planting herbs and stuff. But people is just not interested. And there is such an important medicinal purpose. A lot of that, that's just there, but nobody.... […] Most of our people don't know, I'm serious, most people don't. […] I think they all passed on. The past is a loss of memory you know, total loss of memory. We don't know where we come from. Most of our people don't have means to connect a family tree. We don't have that. But I'm sure the Dutch have that. But we don't have that. We found out that our ancestors were from Southwest Africa. But we only found out now, but we don't know who were our aunts, our uncles and all that. So, those are the things that's why I say it's a loss of memory. Nobody knows where we come from. Many just remember their European ancestors. Now my grandpa was an Englishman or my grandpa was a Hollander that's all they remember. Further they don't remember, who was my Khoisan uncle or my Khoisan grandfather or great, great grandfather. They didn't record nothing.

Some participants argued that elders from the community have rich indigenous knowledge, but that they did not pass it on to younger generations because of generational trauma:[56]

> With the past apartheid government, a lot of people have a lot of resentment towards them. So either they blocking the knowledge that they have, like great grandparents here in the community, they are still, still so angry because of the things that they went through, and they have this deep knowledge, Robin. If you have to sit and talk to some of these old people, they have this rich knowledge and background. So much knowledge on the environment and the Khoi and their heritage, and where we come from as a kind of person as well. They have this knowledge but, I feel some of them are still so angry that they don't share this knowledge with the children who can share it to their children.

This participant stressed that elders are reluctant to share their knowledge with their children. Thus, even if custodians of indigenous Khoisan knowledge are present in the communities where this research took place, there are still active processes of alienation from their heritage and identity.

The sentiment of being robbed of their heritage and history is recognised by several

[56] Interview 9, Lavender Hill, 29 July 2023.

scholars. Trotter (2009) refers to this as the coloured community suffering from historical amnesia. This amnesia was instilled by many colonial institutions and ideologies, such as the lack of history and stories about slavery in museums in Cape Town (Coetzee & Nuttall, 1998). Historical amnesia is a colonial tool used in many other African countries where colonisers have tried to build a nation by creating distorted notions of history using both nostalgia and amnesia (Mazrui, 2013). This selective elimination of memory was necessary for the Apartheid government to make its nation-building project work. This is a typical example of what Mazrui (2013) describes as the African identity crisis. Nature reserves such as False Bay can be understood as institutions that similarly contributed to historical amnesia by excluding and prohibiting their use for indigenous purposes, depriving communities of indigenous knowledge. Furthermore, as a result of Apartheid and colonialism, the coloured identity has been presented as a homogenous identity, whereas it is a diverse melting pot of heritages and cultures. According to Graham (2015): "the simplification of peoples and imposition of identities continues to permeate nature conservation mentalities and practices today, whereby "the social is made to seem less complex so it can fit into the new spatial productions of conservation"(West et al., 2006, p. 264)" (p. 183). The simplification of the coloured community – inherently leading to a loss of identity and heritage – directly aids Western institutionalised and hierarchical notions of nature conservation.

Another Khoisan activist highlighted that: "The psychological trauma of landscapes were not addressed."[57] The activist went on to describe the relationship between their removal from the land and the stereotyping of the coloured identity as violent − in line with what Mushonga & Matose (2020) call the symbolic violence of nature reserves. This chapter opened with an excerpt from the following quote because it so powerfully illustrates this relationship:[58]

[57] Interview 14, Lavender Hill, 10 August 2023.
[58] Interview 14, Lavender Hill, 10 August 2023.

> The reason why we Khoi people are, you know, seen as the most violent people, you know, it's because we miss the land. We missed the freedom of the land, we miss our animals on the land, we miss our community that existed on the land. […]
>
> We can only talk about the gangsterism. Because that is that is as far as the coloured identity takes us. The gangsterism. Now we only talk about the violence, we no longer want to understand how the removal from the land is the cause for that violence. The removal from the land is the cause for the for the hunger, and the poverty, but now we just see the hunger and the poverty. So, but we have to strip away that coloured identity and say, let's go back and ask, you know, what was done to us.

