

Tracking the Many Meanings of Activisms and Occupations: An Ethnographic Study of 'Reclaim the City', in Woodstock and Green Point, Cape Town

By

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Declaration

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Abstract

In the tumultuous post-apartheid period in South Africa, housing has been a topic of continuous contention by both politicians and community-based organisations (CBOs). While apartheid-era policies like the Group Areas Act (GAA) have been abolished, a “spatial apartheid” continues to exist throughout the country. This research focuses on the context of Cape Town specifically, where it looks at a social movement named *Reclaim the City* (RTC) which has come to fight against this “spatial apartheid” and the exclusionary housing practices produced by gentrification. By problematising the implicitly homogeneous label of “activist”, this research illustrates how the members of RTC differ widely, with each having their own personal commitments, subjectivities, and desires, which are weighed with their commitment to the movement. Furthermore, this research investigates the negotiation of the two occupations held by RTC within the inner city, one in Woodstock and the other in Green Point, with local government and other institutions. Lastly, this research then focuses on the relationship between RTC and the non-governmental organisation (NGO) that it works in conjunction with, named Ndifuna Ukwazi (NU). This relationship is differentiated from the traditional power relations and hierarchies found between social movements and NGOs, where the form of their collaboration is tentatively described as a “purposive coalition”. This research has been conducted over a year-long period consisting of participant observation and semi-structured interviews.

Opsomming

Behuising is 'n onderwerp wat konstant bestry word deur beide politici en gemeenskap-gebaseerde organisasies (CBOs) in hierdie onstuimige post-apartheid periode van Suid-Afrika. Terwyl apartheids-era wette soos die Groep Areas Wet al vernietig is, bly daar steeds 'n "ruimtelike apartheid" wat voortbestaan in die land. Hierdie navorsing is gefokus op die konteks van Kaapstad. Dit kyk na 'n sosiale beweging, genaamd 'Reclaim the City' (RTC), wat veg teen hierdie "ruimtelike apartheid" en die uitsluitende behuising toepassings wat deur gentrifikاسie beoefen word. Sodoende deur die vanselfsprekende homogeen etiket van die "aktivis" te problematiseer. Die navorsing wys hoe die lede van RTC baie verskil van mekaar. Elke lid het sy eie persoonlike verpligtinge, subjektiwiteite, en begeertes, wat opgeweeg word met lede se deelname tot die sosiale beweging. Verder ondersoek hierdie navorsing ook die onderhandelinge van twee okkupasies van die RTC binne die midde-stad, een in Woodstock en die ander in Groenpunt, met die plaaslike regering en ander organisasies. Laastens fokus hierdie navorsing op die verhouding tussen die RTC wat saam met die nie-regerings organisasie (NGO), Ndifuna Ukwazi (NU), werk. Hierdie verhouding verskil van tradisionele mags-verhoudinge en hiërargieë wat tipies gevind word tussen sosiale bewegings en NGOs. Die vorm van hul samewerking word voorlopig beskryf as 'n "doelgerigte koalisie". Hierdie navorsing is oor 'n tydperk van een jaar gedoen en bestaan uit deelnemende-observasie en semi-gestruktueerde onderhoude.

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List of Abbreviations

AA	Advice Assembly
ABM	Abahlali BaseMjondolo
AKH	Ahmed Kathrada House
ANC	African National Congress
ARD	Alliance for Rural Democracy
ARV	Anti-retroviral
AsNA	Anthropology Southern Africa
ATA	Applied Thematic Analysis
CBOs	Community-based organisations
CGH	Cissie Gool House
CoCT	City of Cape Town
CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
DA	Democratic Alliance
EFF	Economic Freedom Fighters
GAA	Group Areas Act
HDRC	Higher Degree and Research Committee
LPM	Landless People's Movement
MDR-TB	Multi-Drug Resistant Tuberculosis
MPT	Municipal Planning Tribunal
MST	Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NU	Ndifuna Ukwazi
PIE	Prevention of Illegal Eviction and Unlawful Occupation Act
PRASA	Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RTC	Reclaim the City
SAPS	South African Police Services
SDI	Slum Dwellers International
SJC	Social Justice Coalition
TAC	Treatment Action Campaign

TANs	Transnational Advocacy Networks
TRA	Temporary Relocation Area
VMx	Victoria Mxenge
WCAEC	Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

The state of housing in South Africa today reflects the history of housing in South Africa throughout the last half-century. With 13.1% of South Africans still living in informal dwellings (Statistics South Africa, 2016), as well as increasingly contested issues of land reform and illegal occupation of land, these issues will continue to plague policymakers and economically disadvantaged citizens for the foreseeable future. To better understand the current state of housing in South Africa, one must understand the effect of the apartheid regime's spatial housing policies in the present. To fulfil its ideology of racial segregation, each racial group was designated an area to inhabit, as demarcated in the *Group Areas Act* (Kirkwood, 1950). At the end of apartheid, the abolishment of such laws seemed to give hope to those displaced during the era.

However, twenty-four years later, many studies reveal the ongoing problems of the current housing distribution processes (Huchzermeyer, 2010; Cirolia, 2014; Levenson, 2017a). Moreover, the average citizen living in places like Woodstock and economically disadvantaged people living within Cape Town are becoming increasingly threatened by evictions. In order to fight these evictions without incurring exorbitant legal costs, community-based organisations (CBOs) are vital to their survival. Reclaim the City (RTC) is a social movement born out of these conditions. In defiance of ineffective housing delivery programmes and exclusionary housing practices, RTC has come to occupy two buildings on the outskirts of the inner city which can be characterised as 'negotiated occupations'. RTC is in constant strategic negotiation with the provincial government to ensure that these illegal occupations are maintained. Local government is virtually coerced into such a position owing to its reliance on the masses of poor and working-class people for votes such as in the 2019 national elections. The practices of RTC can be understood as what Holston (2008) calls "insurgent citizenship", denoting actions by citizens to ensure their access to service delivery from the government. This research will therefore contribute to the understanding of

insurgent citizenship in South Africa, focusing on both negotiated occupations and the heterogeneous composition of activists within the social movement.

1.2 Research Problem and Rationale

Processes of gentrification and urban development have continued to threaten economically disadvantaged citizens in urban peripheries such as Woodstock with eviction. Reclaim the City is a social movement born out of these conditions, comprised mainly of evictees from these areas. RTC can provide an interesting lens into the everyday lives of these evictees-turned-activists. However, not all the occupiers can be classified under a single, homogeneous category of 'activist', as there are many differences in backgrounds, orientations, commitments, desires and interests among them, as well as there being significant distinctions between the highly educated, full-time, professional activists of Ndifuna Ukwazi (NU) and the mostly working-class occupiers. This leads me to problematise the activist label given to the occupiers. This research problem alternatively can be asked as the following question: What are the differing daily realities and experiences between the diverse RTC members and NU activists during their fight for affordable housing, and how do these influence the movement as a whole?

RTC works in conjunction with a non-governmental organisation (NGO) named Ndifuna Ukwazi (NU). With NU bolstering their campaign, RTC currently occupies two buildings near the inner-city of Cape Town. Aided by the administrative and policy-based work that NU does, these illegal occupations have and continue to be negotiated with the state. With the assurances and protections that the South African Constitution and other legal judgments afford, the hundreds of occupiers are yet to be evicted. These 'negotiated occupations' therefore highlight the 'grey areas' in which housing activism can take place and the leverage that CBOs can use in a democratic society.

1.2.1 Key research questions

- Who are the members of the Reclaim the City movement?
 - Which of the members consider themselves as full-time activists?

- What activist practices are used by rank-and-file RTC members in their fight for well-located housing?
- In what ways do Reclaim the City (RTC) and Ndifuna Ukwazi (NU) further negotiate the longevity of the occupations with the state?
- What external resources do these organisations use and to what ends do they use these resources?

1.3 Historical Background of Woodstock and Sea Point

The history of both Woodstock and Sea Point¹, which are the main areas in which RTC operates, has been one characterised by changes and divisions that have left a lasting impact. These histories are essential in understanding the current realities found in these areas, and therefore the relevance of RTC. The arrival of the Dutch settlers in 1652 led to land contestations and battles of ownership that resulted in the domination of the local Khoikhoi population by the Dutch East India Company (De Lille & Kesson, 2017:77). After settling in the Cape, patterns of exclusion began to emerge as settlers drew imagined and physical boundaries around themselves and other people (Worden, 2012:12). Contestations of land ownership between the Khoikhoi, the VOC and the African population, which had increased to about 8000 by the early 1900s, only complicated these matters further.

In the mid-eighteenth century, Pieter van Papendorp settled in an area only 2km from Cape Town, known today as Woodstock (Worden, Van Heyningen & Bickford-Smith, 1998:212). During the 1870s, the farmland that was Woodstock was divided up and low-cost housing was developed for those working on the railway line as well as in factories during industrial

¹ While the Helen Bowden Nurses' home is geographically located within the area of Green Point, majority of the occupiers and NU employees refer to it existing in Sea Point. The history of Sea Point is also largely reflective of the area of Green Point. Therefore while the term of Sea Point is used throughout this thesis, the term of Green Point is more factually accurate.

development, and by 1884 Woodstock was the third largest 'town' in the colonised territory of South Africa (Blake, 2011). The composition of Woodstock has, however, never been racially homogeneous, unlike other areas around Cape Town, especially after the Mineral Revolution² of the late nineteenth century (Garside, 1993; Bickford-Smith, 1989). This even remained true during the implementation of the *Group Areas Act of 1950*, which will be further illustrated later.