The activist argues that gangsterism is "as far as the coloured identity takes us", insinuating that the coloured identity has negative connotations shaped and reinforced by their removal from the land. As Petrus & Isaacs-Martin (2012) write, the coloured communities have "inherited negative meanings of identity" (p. 100), which are not only externally held by fellow South Africans but have also been internalised. This internalised racism is a result of a history of negative stereotyping as well as the internalised reconstruction of racism within the coloured community (Petrus & Isaacs-Martin, 2012).

As written in the conceptual framework, alienation from nature and alienation from one's heritage and identity are intertwined (Choquet, 2021; Castree, 2001). Belonging is an experience that is shaped by context (Cajax & Berman, 2010). As such, Apartheid and its influence on nature have significantly influenced the coloured community's sense of belonging to nature. The next section will explore how interviewees' interaction with nature is influenced by internalised racism and inferiority.

3. Colonisation of the mind and internalised racism

Apartheid's spatial planning not only influenced peoples' access to greenery, gardens, and nature reserves but also influenced how people of colour think about themselves in relation to natural spaces. People from the community described a "colonisation of the mind". It was noted in many interviews that the coloured community in townships perceives their identity as not "delicate" enough to be connected to nature. This is in line with Koot et al. (2024), who argue that physical-geographical enclosures are intertwined with psychological and ideological

enclosures. The following quote[59] shows that nature may also not interest people of colour that much:

> Maybe it [the nature reserve] is only for white people because they like the snakes. They like the nature and all that. I was there once. I took my two daughters, and two of their friends. So when we got there, it's mostly people that is upper class to us. And it's not even people from this community. Like maybe, maybe white people that heard about Rondevlei that want to come and explore, not the people from this area. You can see the numberplates, maybe from Belville. But it's not people from our area.

This community member from Lotus River (LR2a) describes that white people "like the snakes, they like nature", insinuating that people of colour and lower economic class have less interest in nature and wild animals. Throughout the research observations and interviews, community members expressed the view that as they come from Lavender Hill and Lotus River, they do not care about nature. Sand (2023) writes: "To 'colonise the mind' means getting colonised people to accept their inferiority, to persuade people into internalising the values of the colonisers and the way they perceive the world'' (p. 213). The internalisation of nature not being "for them" shows the current power Apartheid's environmental racism still has in people's minds. This community elder from Lavender Hill describes the phenomenon of colonised minds in his own words:[60]

> People in Lavender Hill, […] they really believed, because that was the thing that is coming from government, that the coloureds and the blacks don't have the brain to do anything good. We believed and believed it because during that time it was only white people that have brains.

Almost all participants also acknowledged that the coloured community does not regard the nature reserve as something that "is for them". A significant number of participants (seven) described the nature reserve as something for either tourists and foreigners or white and upper-class people. That most visitors are indeed from this group, was confirmed by a young conservation officer[61] who stressed that:

[59] Interview 2, Lotus River, 2 September 2023, male librarian speaking.
[60] Interview 16, Lavender Hill, 27 July 2023.
[61] Interview 18, Anonymised, 18 August 2.

People that come in […] they have the nicest clothes, walk in with big fancy cameras, and you know, like they come from a good home, and most likely a very sort of upper-class community.

It is evident that the nature reserve is not used a lot by the local community, but rather regarded as a space for privileged and white people due to the legacy of Apartheid.

This "colonisation of the mind" and the fact that coloured people internalised the inferiority imposed on them (Sand, 2023) becomes increasingly evident by the self-belief that coloured people have "the intent to destroy". As discussed in the previous chapter, the socio-economic situation of local communities allows for limited awareness and exposure to nature. The lack of exposure contributes to the disconnect between people and nature. People expressed that the False Bay Nature Reserve is "maybe not important for us, because we don't know".[62] The lack of exposure to nature has contributed to a widespread belief amongst community members that they themselves and other members of the community are out to "destroy nature". This finding is in line with academic literature that states that the "local people are destructive" (Kwashirai, 2009; Mushonga & Matose, 2020). This sentiment was mentioned 22 times in nine transcribed interviews. As Uchida et al. (2020) write:

> Culture is a macro phenomenon that is maintained through the psychological output and behaviours of individuals under specific social settings. Individuals construct macro-level norms or notions by inferring from each other's output. Hence, unpacking the processes behind this mutual construction of culture is important. We highlight the necessity for culturally/socially oriented psychologists to elucidate how socio-ecologically driven psychological functions become "cultural values", and how they are subsequently transmitted and shared among people. (p. 117).

Notions of culture and identity are fluid and reshaped by people's behaviours. Uchida et al.'s quote shows that the way people interact with the environment, so-called socio-ecologically, may create certain cultural values and a shared notion of identity. This suggests that people's interaction with the False Bay Nature Reserve, or the lack thereof, may also contribute to creating and reshaping certain cultural values amongst the community, such as the notion that the community is destructive to the environment. People from the community repeatedly described their community as "destructive". I argue that this notion is shaped by the colonial

[62] Interview 2, Lotus River, 2 September 2023, male librarian speaking.

forces and Apartheid and reenacted in the township through gangsterism framed as "the dark side of conservation" (chapter 5). This influences how people see their collective identity as destructive to nature.

Whereas those who identified as Khoisan saw themselves as custodians of the land, with a rich history of indigenous knowledge on (medicinal) plants, the people with a less educated background who identified as coloured largely regarded themselves as inherently dangerous to the environment. The two young men discussed previously who work in the nature reserve, also shared this view:[63]

Conservation officer from LH:	So that time, I didn't know anything about nature. My thing was, like, if I see a spider or anything related to nature, I kill it. [laughter]
Conservation officer from LR:	Yeah, rule number one.
Conservation officer from LH:	Rule number one!

The "intention to destroy" that was shared by many research participants was mostly linked to not having sufficient access, exposure and awareness about nature. Participants argued that because of little education, they would "murder anything". Some participants thought that education would be the answer; if children understand "what is that plant for" and its wider contribution to the ecosystem, they would care more for their environment. A community leader from Lavender Hill, who recognised the exclusionary nature of fences around the reserves, still saw no option to remove the fencing for this very reason:[64]

> […] it is the same with the nature reserve. If there was no fence, all would have been destroyed. Branches would have been chopped off, animals would have been stolen. Fish would have just been taken out of the dams. I can call it red tape as much as I want to. But it is a protective thing just to protect the nature.

Other participants also indicated that "destroying" had become a culture linked to their coloured identity. They argued that coloured people do not care for environmental issues, and that they are:[65]

[63] Interview 12, False Bay Nature Reserve, 7 August 2023.
[64] Interview 10, Lavender Hill, 11 August 2023.
[65] Interview 13, Lavender Hill, 22 August 2023.

> Just out to destroy. Even my fence is not safe where I live because they take my fence down for burning wood. They there to destroy, not really there to build. There are some people that will help building. And then there are people that just want to destroy.

There is persistent pessimism in the community about their ability to take care of the environment, fuelling the belief that fencing, although isolating and exclusive, is necessary to protect the environment. Participants argued that before the fence, "most of the people that went to the nature reserve went actually there to be naughty".[66] As much as they have experienced sorrow in being unable to access the nature reserve, they still believe that the COCT "shouldn't give open access to our communities. Because our kids are not educated enough"[67].

This finding resonates with wider scholarly literature, which presents the "degradation narrative" (Maddox, 2002). The degradation narrative created by colonial officers in settler societies postulates that African and indigenous peoples are not fit to take care of their environment or to conserve nature, as they "degrade" due to their lack of awareness and inferiority to Western peoples and their science (Maddox, 2002). The Western world, in turn, presents itself as "the white saviour" − this time of nature and wildlife. The degradation narrative has been "perpetuated by environmental protection, development and conservation proponents and scholars" (Graham, 2015, p. 45). I argue that this is an example of "symbolic marginalization" (Trudeau & McMorran, 2011), and "symbolic violence" (Mushonga & Matose, 2020) where the community is negatively stereotyped based on their perceived ability to take care of nature. A valuable addition of this thesis' findings to this body of literature is that, in the case of the coloured community in the Cape Flats, this degradation narrative has been internalised by the coloured community. It has resulted in negative perceptions about their identity as unfit to care for nature.