The origins of Sea Point, another focal location of RTC operations and occupation, can be traced back to 1776, when a commander named Samuel Wallis housed his soldiers there to avoid a smallpox epidemic (Murray, 1964:3). In 1877, housing was developed for both white and coloured people in the area working for the Cape Town Tramway Company. In the 1880s, the figure of Saul Solomon, the renowned liberal politician that fought for racial equality, was a driving force in the area of seemingly liberal politics counter to racially oppressive politics at that time (Bickford-Smith, 1995:46). The suburb of Sea Point was made up of predominantly white middle-class families; however, there was a substantial coloured population in parts of the suburb. In 1957, segregation policies such as the *Group Areas Act* (GAA) resulted in 'black' and 'coloured' residents being relocated from Sea Point to the Cape Flats. The case of the Tramway evictions is indicative of the realities during this time, where 'black' and 'coloured' people living in the area of Tramway Road in Sea Point were forcefully removed from this area (Mesthrie, 1994). Subsequently, there was an ongoing land claim negotiation on behalf of those affected by the removals, which came to an unpleasant end in 2013 (Lewis, 2013). This type of formal exclusion can also be understood, as Swanson posits, as a consequence of the "sanitation syndrome" which had been used to separate groups of people under the guise of fear of contracting plague in the early twentieth century (Swanson, 1977:388). By separating groups of people, in this case delineated by 'race', one can certainly trace a history of the othering African people that had been further formalised by urban separation.

² The Mineral Revolution refers to the era from the 1870s onward, characterised by the changing nature of work and rapid industrialisation coinciding with an increase in gold mining.

Prior to the *Group Areas Act* of the apartheid regime, the economic exploitation of the Khoikhoi (Khoisan) population by the Dutch settlers revolved around access to grazing land. These struggles were highly contested. Some historians claim that there was in fact no clear-cut social segregation between white people and 'others' in the Cape Town area before 1948; however, this since has been refuted, and rightly so (Bickford-Smith, 1995). The inter-group relations during the twentieth century have been referred to by the catchphrase 'Cape liberalism'. This is understood as a liberal system under which previously subordinated populations such as Africans were given the right of suffrage. However, it is the view of various scholars that this is a grossly misleading representation of the realities of that time (Trapido, 1980, Bickford-Smith, 1995). These divisive realities were further exacerbated throughout the early twentieth century, which had a further impact on the housing situation and resulted the forms of racial segregation that continue to shape Cape Town's spatial landscape.

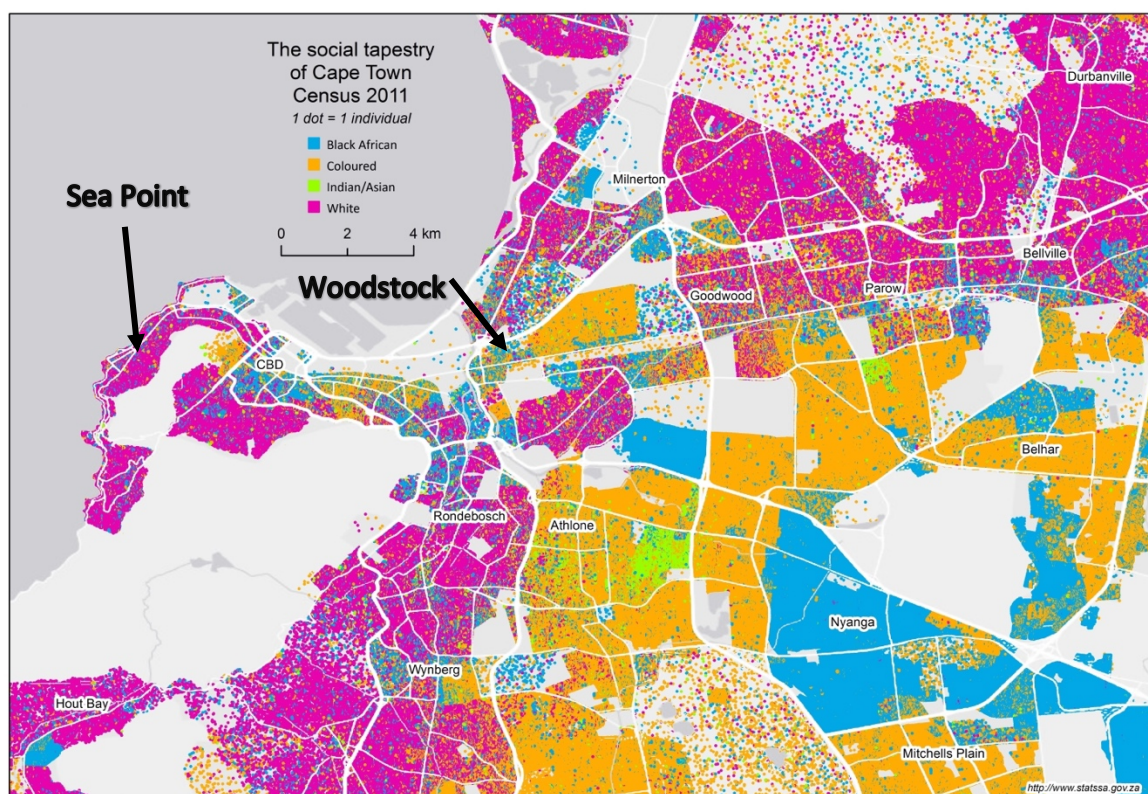


Figure 1: A map illustrating the spatial segregation of Cape Town by racial classification, according to data gathered in the 2011 census (Statistics South Africa, 2011)

The area of Woodstock, partially segregated as it was and still is, was never formally disrupted by the *Group Areas Act* of the apartheid regime. Garside (1993:31) gives a tentative explanation for this when she states that "it is unclear whether this situation [the relaxation of state surveillance and racial policing in Woodstock] betrayed a guilty official conscience arising out of the rape [*sic*] of the adjacent suburb of District Six". As mentioned above, the Sea Point area was not so fortunate during these times, with it becoming an area specifically for 'white' people, as shown in *Figure 1*. These specific histories have a profound impact on the current state of affairs in these areas, specifically with regard to housing and land ownership. The impacts of colonialism, apartheid spatial planning and now gentrification have led to forms of socio-spatial segregation that are increasingly being contested.

In light of the history of housing in Cape Town in general since 1652, one can understand when groups of previously disadvantaged people, such as 'black' and 'coloured' people evicted from Sea Point, may challenge their current housing situation. Since the end of formal segregation and the lofty promises made by the African National Congress (ANC) in the wake of the arrival of democracy in 1994, citizens have believed 'a better life' would soon become a reality. However, processes of gentrification have further complicated the uphill battle for housing.

1.4 Background of Reclaim the City (RTC)

The story of Reclaim the City (RTC) started in opposition to the sale of a piece of land housing the former Tafelberg Remedial School in Sea Point, valued at R135 million; this came to be known as #StopTheSale campaign. At this point, the movement comprised only a few people, mainly female domestic workers who were working in Sea Point and not earning enough to make ends meet, while spending a large portion of their wages on transport into the inner city. Consequently, in March 2016, RTC had their first protest march to demand the sale of the property be halted, all under the slogan, 'Land for People, Not for Profit'.

Among other displays of protest, RTC opposed the eviction of the widely diverse Bromwell Street families in Woodstock. This campaign continues to the present day, where the forty-three potential evictees hope to set a precedent through the ongoing court case. RTC too is a

movement constituting a diverse group of people, each with varying subjectivities, aspirations, commitments and desires that influence the way the movement operates and how it can support other groups of similarly diverse people. Ndifuna Ukwazi (NU), a social justice NGO (non-governmental organisation), has in the past and continues to work with RTC, especially in terms of legal support. NU, specifically its law centre, also subsequently launched an interdict on the sale of the Tafelberg site in Sea Point, which forced this case into the Provincial Parliament. After the legal action taken by NU, the story broke into the media, which was tactically leveraged by RTC and NU on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Both organisations then channelled their support on such platforms to collect submissions concerning the sale of the Tafelberg site.

In July 2016, NU's researchers uncovered, through leaked documents, that Gary Fisher (who was an official in the Provincial Department of Public Works) had purchased property worth R80 million intended to recover the losses incurred by a failed campaign by the City of Cape Town (CoCT). This turned into a public controversy widely covered in the media, including public radio. NU has continued to target specific individuals in a campaign for public accountability in a context of increasing gentrification.

Similarly, the Old Biscuit Mill, an upmarket shopping development in Woodstock, is seen by many RTC activists as a physical manifestation and symbol of gentrification and displacement. While many of those living in the Woodstock area are economically disadvantaged, the Old Biscuit Mill caters for the wealthy, including tourists, therefore automatically excluding those that live in close proximity to it. In response, RTC and NU activists temporarily occupied the area in a campaign that attracted widespread coverage by the media. Around the same time, this occupation spectacle was done in conjunction with the development of eviction law training, and what is referred to as the Advice Assembly, where RTC hopes to instil a grasp of the law among its members, forming a grassroots education programme where members can then help one another. This is a far cry from the standard reliance on low-cost or free legal services that were, and still are, used by the vast majority of those facing eviction.

In March 2017, RTC occupied Helen Bowden Nurses' Home, situated in Green Point, opposite Cape Town's V&A Waterfront and adjacent to Granger Bay, which was renamed Ahmed

Kathrada House (which will be referred to as AKH) and the old Woodstock Hospital, which was renamed Cissie Gool House (which will be referred to as CGH). After the initial euphoria of occupation, both houses quickly attempted to 'formalise' their occupations and held lengthy meetings surrounding planning and political issues. What was originally a momentary decision by the movement has subsequently turned into a day-to-day fight for the retention of these occupations, where RTC and NU have formed a coordinated and united front in their campaign for affordable inner-city housing and the negotiation of the occupations.

As the movement has grown and further been formalised through time, it was encouraged by occasional victories such as Councillor Brett Herron announcing eleven new sites to be developed for social and transitional housing within Woodstock and Salt River. However, with this came changes in the ways in which NU and RTC had to function. NU then learned of the rezoning application for Somerset Hospital near the V&A Waterfront, which had direct implications for the occupation of Ahmed Kathrada House (AKH). This application has subsequently been heard by the Municipal Planning Tribunal (MPT), which advised that the percentage of proposed social housing units was too low (initially 15%); the application has subsequently been rejected pending amendment. This is in light of the negotiated occupations that exist both in Green Point and Woodstock.