In short, people agreed that the lack of exposure to nature and limited environmental awareness contributed to a belief that their community intends to destroy nature. The data revealed a complex dynamic between socio-economic factors, such as lack of education and awareness, and identity within the community. The disconnect from nature is not only a result of the economic environment but also notions of identity and culture (Castree, 2001; Choquet, 2021). This shows how alienation is not only spatial and structural but also ideological (Koot

[66] Interview 10, Lavender Hill, 11 August 2023.
[67] Interview 10, Lavender Hill, 11 August 2023.

et al., 2024), or in other words, it exposes the contribution symbolic violence has on alienation from nature (Mushonga & Matose, 2020). The erasure of identity and heritage, as the coloured community has experienced, is thus strongly connected to their collective loss of belonging to nature. The next section explores a different angle: that of Rastafarians as custodians of heritage, identity and belonging to nature.

4. Reclaiming identity and belonging to nature: Khoisan Rastafarianism

There was one particular group in the community that was often mentioned as custodians of indigenous knowledge, the Rastafarians:[68]

> We have a Rasta here, opposite and apparently, he is selling herbs. I don't know what kind of herbs he's selling. A lot of people buy from him. […] Yeah, so, maybe he has some knowledge of different herbs from additional services for the body.

It soon became clear that the Rastafarians in Lavender Hill and Lotus River should not just be regarded as "unkempt ganja-smoking individuals" (Alexandre-Brutus, 2017, para. 1). On the contrary, Rastas have deep knowledge of indigenous vegetation and its medicinal purposes. Interviews with Khoisan activists from Lavender Hill revealed an intricate relationship between indigenous Khoisan knowledge and Rastafarianism. A participant explained:[69]

> It's collective Khoi knowledge. It's not just Rasta knowledge. […] Rasta is about the land, it's about living healthy, it's about living in communities […] that was Khoi people. So they could somehow live a Khoi life, though not calling themselves Khoi. They could escape the colony through Rastafarianism. […] There's also these bits of things that allowed our poor people to escape the colonial bar. […] I totally get why the Rastafarianism is important to our people, because at least we could live through the land through the Rasta identity.

Rastafarians in Lavender Hill disclosed that they collected indigenous plants from Table Mountain National Park. They were aware of the False Bay Nature Reserve where they used to harvest indigenous vegetation before it was fenced off, which was a source of frustration for

[68] Interview 15, Lavender Hill, 2 July 2023, elder speaking.
[69] Interview 14, Lavender Hill, 10 August 2023.

them. Scholarly literature recognises Rastafarians in the Cape Flats as custodians of Khoisan indigenous knowledge, terming it "Khoisan Rastafarianism" (Alexandre-Brutus, 2017). Alexandre-Brutus (2017) writes that for many in the coloured community in the Cape Flats, "identifying as Khoisan Rastafarian has removed feelings of being a cultureless people without concrete roots. This also alleviates the feelings of dispossession and disenfranchisements that have led to a strong gang and drug culture in Coloured townships" (para. 14). Philander (2012) conducted a fascinating study interviewing 200 Rastafari "bush doctors" in the Cape Flats. She writes:

> Rastafari, a sociopolitical movement and eco-religion, is combined with Khoisan healing tradition to synthesise an alternative lifestyle to dysfunctional township realities. […] To the mixed race coloured community, who rejected their Khoisan indigenous ancestry during apartheid, bush medicine reasserts indigenous rights to resources, instils pride in coloured traditions and reclaims positive male roles. Rasta bush doctors employ indigenous healing methods as a method of legitimizing this historically marginalized community. (p. 134).

The socio-economic issues such as poverty and unemployment discussed in Chapter 5 that contribute to a disconnect from nature, together with the disconnect from heritage and identity discussed in this Chapter, have given rise to a sociopolitical movement reuniting environmentalism with Khoisan indigenous knowledge. Indeed, Rastafarians were painted as important members of the community providing accessible medicine. I found that the numerous community gardens in Lavender Hill were often maintained, protected and shared by Rastafarians.[70] Some community organisations and NGOs in Lavender Hill deliberately hire Rastafarians to take care of their community gardens and to teach youngsters about farming and nature. One might think that there would be a risk of the gardens being destroyed by criminals and troubled youth and that vegetation would be stolen. In speaking with the participants, they claimed the opposite to be true. Indeed, Rastas remained well-respected protectors of nature within the community of Lavender Hill, which rejects the internalised stereotyping of the coloured community as "destructive to nature".

Placing Khoisan Rastafarianism in the wider academic debate on conservation, Petersen et al. (2014) stress the economic and cultural value of Rastafarians and urge the conservation sector to rethink the role of these custodians of indigenous knowledge. Current

[70] In Lavender Hill there are also numerous community gardens supporting feeding schemes and providing food security in the community. These gardens often are maintained and sponsored by NGOs and community organisations. These are not the gardens referred to here.

conservation practices create conflict between Rastas, the state and law enforcement, which is unfortunate as: "Rastafarians should ideally become the primary focus for future conservation-related interventions" (Petersen et al., 2014, p. 5). To blanketly regard harvesting of indigenous vegetation as illegal reduces cultural, economic and historical value that should be part of the discussion (Petersen, 2014; Mushonga & Matose, 2020). The impoverished communities that engage in such harvesting must also be regarded as "people with legitimate needs" (Petersen, 2014, p. 5). In an interview with Mail & Guardian ("Cape herb trade worries ecologists," 2014) Petersen stated:

> We're facing a conundrum. You've got this amazing biodiversity, a very entrenched cultural need for medicinal plants, strong economic drivers because there's so much poverty, and then you've got the law. And law, particularly in South Africa, is based on very middle-class thinking, which is that nature conservation is a critical thing. Don't get me wrong, conservation is crucial, but we need to balance our priorities. We live in a society where protected areas often don't align with people's day-to-day needs. We need to find ways of changing that. (para. 3).

As discussed in Chapter 5, the False Bay Nature Reserve presents an interesting assortment of efforts to connect the nature reserve back to the community. Despite these efforts, the connection between underprivileged communities and the nature reserve is severely limited. Meanwhile, Khoisan Rastafarians aim to restore the loss of identity, make the environment and its medicinal benefits available to all, and generate income and, in that way, stay away from crime (Petersen et al., 2017). Yet, the False Bay Nature Reserve does not tap into this group. As Petersen (2014) states, the way law enforcement operates, often opposite marginalised people rather than side-by-side, is "likely to alienate nature conservation authorities from the local population" (p.5). This alienation was observed during data collection; participants experienced a strong sense of hierarchy and subjugation to the nature reserve.

Participants expressed that they could only "bring nature closer to the community by starting this community gardens".[71] The Khoisan Rastafarians, therefore, counter the consequences of what Galtung (1990) calls cultural violence, which deprives local and indigenous people of their original ways of living (Mushonga & Matose, 2020). In Lavender Hill, people own small community gardens with flowers, succulents, herbs and some vegetables. In these gardens, unlike the nature reserve, they are agents of the space. Participants stressed that these gardens bring the community together and how healing nature can be for

[71] Interview 9, Lavender Hill, 29 July 2023.

their traumatised communities. The Khoisan Rastafarians exhibit a strong belonging to nature as well as an understanding that nature is independent of us and that we are interdependent and part of nature, which Vogel (2014) identifies as a key indicator of belonging to nature. However, the Khoisan Rastafarians experience a strong sense of alienation from the institutions of nature reserves, which is in line with Kanungo's (1979) indicator of alienation: powerlessness. Cocks et al. (2016) show how a community's "ability to access and move through [natural spaces] contributes to people's well-being, identity formation, and shared heritage" (p. 820), reinforcing the positive relationship between belonging to nature and cultural belonging; belonging to an identity. The Rastafarians can thus serve as a meaningful bridge to connect their communities to nature while simultaneously positively impacting the coloured identity, which continues to perpetuate feelings of being lost and unhinged.

5. Chapter summary

This chapter discussed the interrelatedness of the coloured community's alienation from nature, identity and heritage. It demonstrated how the coloured community has internalised racist beliefs about their (in)ability to protect nature, which traces back to the Apartheid era. This is a critical contribution to the existing literature, which focuses on the degradation narrative from the colonisers' point of view. This finding presents a clear need for environmental education and awareness creation which focus on identity and heritage. On the other hand, Khoisan Rastafarians have adopted a new identity, moving away from the clouded notions of the coloured identity, which allows them to reconnect to nature. They experience a strong sense of belonging to nature and share this with their community as custodians of indigenous knowledge. Unfortunately, some institutional barriers remain, which have caused the reserves to lose out on the potential benefits of working with Rastafarians. The Rastafarian experience shows that in the midst of community-wide alienation from nature, a sense of belonging to nature is being nurtured that could lead to alienation being overcome.