In 2018, there was a further push by RTC and NU to become more formalised. Previously RTC had no formal leadership structure; rather NU employees would assume this role on an ad hoc basis. As of 9 August 2018, the day on which RTC held its first ever congress, a constitution was adopted by the movement, with each occupation voting for chapter leaders. However, the more micro-scale events are still the main focus of the movement, where they have come to confront the eviction of eighty residents from Albert Street set to take place early next year.

In September 2018, NU's researchers challenged the sale of a property in the inner city (known as Site B). The property had allegedly been sold to the corporate property powerhouse, Growthpoint Properties, at R140 million less than the property is believed to be worth. This has been the focus of many RTC actions and protests at the Growthpoint offices and the homes of those involved in these transactions. These protests are indicative of the

carrying platforms on which RTC are willing to fight for their cause, rather than relying solely on the intervention of local government.

1.5 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

1.5.1 Social movements and rights-based activism

With the dawn of democracy in South Africa, the lauded progressive constitution of 1996 was interpreted by many as an assurance of the change to come. However, after twenty-two years, many of these rights remain unfulfilled. More specifically, Section 26 of the Bill of Rights states that all citizens have the right to adequate housing even though this can be and is limited by the resources of the state (Republic of South Africa, 1996). With the inadequate amount of housing that has been built, further exacerbated by an ever-increasing demand, groups of economically disadvantaged people in South Africa have had to resort to collective action (Levenson, 2017b:475). There is a wide range of community-based organisations (CBOs) that have advocated for housing and land redistribution. From the Landless People's Movement (LPM), to the Housing Assembly and even the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign (WCAEC), these movements have gained wide public support by using rights-based activism.

As has been noted, the declaration of rights in a constitution does not automatically manifest those rights into reality. Rather, there are ways in which citizens can and do push for the realisation of their rights. Holston (2008) illustrates this well in consideration of the Brazilian context. While the Brazilian context is vastly different from the South African context on many counts, there are similarities between the contexts regarding housing for the poor. Holston argues that while many of the disadvantaged have gained political rights, they do not have effective political citizenship. Instead, there is a differentiated notion of citizenship in Brazil, which entails tacit or legal differentiation between people, often under nefarious intentions (Holston, 2008:236). In democratic South Africa, the difference between citizens does not espouse such a formal distinction; however, the continual pursuit of rights by groups of citizens through different means is found in both contexts. This is a useful idea in understanding the movement of RTC because even though the vast majority of the members are South African citizens, and therefore have a right to housing, this right clearly has not resulted in widespread access to formal housing. While since 1994, 2.6 million government-subsidised housing or Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) houses have been

built, there is still a backlog of over 2.1 million units for citizens that have applied for housing, to no avail (Tomlinson, 2015).

Earle (2012) observes that the struggle for housing within the inner city in Brazil is further complicated owing to the increase of urban decay which consequently makes the occupation of such buildings highly dangerous, let alone illegal. However, as Earle states:

These acts of civil disobedience are, in theory, illegal, yet the movement also puts great faith in the power of the law: it draws up proposals for new legislation with its allies in the PT [The Brazil Workers' Party] and engages in litigation against the state for the latter's failure to uphold the right to housing, with reference to the Constitution and the City Statute (Earle, 2012:107).

Therefore, one can see that the popular struggles for housing in both Brazil and South Africa show that when groups occupy buildings, there is a strong political narrative underpinning the undertaking. For example, in South Africa, the lack of housing transformation has led to an opposition political party, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) to incite land and building occupations (Maughan, 2018), which is similarly done in Brazil by opposition parties. This case demonstrates that specifically rights-based activism can assume different forms, where there are multiple platforms and areas in which one must engage.

One of the founders of the much-lauded Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), Zackie Achmat, is a co-founder of NU, the NGO that works in conjunction with RTC. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the close ties between these organisations, the modes of politics of the TAC and RTC are broadly similar. For example, they are both organisations that engage in rights-based activism, coupled with calculated bargaining with the state for the fulfilment of those rights. The positioning of a social movement with regard to the state and the forms of 'appropriate' protest was eventually questioned by the TAC after a period of disappointing results, where in time they felt a necessity to resort to "civil disobedience" (Friedman & Mottiar, 2004:20). This is a form of 'lawless' activism that has been utilised by numerous organisations throughout South Africa's tumultuous post-apartheid history. Interestingly, RTC is bound by its constitution that prescribes non-violent forms of protest. However, other dominant

activist practices such as the use of rights-based activism and 'slow activism' have been adopted by RTC.



Figure 2: An example of 'spectacular' service-delivery protests in South Africa (Grant, 2014)

It is common in South Africa when thinking of community-based activism immediately to imagine violent protests, with public and private property destroyed and burned. However, with RTC's commitment to non-violence, this type of 'spectacular' activism is not a viable option. As both Robins (2014) and Appadurai (2001) have argued, a "slower", more patient form of politics can also be effective. In taking other examples where the form of what Robins (2014) has coined as "slow activism" has been used, the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) can be exemplary. While fighting a political battle within the media, the members of the TAC continued to use class-based politics and they have mobilised the poor and working class in the hope of using the courts to bolster their campaign (Robins, 2004:663). Practices of slow activism have "included patient modes of grassroots mobilisation, human rights-based pedagogies of active citizenship, litigation, and a 'critical engagement' with the modern, bureaucratic state" (Robins, 2014:93). These practices are shown in work done by RTC, for example, in their weekly legal education meetings and "court support" campaigns. Relating to the individual in RTC, slow activism can be a useful tool to analyse the behaviours and commitments that these members show. For example, it is often that a small group of members attend almost every protest and court appearance, while perhaps, owing to the

extended form of slow activism, some members become gradually less committed and less interested in these practices.

1.5.2 Heterogeneous nature of activism

When thinking about social movements, it is easy to mistakenly categorise the group of 'activists' as a homogeneous unit, all with the same beliefs, life histories and commitments to activism. This can be done when examining the case of RTC. However, none of the above assumptions are true, which leads this research to focus on the "heterogeneity of activism". As Song (2013:383) illustrates through her research on the Comfort Women campaign, "within the fight for one goal, multiple 'imagined communities' exist, each constructing a particular subjectivity of the 'comfort women' survivor in activism". Woodstock itself is a diverse area, and it should come as no surprise that the group of activists (self-proclaimed or labelled by the movement as such) is diverse and heterogeneous. These differences exist along many lines, from class, gender, educational level, and racial differences to differences in life history, as well as their own social and political subjectivities.

While RTC's constitution dictates that for members to be in "good standing" with the movement, they must attend protests, actions and other forms of collective expression (Reclaim the City, 2019); however, not all members do so regularly, if at all. As there are various reasons for people joining the RTC movement, and various reasons for joining the occupations, all the members have different "activist subjectivities" and social and political commitments. This leads some members to be present at all protests, court appearances and meetings, while others are rarely in attendance. As Song (2013) argues, this can be detrimental to the success of a movement, and the question leaves her wondering if Benedict Anderson's concept of 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 2016) may act as a counterweight to such diversity. Imagined communities is used by Anderson as a term that can describe how groups or 'communities' can be constructed among any diverse group of people (Anderson, 2016:7). While this is interesting, Song's problematising of the perceived homogeneous nature of the word 'activist' is more relevant to this research and its questioning of the interests, desires, aspirations and commitments of members of RTC.

1.5.3 Negotiating occupations

As previously mentioned, land and building occupations are on the rise. With the current state of housing in South Africa there is little hope that the end to this is near. For those who have been evicted and face a dire future without housing or accommodation in a Temporary Relocation Area (TRA) near Cape Town, land and building occupations seem like the next logical step (Nicolson & Simelane, 2018). Often what is publicised as a violent insurgency and illegal occupation of land or a derelict building, is often a last resort for the occupiers. Such situations occur across the world, from countries in the Global South such as Brazil and South Africa, to the United Kingdom in the Global North. In Brazil, for example, the Landless Workers' Movement (*Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra*) (MST), is a mass social movement that has occupied buildings in both urban and rural areas, while also fighting for spatial justice. In South Africa, RTC's campaigns have mostly been confined to the inner city.

Regardless of the positioning of the occupations, these actions elicit certain questions relating to the state and the respective social movements. For example, Strydom and Viljoen (2014) have attempted to reconcile the rights of property owners with the rights of individual citizens without housing. While their legal arguments are valid, the political and social implications of occupations complicate things further. Du Plessis (2018) sums this up in her article titled, 'Are illegal land occupations about justice? Nah, it's all politics', where she argues that while there are legal complications that might play into land redistribution, the political and social consequences and complications are more compelling. In the case of RTC, it would seem that political encounters between the state and groups of occupiers typically lead to negotiation and processes of give-and-take. As occupations are almost always illegal, there are politically negotiated 'grey areas' that enable these occupations to take place. As Partha Chatterjee observes:

Government authorities do not try to punish or put a stop to such illegalities [occupations and illegal use of utilities] because of the political recognition that these populations serve certain necessary functions in the urban economy, and to forcibly remove them would involve huge political costs (Chatterjee, 2011:14).

Therefore, one can identify the complex relationship between these parties, often tactically leveraged by movements such as RTC to provide immediate relief from housing problems. This brings this discussion full circle, where groups of people aim to come together in the hope that this newly formed entity is legally entitled to, and 'worthy' of attention from, governmental housing programmes.

The occupations by RTC are, as has been mentioned, illegal. However, the fact that these occupations have persisted for over two years shows the bargaining force of such people, as has been aptly illustrated by Thorne and Oldfield (2011) where they state that "we demonstrate land occupiers' agency to contest and challenge [local government or the police], through for instance, the delay and postponement of the unfolding of land and settlement policies" (Thorne & Oldfield, 2011:519). Therefore, as will be argued throughout this research, ordinary citizens can develop means of bargaining and leveraging with local government.

1.6 Methodological Framework

As this research is on a social movement comprising a heterogeneous group of people, each with varying subjectivities, needs and interests, the data was collected via a qualitative framework that could take account of this differentiation and heterogeneity. The nature of a social movement like RTC is well encompassed in the words of Touraine, where he states that "the notion of a social movement ... does not describe 'reality' but is an element of a specific mode of constructing reality" (Touraine, 1985:749). Therefore, to better understand and analyse this continually constructed reality, this research was conducted using an ethnographic approach. RTC hosts three weekly meetings which both occupiers and the public are welcome to attend. These spaces ended up being ethnographically rich environments, which form a large portion of the findings in this research. Both occupations held by RTC host the aforementioned meetings, therefore this research was done on two sites. These occupations are the Old Woodstock Hospital (renamed Cissie Gool House) in Woodstock and Helen Bowden Nurses' Home (renamed Ahmed Kathrada House) in Green Point.

To collect data at these meetings, participant observation was used extensively, coupled with informal conversations with RTC members, and to a lesser extent the use of semi-structured interviews. This research favoured the former because meetings, actions, pickets and protests all provide rich and interesting data, often showing the praxis of such events that deviate from what is planned and said throughout the meetings. During RTC actions that ranged from protests at Site B (property sold to Growthpoint Properties under nefarious motives) to attending legal proceedings in court, the behaviour of leaders and rank-and-file members alike provided great insight into the inner workings of the movement. Owing to the richness of data in these settings, the method of “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) was employed to be able to capture the essence of such proceedings.

The lack of focus on semi-structured interviews was a conscious decision throughout this research. While a few semi-structured interviews were conducted that each ran for over an hour in duration, the data collected served to affirm what was presented in informal conversations and other interactions with RTC members. RTC is a movement that has caught the attention of scholars in South Africa and around the world; therefore, the members of the organisation can, at times, show signs of respondent fatigue (Ben-Nun, 2008: 743). This was experienced in the semi-structured interviews conducted, where a few of the answers to the questions posed were brief and followed by deviations onto topics that respondents regularly are asked about, from their life histories to their experiences of leadership. However, where semi-structured interviews did prove useful was with members of NU.

The use of ethnography allowed observation and participation in RTC proceedings; however, while this method led to my ease of integration into the movement, it may have affected the way I interpreted the respective data. As a South African citizen who is fluent in Afrikaans, I experienced a certain level of acceptance within the movement. However, at times I felt that by being ‘white’, I was automatically perceived as a ‘outsider’ to the movement. While being South African proved to be advantageous in my acceptance by members of RTC, this also may have influenced the way I gathered data. As the anthropological adage states, “one must make the familiar unfamiliar and the unfamiliar familiar” (Stocking, 1983:10). Therefore, I had to question everything that happened within the movement consciously and continuously.

All data collected through the aforementioned qualitative methods was analysed using Applied Thematic Analysis (ATA). This method is an inclusive and broadly framed technique that separates data collected into different codes (themes). By doing so, the data collected via participant observation, informal conversations, and semi-structured interviews was grouped (Guest et al., 2012). The benefit of this technique was that it involves processes of data reduction that transformed the countless number of observations through thick description into easily comparable and understandable themes.

1.6.1 Limitations

The limitations of this research are mainly centred around the collection of data. During the semi-structured interviews that were conducted, it was found that the rank-and-file members of RTC often had an agenda or personal message that they wanted to convey through their answers. Therefore, at times, instead of answering a specific question, their responses were more focused on other matters. I attempted to account for this by putting more emphasis on the information gathered through participant observation. Moreover, considering the members of RTC I engaged with, the data gathered during the meetings and protests might not be adequately representative of the group as a whole. This is due to the fact that only a fraction of RTC members attend the weekly meetings and intermittent protests, therefore the data collected gives an accurate depiction of only a specific group of RTC members.

1.7 Ethical Considerations

As stated above, my positioning as a South African citizen had some effect on the way I was received by RTC members. However, this also was influenced by questions of class and race. While being South African and sharing a sense of national identity with the members of RTC, I also experienced a conflicting sub-identity of being a white middle-class researcher from an elite institution of tertiary education. In addition, there is a history of the problematic roles of "white male researchers" doing studies on social movements in South Africa and around the world, often with justifiable cause (see Mosse, 2011; Mdlalose, 2014). While Pointer (2004) has noted some reservations with regard to the detrimental role that white "activist

intellectuals” can play, Desai and Pithouse (2004), in a reply to Pointer’s work, have sufficiently contested such ideas.

The participants in this research are confronted with the daily fear of eviction coupled with the battle for affordable housing in the inner city and the manifestation of their rights. Therefore, this research was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines set out by Anthropology Southern Africa (ASnA) (Anthropology Southern Africa, 2018), and the guidelines set out by Stellenbosch University’s Higher Degrees and Research Committee (HDRC). However, it is important to note that the members of RTC do not seem to identify themselves as a vulnerable population without agency.

When seeking institutional permission for this research in July 2018, RTC had neither formal leadership nor structure, therefore this responsibility was fulfilled by NU. This consequently changed, when on 9 August 2018, RTC held their first ever congress, and chapter leaders and house leaders were elected. This, in turn, created a dilemma regarding the permission received from NU. This was mediated, and the new chapter leadership was able to reconfirm permission for the subsequent research to be done.

At the first meeting I attended at each of the occupations, I introduced myself to the members and gave a full explanation of my position and my research. Owing to the meetings being attended by different people every time, it seemed impracticable to do this at every meeting. During subsequent informal conversations with members of RTC, I did let the respondents know that I was a researcher. As was expected, there was some resistance from some of the members concerning their perceptions of Stellenbosch University and even from white people in general. During the initial phases of research in either occupation, there were interactions that seemed to ‘test’ me; however, finally I felt more accepted. All the data collected during this research, including my field notes and interview transcriptions, were saved on the Stellenbosch University OneDrive which is a secure and encrypted network to which only I have the password.

1.8 Chapter Outline

Chapter 2 of this thesis serves to discuss the “heterogeneity of activists”. By focusing on the similarities and differences between the members of RTC, the implicitly homogeneous term of ‘activist’ is problematised. The ‘activists’ in both the Woodstock and Green Point occupations are shown to be different from one another, and different from those in the same occupation. The members of RTC are however guided under pedagogies of activism that, at times, mistakenly try to construct an activist ‘model’, undermining the value of the heterogeneity of activist subjectivities. This chapter then argues for the development of ‘responsibilised activists’, who proactively attempt to use activism to benefit their personal circumstances and the campaign of RTC.

Chapter 3 focuses on both RTC and NU which are continuously engaged with the state and other institutions to ensure the retention of the occupations, even though they are deemed unlawful. In considering the housing situation specifically around Cape Town, this chapter constructs an understanding of how the occupation of two buildings by RTC members is a retaliation in response to exclusionary housing practices. This chapter therefore traces the various methodologies used by RTC and NU in their struggle to retain the occupations as well as in the navigation of their broader struggle for affordable housing within the inner city.

Chapter 4 investigates the relationship between RTC and NU more closely, showing that their relationship does not conform to the hierarchical nature that is often developed between social movements and NGOs. By constructing what I call a ‘purposive coalition’, the two organisations have been able to benefit each other, using their relationship strategically to be as effective as possible. In considering the relationship between RTC and other community-based organisations (CBOs), other particular relationships are considered to be either mutually beneficial coalitions, or opportunistic co-opting of a group of ‘activists’.

Chapter 5 offers a reflection on the previous chapters by restating their core ideas, while relating them to the research questions set out in the beginning of this research. This chapter then provides a personal reflection on this project as a whole, illustrating the ‘collaborative’ work done with two other researchers interested in RTC and NU.

Chapter 2: Not a single (activist) story

2.1 Meeting the 'Activists'

On the first day of my data gathering, I drove towards the bright and bustling Cape Town CBD; however, taking a left turn towards Woodstock instead of continuing to the commercial hub of Cape Town. The environment changes almost immediately, with the presence of industrial buildings increasing rapidly as I drive through the area. I am greeted by narrow streets which are made narrower by the cars parked on the shoulder of these streets and surprised by the number of 'spaza shops' or non-commercial tuckshops in the area. Dimly lit streets guide you past a darkly shrouded police station that leads to Mountain Road, which is my destination. Parking on the steeply inclined street, I notice a young white woman, possibly a student from the nearby University of Cape Town (UCT), walk into one of the houses that flank the street. As I walk up to the Old Woodstock Hospital, known as Cissie Gool House (CGH), which I am later told is a place which Reclaim the City members occupy, I slip through the 'locked' gate, watched by a few passers-by. As I walk up to the third floor of the building, I pass the corridor where the occupants live and get a few questioning looks. After introductions are made, I help a few members to find chairs in other buildings on the property also occupied by RTC members.

Walking through these other dimly lit buildings, I notice signs painted in Afrikaans on the walls saying, 'ontvangs' (reception) and 'hospitaal' (hospital), showing the historical function of these buildings. As the room fills up close to the 7 pm starting time of the meeting, it is apparent that the number of chairs gathered, about forty-odd, will not be enough for the group. As the chairs were set up in a circle, most of the people moved chairs to make the venue take on the format of a traditional classroom, with the facilitator (a member from NU) sitting in front of the members.

The above anecdote is taken from the inception of this research and shows my first experiences within RTC's Woodstock occupation referred to by the members as Cissie Gool House (CGH). The meeting, much like the other weekly meetings taking place on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7 pm to 9 pm, comprises both RTC members (those that occupy the building and external members), and other members of the public that have come for a variety of reasons. As Woodstock has a complex social history as previously discussed in Section 1.3, the residents of the area are by no means homogeneous, and the same applies to the residents of CGH. Through meeting and befriending many of the regular meeting

attendees throughout this research, the heterogeneity of the members became even more apparent.

As Song (2013) illustrates in her research on the Comfort Women campaign, even though a group of seemingly similar people may unite for a shared purpose or cause, they remain different from one another on many accounts, from life history, to desires, goals of their campaigns and subjectivities. In this research, such differences are compounded by the label of 'activist', given or self-designated by the members of RTC. There is an implicit assumption in the work done by RTC and many other social movements that when one is labelled an activist, that label creates a sense of homogeneity around the type of person one is (or at least should be), and also creates a common 'activist subjectivity'. This chapter problematises that assumption.