Chapter 7. Conclusion: The False Bay Nature Reserve, spatial imprisonment, and an identity of alienation

This thesis aimed to examine how local underprivileged communities surrounding the False Bay Nature Reserve experience the reserves and how they are affected by conservation. Through their experiences, this thesis shows how the communities experience both belonging and alienation to the nature reserves. Chapter 5 examined how the physical and structural infrastructure influences belonging and critically discussed the structures in place that aim to enhance community engagement. Chapter 6 discussed how culture and identity are intertwined with belonging or alienation from nature. Drawing on the conceptual framework of belonging, it argues that the communities are relatively alienated from nature. This alienation is created by feelings of powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation and self-estrangement, the five indicators of alienation by Seeman (1959). In addition, the institutionalisation of the nature reserve does not allow the indigenous understanding that humans are part of nature and interdependent with nature, which Vogel (2014) identifies as another strong indicator of alienation.

The physical and structural infrastructure of the nature reserve, discussed in Chapter 5, causes alienation through symbolic and structural violence (Mushonga & Matose, 2020). The fences and the enforcement of private security reflect "hardened" and strict property rights, as Büscher and Thakholi (2023) describe it. Property rights essentially determine who belongs and who does not. Dissatisfaction with the fencing was sensed throughout the community as it inhibits access and inclusivity. Furthermore, stories emerged about children being shot with rubber bullets by private security when they jumped the fence. The security guards themselves are estranged from the nature reserves, participating in their jobs without intrinsic motivation and purpose (Kanungo, 1979). This complicates the security guards' relationship with local communities. The required permits also reflect a system of regulations in which local people's use of nature (fishing and harvesting, but even children's play) is severely restricted. In line with other academic literature, physical structures, in this case, fencing and private security, create divisions across class and race and impact people's ideological and psychological experiences (Koot et al., 2024). This was reflected in the data, which showed that because of the exclusive and hostile image of the nature reserve, participants were under the assumption that the nature reserve charges an entrance fee. It is, therefore, possible to conclude that the spatial structures of the nature reserve are alienating local communities. This alienation cuts

deeper than merely physical and structural dimensions; it worsens class and race divisions (Cajax & Berman, 2010; Nyamnjoh, 2023), and it also affects the communities' beliefs and assumptions about the nature reserve.

The nature reserve's officers recognise that the communities are not well connected and desire to create a sense of belonging, for which they mainly use environmental education. The environmental education initiatives observed seemed largely ineffective, however, as they were not locally rooted or connected to indigenous heritage and knowledge systems and were implemented in highly mediated and organised ways. This leads to further alienation from nature as: "we (supposedly) can only feel comfortable about getting 'back in touch' in highly mediated ways" (Sopher, 2016, p. 83). Management itself might also experience a sense of alienation from nature, which complicates its role in creating more belonging amongst local communities. The Friends of Zeekoevlei and Rondevlei (FOZR) community, despite its commitments to inclusiveness, was not known amongst community leaders in underprivileged township communities, reflecting a sense of isolation, which is an indicator of alienation identified by Seeman (1959). The most effective way of stimulating a sense of belonging to nature was through employment opportunities such as the Extended Public Works Programme or the NGO Nature Connect. The data showed that the socio-economic, the personal, and belonging to nature are intricately linked to each other (Cajax & Berman, 2010; Castree, 2001; Choquet, 2021). Poverty, unemployment and easy access to criminal connections inhibit connections to nature. However, when employment opportunities were found in the nature reserve, it had positive consequences for people's personal socio-economic situation and reinforced their sense of belonging to nature. The participants also found a passion for connecting the nature reserve with their communities through feelings of custodianship and involvement (Kanungo, 1979). For further research, it would be valuable to look at Nature Connect as a transformative organisation that puts people at the heart of conservation.