RTC members, as has been mentioned, attend various meetings, protests and other forms of collective action. However, the more I engaged with the movement, the more it became apparent that there was only a small grouping of people that lived up to the implicitly developed activist 'ideal' that was expected by stalwart activist leaders, including members of NU. The main assumption that should be dispelled in attempting to understand what it means to be an 'activist', is the idea that activists share identical life histories. Of the hundreds of occupiers that inhabit CGH, they all have varying life histories; however, the other occupation seems to be even more diverse. Specifically, in the case of Ahmed Kathrada House (AKH), it was the opinion of many activists involved in the occupation, as expressed in informal conversations, that the occupiers in Green Point have vastly different life histories. While many of the occupiers in the Woodstock occupation originate from the Woodstock area, with most of them having lived there for many years, the same cannot be said for the occupiers of AKH.

2.2 Different People, Different Activists

A house leader from AKH confirmed that there seemed to be a more 'diverse' population of occupiers in Green Point compared with the occupation in Woodstock. During an informal conversation the respondent argued:

Matthew: So, what do you think about the two occupations? Do you think the people are different?

Respondent: Yes, I do think the occupations are very different.

Matthew: In what ways do you think they are different?

Respondent: Well ... I think it is the people that are different. Woodstock has a community, while here at AKH, we are alone. In Woodstock, everything is changing, but they are still surrounded by their families, friends and the places they used to live in. Here in Sea Point, we are surrounded by the rich, the white people. Many people from AKH came here during the World Cup [2010 FIFA World Cup™] to find jobs. When the World Cup ended, they did not want to go back home, so they stayed here. The people in Woodstock think they are the main branch, while we were the first occupation.

This extract from a semi-structured interview provides glimpses into the fractured nature of RTC as a whole, but also shows the heterogeneity of the occupiers of each 'house' as well as indicating the diversity among themselves. Through these differing life histories, one can trace the varying commitments to their activist lifestyles. With regard to people in Woodstock, as well as the highly publicised case of the Bo-Kaap (Hendricks, 2018), there is a 'struggle identity' that has been constructed in opposition to 'the developers'. The effects of 'gentrification', a buzzword that seems to assume altering definitions depending on to whom you are talking, can indeed be used to delineate and differentiate between RTC occupations and members.

As Barbero (2015:274) states in grappling with housing activism in Spain, "people went from worrying solely about their individual problem, to engaging in collective political processes, and in so doing transformed themselves 'from affected to activists'". This quotation illustrates how people can be coaxed into becoming activists. Barbero is also effectively showing the importance of considering contextual factors that can lead one into activism. In Woodstock specifically, there is a perception that 'the developers', who are often characterised as 'white' and foreign, are coming to "take the property that belongs to the people of Woodstock", as was told to the members of RTC during the Heritage Walk. This event was captured in my field notes:

I arrive at the crossing of Albert Road and Gympie Street, looking for the RTC members, none of whom are in view. This is after taking a one-kilometre run to the location, because of a miscommunication between Ismail [one of the occupiers] and me. I then walk alone through Woodstock back to CGH where I meet with Ismail and the day begins officially. After RTC members run down the corridors and attempt to elicit as many supporters as possible, we all gather outside CGH (women, children and men alike) and walk down to the location I was just at, the corner of Albert Road and Gympie Street, which is the nearest to Cape Town CBD that we will walk today. As we arrive, two traffic cops arrive. They plan to assist us by protecting us from traffic and helping the members cross the street. One of the house leaders of the Woodstock occupation starts off by saying that the history of Woodstock is being changed and erased, which sounds almost like a call to arms. "So today we are going to the places where our members used to live. We are there to show that we are part of the community of Woodstock, and now the new developers and buildings are erasing those histories."

Throughout this research, I felt that this was the dominant narrative about the current state of affairs in Woodstock, shared by most of the RTC members that I met. This prevailing narrative is essential to consider when understanding who becomes an activist and why they do so. By appealing to the people of Woodstock, through arguing that something of theirs will be lost, displaced or destroyed through the processes of gentrification, many might be further motivated to become activists. The house leader's statement that history may be lost, seems to resonate with the elder members of RTC, especially when one considers that a large group of them were evicted from District Six during apartheid, which has been widely characterised as a brutal process that resulted in a loss of history (Field, 2001).

Comparatively, in Sea Point, the type of person that becomes an activist, and the motivation to do so, seem to differ. While Sea Point has a complicated history, as shown previously in Section 1.3, one can argue that the call for people to resist the forces of gentrification is not as strong. This might very well be because, as Sea Point is a high-investment area, few economically disadvantaged people can even afford to live in the area. Therefore, the reason for lack of collective action against the developers may not be apparent because the fight has already been lost, and large parts of the culturally diverse history, as seen in the case of the Tramway Road evictions (Field, 2001), have already been erased. Many of the members from the Green Point occupation also have not been directly affected by evictions (unlike many of

the members from the Woodstock occupation), but rather a common reason for occupying the building is to be in close proximity to the city centre and their places of work. However, with "the land debate" (Madonsela, 2018) heating up recently in South Africa, the tide may change, ushering in a new age of housing and land activism within the economically affluent Sea Point. Therefore, one can conclude that the cultural histories of both Woodstock and Sea Point tie into a collective identity that is utilised in the development of the subjectivities and identities of 'activists'.

2.3 Occupations of Difference

While the previous section gives an account of the political milieu of each occupation, an in-depth investigation into each occupation itself can further demonstrate the heterogeneity of activism found in RTC. Throughout this research, I observed that there seemed to be a complex relationship between the two main occupations, Cissie Gool House (CGH) in Woodstock and Ahmed Kathrada House (AKH) in Green Point. My initial research consisted of my attending the two weekly meetings at CGH, where little was said about AKH and the residents of that occupation. Upon my entering the Green Point occupation at a later stage, my shock at the differences between each occupation became immediately noticeable:

Tonight was different from what I have experienced so far throughout my research. Instead of taking the turn-off before Cape Town to Woodstock, Bjorn [another researcher] and I drove into Cape Town and skirted around Green Point to find parking near AKH, the Green Point occupation. As Bjorn has already engaged in this occupation, he plans to introduce me to the people he has met in the occupation so far. As we walk around the perimeter of the property towards the entrance gate, I see three people dancing and singing on a balcony, with drinks in their hands. It turns out one of these people is one of Bjorn's contacts in the occupation. We then pass through the security guard-'controlled' gate and I am immediately struck by the fact that there is no electricity in the building, and as the sun has almost set, this makes it very difficult to navigate around the occupation. Even more alarming though is the overwhelming putrid smell of sewage that courses through the building. I later learn that occupiers of AKH have severe challenges with their sewage. We blindly make our way up to the second storey where we meet those members that were on the balcony during our entrance. They invite us in and kindly offer us a glass of wine and an embrace. The one member has been staying in the occupation for two years. I am immediately struck by the view

from his balcony, which clarifies in my mind why this occupation building is said to be the 'Jewel of Granger Bay'.



Figure 3: View of the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront from Helen Bowden Nurses' Home referred to as AKH (Wingfield, 2018)

While the physical environment of AKH, in particular the stench of poor sanitation conditions, can only make living at the occupation extremely unpleasant, this was not the case at the Woodstock occupation. While CGH has some degradation to its façade and its interior, it never came across as a particularly unpleasant place to live. However, such concerns are only the 'tip of the iceberg' when it comes to differentiating between the respective occupation sites.

During my time in CGH, I was regularly meeting new people at the two weekly meetings, while also engaging with them at court appearances and other forms of protest. However, the same meetings at AKH were poorly attended, much more so than those at CGH, where the leaders took turns chastising those who were "in their rooms, rather than in the meetings" (Fieldnotes, 2018). This seemed to be a trend, where in each occupation, a small group of

loyalist members would attend meetings, and the majority of the occupiers would remain in their rooms or be otherwise occupied.

While attending an early morning ‘escrache’ at Japie Hugo’s house (a person seen by RTC to be responsible for the sale of Site B to Growthpoint at a greatly reduced price), the uneven commitment of members from each occupation was illustrated. An ‘escrache’ is a form of public protest that is aimed at ‘harassing’ [sic], or rather influencing public figures (Lunn, 2013). That morning, I arrived at CGH at 4:30 am to be ready in time to catch a taxi with other members to the undisclosed site of the protest. I was somewhat disheartened to see that only about ten people from CGH had assembled by 5:00 am to leave for the protest. We were then taken to NU’s offices in Cape Town CBD, where we met up with the members from AKH, of whom there were also about ten in total. I had never met any of the comrades from the other occupation up to this point. After a short briefing, we were transported to Camps Bay, which was the location of the protest. After arriving, we were informed that the taxis would go to retrieve more members to come and join us; this ultimately turned out to be only two more members.



Figure 4: Signboards with the details of each person that RTC and NU determined was at fault for the botched sale of Site B (Wingfield, 2018)

This shows that while RTC as a social movement has different chapters that are at times brought together in the fight for affordable housing in the inner city, the commitment of each chapter to activism varies. These sentiments were echoed by a member of the Green Point

occupation in a meeting at the Sea Point Methodist Church: "Look at [the members of] CGH, they are making us look bad. They are always at the court proceedings and the protests; we are never there" (Fieldnotes, 2018). It became increasingly apparent that there was a rift within RTC as a whole, which led to each of the occupations feeling separated and disconnected from each other. The realities of activism are influenced by these perceptions. For instance, members of AKH may feel less inclined to attend protests and court proceedings because they feel like they are "not the main chapter", as was expressed by various members in AKH.

In the context of transnational advocacy networks (TANs), NGOs and other community-based organisations, the differentiation between 'chapters' or branches is not uncommon. For example, this is well documented by Robins (2008) in the case of the Victoria Mxenge (VMx) Federation based in Cape Town. Here the Cape Town affiliate of the globally networked Slum Dwellers International (SDI) was challenged when some rank-and-file members "undermined the SDI's model for deep democracy, with its emphasis on non-hierarchical, decentralised leadership and grassroots mobilisation" (Robins, 2008:78). The local realities were different from those of the guidelines presented by SDI, and leaders of the Victoria Mxenge branch of the South African Homeless People's Federation in Cape Town ended up holding onto power for longer than prescribed, thereby creating power cliques and controlling the delivery of housing and other resources to other SDI federations and ordinary members. Therefore, one can conclude that the different branches or chapters of a larger organisation may vary widely.

In terms of the context of RTC, one can trace how a similar disjuncture between ideology and reality played out. While RTC and NU set ideals of how activists should act and therefore the nature of activism, the realities of each occupation were different. As has been shown, activism is indeed not a homogeneous term that can be used to create a uniform population of activists; activists have differing interests, aspirations, agendas and commitments that permeate throughout RTC. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009) addresses this problem with "the single story" in her famed Ted Talk that has over 17 million views. In her talk, titled 'The danger of a single story', she relates how her own experiences illustrate the need to think complexly about our lives, and the identities we project upon others. She warns that if we do not do so, we are at risk of misunderstanding other people, cultures or nationalities. This is

also essential to the understanding of the terms, 'activist' and 'activism', as has been problematised throughout this chapter.

If one is to focus finally on the individual level of activism, it becomes clear that one should heed Adichie's advice. At the inception of this research I believed (admittedly ignorantly) that there would be a significant level of homogeneity among all the activists. However, this is not the case. The differences between RTC members, even in the same occupation, are vast. From work status to age, gender, education, motivation for joining the movement, and commitment to activism, to name a few, RTC members are very different. While some members may be elderly members of the community with little formal schooling who faced eviction from a house they had been living in for a large part of their lives, there are many occupiers who are younger, may have completed secondary school and were evicted from the first house that they had rented. Such cases show the varying life histories found within the occupations. The above argument, however, has been made without problematising if the people occupying these buildings even consider themselves to be activists or not.

It is difficult to ascertain if members of RTC really do consider themselves as activists, regardless of how they understand the concept. Both the RTC Constitution and the vetting process for occupation somewhat coerce one to agree to become an 'activist'. However, this might not be many of the members' intention, and they might accept these prescriptions with reluctance. Criticisms from outsiders have been formed along a similar line, where the occupiers are accused of "just looking for a free place to stay", and therefore not being interested in activism. It is difficult to discern who consider themselves to be activists and who do not, because it is almost obligatory to say that you are an activist by virtue of being an occupier. Such an observation has been made by Olsen, when sketching out his "free-rider problem", where he notes that in large groups some members will not act to further the cause of the movement unless coerced to do so (Olsen, 1965:2-10). By not agreeing to this designation as an activist, you put yourself at risk of being removed from the occupation, or at least discredited for your lack of commitment to the movement. However, if one is to consider the actions of the members to determine if they heed RTC's and NU's ideals of activism, many could not be considered "proper activists". There too may be a rebuttal from the occupiers themselves that, just by illegally occupying the building in the first place, they may consider themselves activists in their own right.

2.4 Pedagogies of Activism

It is clear from the above discussion that RTC is made up of a diverse group of 'activists' that live in different occupations, which are situated in differing contexts and environments, and are composed of different social profiles. The fact that RTC members are referred to by the overarching and implicitly homogeneous category of 'activists', may even seem nonsensical. As Bobel (2007:149) has argued, there need not necessarily be an alignment between one's personal identity and one's collective identity, relating to one's position with regard to a social movement. Therefore, Bobel argues for a more nuanced understanding of collective identity, and consequently differentiates between 'being' an activist and 'doing' activism. The problematising of singular activist identities has been echoed by authors such as Klandermans (2004) and King (2004). However, one cannot look at such identities as if they are unobstructed by the movement they are developed around. As Appadurai (2001) would argue, there is a common 'culture' among people such as the RTC occupiers that is grounded in aspiration; an aspiration in this case that could be founded on the hope of their rights being realised, and housing delivered. RTC and NU are not passive in the development of the activist capabilities and subjectivities of the occupiers. The two weekly meetings are also not unstructured and unplanned. The leaders of both NU and RTC aim to use these meetings to transmit what can be understood as 'pedagogies of activism'.

One can pose the question, "How do activists know how to be activists?" While purposely avoiding any deterministic answers, this section will show that in the case of RTC, the members are largely informed by the practices and meetings held by RTC leaders and NU employees. Therefore, we must bring such meetings into focus, and understand how they can be viewed as pedagogical spaces.

As noted throughout this study, the first indication that these meetings can be seen through the lens of pedagogy, is that of the seating arrangements. From the first meeting at the Woodstock occupation, I was shown how the chairs were set up to try to enforce a spirit of collective discussion and collaborative effort. Meanwhile, even if the chairs were set up in a circular formation, they were subtly rearranged by the members, where they would sit to face

the 'leader' or the person speaking most during the meeting. An NU employee vented to me about their frustration when I asked about the previous night's meeting seating arrangement. He noted that it was a conscious decision to put out only a few chairs while setting up the room before the meeting, to ensure that they were not all moved to the opposite side of the room close to that of the 'speaker', which was noted to enforce a normal 'classroom dynamic', with which comes a perceived power dynamic. This power dynamic, it was believed by NU members, would reinforce in the minds of the RTC members that they must be 'taught' about such matters. Before each meeting, specifically of the Advice Assembly (AA) on Tuesday nights, the NU employees tried to ensure that this was not the case.



Figure 5: A picture of an Advice Assembly (AA) on a Tuesday night, showing a traditional pedagogical style (Wingfield, 2018)

Every Advice Assembly (AA) began with a set of ground rules or procedural guidelines that were used to try to ensure the space was informative, non-hierarchical and unrestricted. One such instruction was that the advice that would be given to a person with a legal question (most often not a member of RTC, but a desperate outsider) was not a formal legal answer, and that it was given as advice and not as a formal legal response. This was, it seems, aimed

at garnering legal capacities among the members of RTC, where they would gain valuable legal knowledge and thereby come to feel empowered. Those members that were regular attendees at these meetings seemed to possess a firm grasp of cases of illegal eviction and what is called constructive eviction (when one's landlord uses infrastructural manipulation to evict the tenant, for example, changing the locks on the property).

One of the members used his learned competency to win a dispute with his landlord, who had tried to evict him and other occupants on the property illegally. The following anecdote is taken from the Advice Assembly (AA) where he explained his situation:

We then move onto the case of Lumumba, a devout RTC member. The magistrate was quoted as saying, "Today is a good day for lessees and a bad day for landlords," in their response to the judgment of the case. Lumumba stands up and gives a rousing account of the day's events in court. He says he owes his victory to the movement, and to the lawyer who surprisingly treated him like a human being [she was evidently a lawyer from NU]. The landlord argued that Lumumba's account was in arrears and that he had damaged the property, neither of which was true. By getting all the tenants that he lives with to sign a form to contest their eviction and their exorbitant rent increases, he was able to build a strong case against his landlord. At the end of this account, Deena [a chapter leader] then expanded on this idea, by saying that the help they [RTC] have started giving to people in court is so valuable, "The stuff we learn in here is gold"

This anecdote shows that there is a strong pedagogical focus in the meetings that RTC conduct. While, as it has been shown, the members of RTC are heterogeneous, such educational practices can be seen to create a certain degree of 'collective consciousness' and common interests among members. Through the capacities created among the attendees of meetings such as the AA, members can help themselves if they are mistreated by their landlord or assist friends and family members in similar situations. The leaders of RTC have even encouraged those who are regular attendees to go to both the magistrate's court and regional court and offer advice and help to other unwitting members of the public that have not had the opportunity to attend RTC meetings. However, while such pedagogical practices seem to create hope of a legally informed populous, there are limitations to this. Once again, the fact that only a certain group of 'loyalists' attend such meetings, means that there will be

only a small group of legally educated members. Therefore, the heterogeneity of the 'activists' of RTC is reinforced.

However, there is not only a pedagogical focus on jurisprudence within RTC. As the members are referred to as activists, they are also 'taught' how to be whatever RTC considers to be 'activists', as has been previously problematised. The weekly meetings held on Thursday nights at both the Woodstock and Green Point occupations are called 'chapter meetings'. These meetings, when not being confused with house meetings and thus discussing alternative matters, are used to focus on the building up and consolidation of the social movement. Since RTC has come to occupy three physical buildings, this has made organisational work more complicated. From issues of disorderly conduct in the occupations, to the creation of safe learning and play environments for the many children, RTC has had to adapt and learn to manage with an ever-increasing list of issues surrounding the occupation. Consequently, it comes as no surprise that some members use 'chapter meetings' to discuss such mundane, everyday organisational affairs.

When the meetings do stay within the focus of the individual chapters, members are educated and questioned about the protests that have occurred, other happenings that influence the movement, and how they want to proceed. While the focus does take place on the basis of an interactive conversation, one can identify a strong, and at times prescriptive, pedagogical theme in these meetings. Since the election of chapter leaders and house leaders at the end of 2018, these meetings have taken on a new life, with such leaders being focused on how to have a strong activist presence. Through countless case studies, RTC tries to inform and teach RTC members what kind of activist strategies work, and which are not as effective. From the tracking of the Bromwell Street case in court, which might set a precedent for illegal evictions, to the circumstances of individual members of RTC, members are educated about the minutiae of activism. Although it is a regular occurrence for a member to suggest a new activist practice, few of those suggestions seem practicable or well received.

When NU researchers uncovered the sale of Site B to Growthpoint (also discussed in Section 1.4), RTC leaders were determined to retaliate. The typical pedagogical style of the chapter meetings was to be participative, or so it seemed. In the discussion of how RTC would respond

to this, many members came up with seemingly illogical and ineffective modes of protest. From meeting Ian Neilson (former Acting Mayor of The City of Cape Town) at Cape Town International Airport on his arrival from his holiday to suggesting a tax boycott, these ideas were presented without restraint or censure. Then the RTC leaders laid out a plan of what they decided should be done. In the next chapter meeting, there was a seemingly endless supply of information booklets containing an easily understandable account of the situation concerning the sale of Site B. This came as a relief to many of the members, because an understanding of the sale of 'bulk rights' did not come easily, even in the case of the more experienced housing activists in the group. With these pamphlets came a presentation from the researchers at NU, who gave an account of whom they had determined was 'responsible' for the sale of Site B. The meeting was then handed over to the RTC leaders that gave directives on how they aimed to face this debacle.