As established, the set-up of the nature reserve has psychological and ideological consequences for feelings of belonging. The findings and discussion in Chapter 6 furthermore showed that the communities experience alienation from nature at a much deeper level: at that of their identity and heritage as coloured people. It discussed that many participants do not have indigenous knowledge about the nature reserves due to Apartheid's spatial planning and the oppression of their cultural heritage. This is what Soper (2016) defined as "cognitive estrangement", another indicator of alienation. Similarly, the empirical findings showed that cognitive estrangement occur not only in relation to nature but also in relation to the coloured community's heritage and identity. In fact, the participants often saw alienation from nature

and their identity as deeply intertwined: those who are alienated from nature are alienated from their identity, and vice versa. The spatial imprisonment discussed in Chapter 5 is simultaneously existential imprisonment. Alienation from nature is further perpetuated due to internalised racist beliefs that their community is unfit to take care of nature. This is a new contribution to the existing literature. While scholarly work has shown how colonial authorities have spread a "degradation narrative" to appropriate and protect land from the potential destruction of local communities, this thesis shows that the degradation narrative has also been internalised by the coloured community itself, further perpetuating alienation from nature. The findings align with Sibley's (1995) argument that dominant and powerful social groups exercise control over other groups by creating socio-spatial boundaries (such as fencing and private security) resulting in the marginalisation and alienation of vulnerable groups − not only through physical structures but also through culture and identity.

The thesis however also shows potential ways of fostering belonging amongst underprivileged township communities. The intricate relationship between identity and nature shows transformative potential for initiatives that reconnect the community with nature by putting identity and heritage central (Vogel, 2014). Khoisan Rastafarians in the community should be understood as meaningful custodians of the connection to nature. They constitute a group that understands humans as part of nature and interdependent on it, indicating their strong sense of belonging (Vogel, 2014). At the same time, the Khoisan Rastafarians are alienated by the institutionalisation of the nature reserves, which render their ways of living illegal through permits and other regulations. This can be understood as cultural violence (Galtung, 1990). In order to counter the loss of indigenous knowledge, or "cognitive estrangement" (Soper, 2016), which is a strong indicator of alienation from nature, the Khoisan Rastafarians need to regain a sense of custodianship over the False Bay Nature Reserve.

In concluding the question posed by this study: How do the underprivileged local communities around the False Bay Nature Reserve experience nature conservation, and how are they affected by it? This thesis highlighted a mix of complex socio-economic, historical, cultural, and spatial/structural dynamics that shape the communities' experiences of alienation and belonging. Due to the long-term legacies of colonialism and apartheid, communities continue to experience alienation from nature through the institutionalised conservation practices of physical fences and securitised access. This is despite local authorities' attempts to enhance belonging through environmental education and employment opportunities. Although the communities live on the borders of the nature reserve, in their minds nature

continues to be distant or even barely exists. This is intricately linked to the coloured identity and heritage, which suffers from historical amnesia and erasure.

By focusing on the underprivileged township communities surrounding the False Bay Nature Reserve, this thesis demonstrates that nature can exacerbate the sense of alienation for those already marginalised by society. Communities such as those in Lavender Hill and Lotus River are socio-economically marginalised within the city's structural set-up. This amplifies how nature reserves intensify alienation through spatial and structural factors and by failing to address contemporary identity challenges. By recognising racial and class barriers; including custodians of indigenous knowledge such as Rastafarians; and committing to continuous engagement with local communities – even the ones that might "cause problems" – the nature reserve, as an institution, can be reformed to provide communities with the experiences of autonomy, custodianship and belonging.

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Appendix A: Informed consent form

University of Cape Town

Sociology Department

Consent Form.

Title of Research Project:

Politics of belonging and alienation: Underprivileged communities' experiences of the False Bay Nature Reserve

Name of Masters' Student/Researcher:

Robin Breedeveld

University Department Address:

Sociology Department University of Cape Town Private Bag X3 RONDEBOSCH 7701

Telephone:

0795442014 (mobile)

Nature of the research:

This research is part of a qualitative research project that is looking into perceptions and experiences of marginalisation connected to the Rondevlei nature reserve.

Participant's involvement

This individual interview will take place at _____ and will last approximately 1 hours. This is interview will explore the participant's experience of and engagement with the False Bay Nature Reserve. May you, the participant, have any concerns regarding the research, you can contact either the researchers' supervisor, Frank Matose: frank.matose@uct.ac.za, or the head of the UCT sociology department: head.sociology@uct.ac.za.

Agreement:

- I agree to participate in this research project.
- I have read this consent form and the information it contains and had the opportunity to ask questions about them.
- I agree to my responses being used for education and research on condition my privacy is respected, subject to the following: I understand that my contribution to the focus group interview might be included in the PhD thesis and that I can choose not to be personally identifiable.
- I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in this interview
- I understand I have the right to withdraw from this interview at any stage

Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____

Contact details of participant: _____

Signatures of Masters' student: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B. Overview interview participants

	Profession/Reason for participation	Gender	Age range	Area of residence	Data collection	Date
1	Librarian and social worker	Female	30-40	Lotus River	Formal interview	13 August 2023
2	Group interview with two librarians and social workers, and one community elder	Male, Male, Female	40-50, community elder 60-70	Lotus River	Formal group interview	2 September 2023
3	Resident	Female	40-50	Grassy Park	Formal interview	4 July 2023
4	Khoisan community leader	Male	60-70	Fairways	Formal interview	10 September 2023
5	Khoisan community leader	Female	60-70	Fairways	Formal interview	10 September 2023
6	Conservation officer	Female	Anonymised	Anonymised	Formal interview	10 July 2023
7	Conservation officer	Female	Anonymised	Anonymised	Informal interview/ethnographic participant observation	12 July 2023
8	Community worker NGO	Female	20-30	Lavender Hill	Formal interview	28 July 2023
9	Community worker NGO	Female	40-50	Lavender Hill	Formal interview	29 July 2023
10	Community leader	Male	50-60	Lavender Hill	Formal interview	11 August 2023

11	Inhabitant	Male	30-40	Lavender Hill	Formal interview	13 September 2023
12	Group interview with conservation officer and facilitator Nature Connect	Male	30-40	Lavender Hill, Lotus River	Formal interview	7 August 2023
13	Inhabitant informal settlement	Female	40-50	Lavender Hill	Formal interview	22 August 2023
14	Khoisan community activist and educator	Male	30-40	Lavender Hill	Formal interview	10 August 2023
15	Inhabitant and community elder. Became a group interview as his wife and son joined the conversation	Male	60-70	Lavender Hill	Formal interview	2 July 2023
16	Community elder	Male	70-80	Lavender Hill	Formal interview	27 July 2023
17	Inhabitant, lives right next to Rondevlei entrance. Wife joined the conversation	Male	40-50	Grassy Park	Formal interview	16 July 2023
18	Conversation officer Rondevlei	Male	20-30	Anonymised	Formal interview	18 August 2023
19	Member Friends of Zeekoevlei & Rondevlei	Male	40-50	Zeekoevlei	informal interview/email exchange	6 September 2023

20	Community leader	Female	50-60	Lavender Hill	Informal interview/ethnographic participant observation	16 July 2023
21	Group interview two community elders	Male	60-70	Lavender Hill	Formal interview	19 August 2023
22	Security Guard Quemic Zeekoevlei	Male	20-30	Delft	Informal interview/ethnographic participant observation	8 July 2023
23	Security Guard Quemic Zeekoevlei	Male	30-40	Langa	Informal interview/ethnographic participant observation	8 July 2023
24	Two mothers, visitors in Rondevlei with their children	Female	30-40	Grassy Park	Informal interview/ethnographic participant observation	12 July 2023
25	CEO of NGO	Female	30-40	NGO is in Lavender Hill & Capricorn, participant does not reside in LH itself.	Informal interview	30 July 2023
26	Social activist and initiator recycling business	Male	30-40	Vrygrond	Informal interview and observations recycling site	30 August 2023

Appendix C. Ethics approval

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22 August 2023

Confirmation of Research Ethics Approval of Robin Breedeveld [SOC2023/22]

This is to confirm Robin Breedeveld's research proposal, "Exclusion for Nature Conservation: The False Bay Nature Reserves and Marginalization of Surrounding Communities." under the supervision of Prof Frank Matose, has been reviewed by the Department of Sociology.

The Department and supervisor are satisfied that the research carries no significant risk or harm to human subjects. We are further satisfied that appropriate informed consent and confidentiality/anonymity/data protection mechanisms are in place.

It is a condition for the acceptance of Robin's proposal that it complies consistently with strict ethical standards. This will entail, proceeding only on the basis of the consistently informed consent of interviewees and will require regular monitoring of ethical issues which may emerge as the project develops.

Please contact the Department should you have any questions or concerns.

Kind regards,

Susan Walker