With the faces of those responsible for the Growthpoint sale presented on big signboards as seen in *Figure 4*, the leaders detailed plans to conduct protests at the guilty parties' homes. While they admitted that these addresses would be obtained through 'leaks', they were enthusiastic about the perceived outcome of such processes of heightened activism. It was surprising that while the leaders did give instructions on how the protests would occur, there was less of a pedagogical focus during this meeting. However, this was quelled on the morning of the protest. As recalled earlier in this chapter, RTC conducted an 'escrache' at one of the accused's homes in Camps Bay early in the morning. Before making our way to the protest site, we stopped off at the NU offices for a 'briefing period'. The leaders of NU then proceeded to once again inform the group of why the protest was happening, and why they were using a morning 'escrache' as a protest tactic. This, it turns out, was not the first time they had held a morning protest such as this.

Brett Herron, former mayoral committee member and part of the governing Democratic Alliance (DA) party, was the target of a similar early morning protest. In the time leading up to the protest, RTC members and leaders alike had become increasingly frustrated with the lack of social housing/affordable housing being built; therefore, they decided to host 'Breakfast with Brett', and appeared outside of his house one morning. Brett Herron eventually came out to meet the protestors, sat down with them and addressed their

concerns. Through this 'victory', RTC leaders gained confidence in the effectiveness of this method, therefore giving them a reason to employ it once again in light of the alleged corrupt sale of Site B to Growthpoint. The protest outside Japie Hugo's house, however, did not turn out to be a success. Owing to his recent cutting of all ties with the City of Cape Town (CoCT), he had no public responsibility to address the protestors' concerns and stayed in his house throughout the entire day. After 'protest-fatigue' had set in, members of RTC eventually decided to end the protest. This protest method promoted by RTC leadership was seen to be somewhat ineffective in this particular context, even though people from neighbouring properties took notice of the events. To further complicate matters, Brett Herron was subsequently seen to be a 'good guy' by RTC, which was reinforced by his leaving the DA with the outgoing mayor Patricia de Lille. In a statement given on his departure, Herron stated that "a white cabal" of DA members had blocked his viable proposals for social housing at every turn possible (Pather, 2018).

The pedagogies of activism found within RTC are observable within a wide range of social movements and CBOs throughout South Africa. Consequently, as it has been argued, there is a certain perception of homogeneity that is created by such practices, even though members are typically diverse in their backgrounds, interests, desires, aspirations and commitments. Pedagogies of activism can also be understood by the fostering of an individual's feeling of responsibility, as Rose and Novas (2005:10) have argued in the context of what they call "biological citizenship", and one's individual responsibility to control one's biological reality. Robins (2006:312) has contextualised this fostering of individual responsibility in South Africa, which he refers to as the making of "responsibilized citizens". Robins understands the concept as focusing on the responsibility of those affected by HIV/AIDS in the case of the TAC. This is argued to be critical for the success of the anti-retroviral (ARV) intervention. While Rose and Novas (2005), and Robins (2006) use the term 'responsibilised' citizens in their arguments of health and biological citizenship, this research uses the concept in relation to rights-based citizenship and activism. While the leaders of RTC do use a pedagogical approach in their meetings, there is an assumption that the members will then take responsibility for themselves and help those around them.

2.5 Making “Responsibilized Activists”

It has been shown that the leaders of both RTC and NU attempt to teach and guide the members of RTC in their fight for affordable housing and spatial justice, with meetings focused both on jurisprudence and court competencies, as well as pedagogies of activism. However, the leaders have also aimed to create a self-sustaining system of empowerment that enables stalwart members to educate their peers. Such processes are often confusing to the members of RTC because a large group of them regularly and wholeheartedly accept their roles as ‘the learners’. During a meeting at the Sea Point Methodist church, such conflicting ideas emerged:

RTC members then start saying that they need to take the fight to the city, and not wait for NU. This acts as a catalyst for members to brainstorm ways in which they can now combat the newly reformed CoCT [City of Cape Town]. An NU employee then informs everyone that the City has even complained about the ‘escraches’ that have been happening for a long time, which seems to show that the city plans on limiting the actions of RTC and NU. It is said that some of the protests being done are null and void. This swing of momentum by the CoCT will also subsequently affect the eviction cases against AKH members. The responses of the new head of law enforcement [in the City of Cape Town], JP Smith, seems to show that protests will not be taken lightly by law enforcement. The members then argue, in different ways, that RTC and the other movements it is in coalition with, should come together and do a mass action and march, as well as convening a meeting that can lead to better relations between the CBOs. This discussion then went off on a tangent about the security officials at the occupations and their allegiance to the City instead of the occupants.

The chapter meeting then basically became a house meeting, with all the people that were speaking (about four people) arguing that there must be more solidarity between the members in AKH as well as the two occupations. It seems to be a common view that there are many people in the occupation that do not care about activism or even about affordable housing. They, in turn, live lives that are secluded from the politics of RTC and simply view it as a free housing opportunity. This division between those at all the meetings and actions and those who are not in any way activists seems to be very destructive. The relationship between NU and RTC is brought up, which highlighted its problematic nature. Some RTC members feel that NU must make all the decisions and RTC must only play a supportive role, but NU members seem to feel it should be the other way around.

The above excerpt shows that issues of difference between occupations, pedagogies of activism and the heterogeneity of the occupiers are topics often discussed by members. These issues were often among the topics of conversation both formally within the meetings and in informal conversations after the meetings; therefore, as has been shown and will continue to be shown, such ideas form the focal points of analysis throughout this study as they relate to forms of 'insurgent citizenship' and the daily realities thereof. Moreover, the particular context in which the movement finds itself, with the new mayor of Cape Town, Dan Plato, seems to complicate matters further. However, one of the most interesting points of this section of fieldnotes concerns the issue where RTC members feel that NU should lead the way, while NU employees have suggested it should be the other way around. At the beginning of this research, before the RTC had elected chapter leaders, NU seemed to 'call the shots', while RTC members just followed instructions. This change can be understood by what can be called 'responsibilised activism'. While NU does have the resources that RTC does not, it seems both logically and strategically sound that NU should pass the baton of leadership onto both RTC's leaders and members.

The lack of commitment from a large group of rank-and-file RTC members can be perceived by some of the leaders as a hindrance to the success of the movement. As referred to earlier, Robins (2006) shows how the power for change (however it is determined) ultimately lies with the individual. For example, to ensure that they do not fall victim to Multi-Drug Resistant Tuberculosis (MDR-TB), patients must demonstrate individual responsibility to take their medication regularly. The same form of individual responsibility can be used in understanding how effective RTC is. If members are not dedicated to educating themselves and others, to supporting their comrades in court cases and disputes with their landlords, the movement may become ineffective. As has been mentioned previously concerning the heterogeneity of activists, members might not mobilise in support because they have different individual identities, aspirations, interests and subjectivities. However, by encouraging the fostering of 'responsibilised activists', members and occupiers alike may engage with more commitment to the movement.

In the context of South Africa, where rights-based activism is effective if used carefully and strategically, social movements such as RTC have the ability to produce real change in the

sphere of housing, specifically within the inner city. Community-based organisations (CBOs) such as the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) and the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign (WCAEC) have used rights-based activism to ensure service delivery according to their rights enshrined in the South African Constitution. Robins (2004) has shown how the TAC used rights-based activism in its battle for a government-based intervention against HIV/AIDS. Together with calling for 'health citizenship', the movement fought the treatment battle, through drawing on both legal-based and a pro-poor class-based mobilisation. The legal component of this campaign was essential to its success, with "[the] TAC's legal representatives argu[ing] in the High Court of South Africa that the state had a constitutionally bound obligation to promote access to healthcare, and that this could be extended to AIDS drug treatment" (Robins, 2004:665). However, the idea of the 'responsibilised activist' must also be considered as an essential ingredient in the success of the movement; in other words, the pressure exerted by the rank-and-file of the TAC was crucial in the eventual rollout of ARVs by the South African Government.

A similar case of rights-based activism can be found through the movement of the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign (WCAEC). Owing to its being profoundly akin to that of RTC, this movement can illustrate how rights-based activism can be used in the context of housing. Miraftab and Wills (2005:208) encapsulate the complex nature of the accessing of one's rights, whereby they state, "[housing] campaign activists are trying to create spaces of citizenship from which their rights can be ensured and actually practiced". This is what RTC has also strived to do, by using both 'rights talk' in its 'Advice Assemblies' (AAs), and through the use of collective action and protest to "force the government's hand". The goal of RTC is not only that of affordable housing, but affordable housing located within the inner city. As Levenson (2017) shows, social movements have a multiplicity of options in their fight for the realisation of their rights, one of which is to target the market. The 'market', or more specifically that of private capital in South Africa, has been targeted by RTC in their campaign against private developers such as Growthpoint. Therefore, while one can see that the use of rights-based activism, as Robins (2008) has argued elsewhere, can provide hopeful avenues of the realisation of one's rights, there are various other avenues which can be utilised. For example, the grey areas between legal and illegal provide spaces in which social movements

like RTC can function. This dialectic between law and politics will be further illustrated in Chapter 3, concerning the negotiation on illegal occupations.

Chapter 3: Occupation negotiation

3.1 Housing in Context

Both the historical context and present-day continuities of the past in South Africa specifically influence the current fight for housing by members of RTC and members of the working-class alike. The daily struggle by members of RTC and NU for the retention of the respective occupations has a multi-faceted rationale. During apartheid, through the *Group Areas Act* (GAA), ‘black’ and ‘coloured’ Capetonians were corralled into areas characterised by a lack of adequate infrastructure, and which were a great distance from the city centre. With South Africa emerging from apartheid, scores of previously disadvantaged people have put their faith in infrastructure service delivery from the state, ranging from demands for electricity, improved sewage systems and access to clean water, to the delivery of housing itself. However, as Von Schnitzler (2016:3) argues, “[Service] delivery is a fetishized goal of the immediate post-apartheid period.” Often the state has been unable to live up to its own standards of service delivery adequately, let alone the expectations of those in need. Forms of protest against the untimely delivery of basic services are often intertwined with the infrastructure requested. While Von Schnitzler (2016:4) argues that forms of protest against water meters often result from bypassing or tampering with meters, protests against the lack of housing by RTC are done by means of the occupation of buildings.

Citizens have found that fighting for something materially tangible such as infrastructure allows them to measure and quantify the progress of the state easily, rather than the pursuing of lofty and elusive ideals such as ‘democracy’. Dubbeld (2017:76) has argued along similar lines, where he shows how both councillors and municipal managers in the Glendale district of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, believed that “democracy could be measured through infrastructural improvements”. Perhaps many poor and working-class people have come to hold similar beliefs. One core metric that can be used to illustrate the legacies of apartheid is that of housing delivery, where Cape Town is still highly segregated and has an integration rating of 0.67, on a scale where 0 is a fully integrated city, and 1 is wholly segregated (Statistics South Africa, 2011). Shown in *Figure 1*, the distribution of housing is largely related to racial grouping. One can still see that areas that were exclusively for ‘white’ people during apartheid

(for example Sea Point and Hout Bay) still largely reflect the same composition. Spatial transformation has continued at a slow-moving pace since the legal abolishment of the *Group Areas Act*. What comes with this continued segregation is the distance of ‘coloured’ and ‘black’ areas from the inner city, which is closer to jobs, and as many people in RTC argue, “closer to the money”. Therefore, as will be shown throughout this chapter, the aspirations of the members of RTC for housing and the persistence of the occupations are partly influenced by the historical legacies of dispossession, socio-spatial segregation and racially based housing policies.

3.2 Revanchist Occupations

The City of Cape Town (CoCT) has recently been the subject of much praise internationally for being one of the highest-rated tourist destinations in the world (Tembo, 2017). With this, comes an initiative by the CoCT to develop the city into a bona fide “world-class city”, to match the likes of London, New York and Abu Dhabi (Lemanski, 2007). Capital is channelled into the city in hope of a return on investment that might be found through increased levels of tourism in the area. However, as the city’s buildings climb skywards, the zone of investment must also push outward in a process of urban sprawl and gentrification (Visser & Kotze, 2008: 2575). As previously discussed, this leads to an increase in rent in fringe areas such as Woodstock. RTC has reacted to such processes by illegally occupying two derelict buildings, one in Green Point, the other in Woodstock. One might assume that owing to such structures having a high potential value for the city and private investors, the occupiers would have been evicted from these spaces a long time ago. However, the complex interplay between law and politics has protected RTC from this scenario. Therefore, the concept of the ‘negotiation of occupations’ will be discussed in this chapter.

The progressive South African Constitution has been praised for the rights and protections it affords South African citizens. In the case of housing specifically, one can make a similar argument. The legal rights of those who have been evicted or face the possibility of eviction have been strengthened by the precedent-setting case of Irene Grootboom as presided over by then Supreme Court Justice Zak Yacoob. The applicant of the case, Irene Grootboom, a

resident in Wallacedene on the outskirts of Stellenbosch, was one of the 390 adults and 510 children evicted from an illegal occupation of state-owned land earmarked for low-cost housing. After deliberation in the courts, it was concluded by the Constitutional Court that those people who had been evicted should be supplied with basic living provisions, including tents, portable toilets and drinking water (Huchzermeyer, 2003:87). Ironically, Irene Grootboom died without receiving an RDP house, similarly to many evicted South Africans. This case also led to changes in the Bill of Rights (Republic of South Africa. Department of Housing, 2006), where tenants across the nation now cannot be evicted unless they have alternative accommodation; such people cannot be put in a situation that would render them homeless. The same law applies to the members of RTC that are illegally occupying buildings in both Woodstock and Green Point. Therefore, these legal allowances are utilised creatively and carefully by housing groups such as RTC.

Owing to the abolition of apartheid's racially discriminatory spatial policies, the people of Woodstock have the 'right to the city', but neoliberal policies have once again barred them from living within or near the city. The illegal occupation of buildings seems to be an attempt by people to live in the inner city, rather than being evicted to Blikkiesdorp or Wolwerivier (two resettlement areas located at least 30km from the inner city). Similar exclusionary formations of space have been documented throughout the world, and this has in turn activated assertions of 'the right to the city'. This term, which is widely associated with Henri Lefebvre's *Writings on Cities* (1996) and David Harvey's (2012) books such as *Rebel Cities*, has influenced spatial justice movements such as RTC. Both authors have contested the current exclusionary composition that modern cities reflect and have rather advocated for the positioning of a heterogeneous populous within the space, instead of the wealthy citizens that are generally seen to occupy the city. For members of RTC and other community members that face eviction from the inner city, their bargaining is often made along the lines of an emotive or subjective 'right' to remain in a particular space. Considering the context of the history of forced removals around Cape Town, specifically the case of the evictions from District Six, the responses shown by those being evicted from the city are historically grounded in the apartheid past as well as in the contemporary activities of private neoliberal developers.

Tracing the exclusionary nature of space and housing within and surrounding the City of Cape Town, I therefore suggest that the two occupations can be considered as ‘revanchist occupations’. As Smith (1996) explains, the word revanchist is derivative of the French word for revenge. In the case of French revanchists at the end of the nineteenth century, their goal was to discredit both the working class and members of royalty; in the case of RTC, they seem to not be as oppositional and defiant to organisations such as the COCT. However, the defiance of RTC in relation to the loss of land and territory mimic the steadfast actions of various groups of “revanchists” against similar dominating forces such as gentrification.

Returning to the question of why these illegal occupiers are not evicted by the police, the complexity of the relationship between the law and politics needs to be examined. One reason is that the DA-led City of Cape Town needs the support of poor and working-class people. Another reason relates to the democratic character of post-apartheid South Africa and the realities of electoral politics (Friedman, 2019). Governing parties, both nationally and provincially, need to maintain good relations with potential voters. These considerations, as well as the rights contained within imperatives of the Constitution, mean that poor and working-class people can have a measure of ‘influence’ in relation to the parties that govern them.

Those living in poor and working-class communities such as Woodstock, and their activist allies, may feel as if they are excluded from the inner city by both government and the influences of neoliberal capital. The conditions effected by such mechanisms are often not policy-based or formalised processes. As Caldeira (2000:3) has argued, segregation can rather be determined by the creation of socially and financially segregated communities, or “fortified enclaves”, rather than by state-driven exclusionary spatial policies. Regardless of the cause of the situation in which poor and working-class members find themselves, they must find a way of bargaining for a ‘better life’. Desiree Fields has contributed to this debate by tracking the many ways in which community-based organisations can contest the financialisation of urban space (Fields, 2015:2). What is salient throughout this debate is that “activist practices may strategically combine opposition with engagement in order to advance their agenda, serving as a more subtle and indirect form of contestation” (Fields, 2015:8). This relates directly to the interplay between law and politics, showing that it would be less

effective for RTC to become entirely oppositional to the state; a form of pressurising the state could be more useful for urban social movements, as Robins (2008) has argued.

This engagement is further complicated because of the lack of productive spaces in which a movement such as RTC can engage with local government and other responsive institutions. Cornwall and Coelho (2007) argue for the reconfiguration of the relations between the state and society, and for the production of spaces where the voices of the marginalised can be heard. RTC have been able to 'create' such spaces, where different levels of local government have been engaged with. By demanding their 'rights to the city', the members of RTC have asserted their citizenship rights (Caldeira, 2000:13). This was demonstrated by the actions of RTC where, in light of one of the leaders of the Green Point occupation being stabbed on the night of 24 March 2019 within the occupation and subsequently dying, the members of RTC approached representatives from Department of Public Works and the City of Cape Town on 4 April 2019 to demand that electricity be restored at the occupation, which had been shrouded in darkness since the inception of the occupation. The result of an all-day peaceful protest, as well as a letter of demands drawn up by RTC, led Jacqui Gooch, head of the Department of Public Works to acquiesce to the demands of RTC, including supplying of solar-powered lights for the rooms and an investigation to establish if electricity and lighting could be restored (Reclaim the City, 2019).

One can note from the example above that there are ways in which community-based organisations can pressure and bargain with local government and other representative institutions. Such actions can also be understood by what Holston (2008) calls "insurgent citizenship". Holston contextualises this through his research in São Paulo in Brazil. Holston (2008:203) states that, "the law regularly produces irresolvable procedural and substantive complexity; this jural-bureaucratic irresolution dependably initiates extrajudicial solutions; and these political impositions inevitably legalize usurpations of one sort or another". In other words, if the space for meaningful engagement does not exist between the state and the marginalised, the latter will create such spaces, through tactics such as protesting at an office of the local government or occupying a derelict building. The goal of such actions is to elicit a response from the state, without which such people will be left empty-handed.

3.3 The Interplay between Law and Politics

While it has been noted that one factor that influences the state's receptiveness to forms of protest and civil disobedience can be their reliance on such people for votes during national and provincial elections, the reality is often far more complex. Many organisations that call on local government for an intervention into their harsh lived realities are often met with silence, or at best, temporary solutions. Therefore, social movements such as RTC have to be creative and calculative in the ways in which they engage with the state.

One way in which RTC has gained the attention of local government, aside from numerous protests and formal legal enquiries, is by the occupation of two buildings. This 'insurgent' practice has been seen by many as radical, while the occupiers would argue it is done out of necessity. All of those who occupy the Green Point and Woodstock sites could face eviction and the possibility of being arrested at any given moment; illegal occupation is a precarious existence. These buildings are both situated within densely populated neighbourhoods that are inhabited by people who might not take favourably to the occupiers. Such neighbours rarely sit by passively and watch these events unfold. From lodging complaints about litter on the premises of the occupation to notifying the police that they feel unsafe, residents in surrounding properties often attempt to destabilise the occupations. However, as can be illustrated in the duration of time these occupations have been held, the occupiers have defiantly maintained these occupations, often through bargaining with local government.

Therefore, one can ask how one can reconcile the rights of the occupiers with the legal frameworks that exist within the country? Local government is in a difficult position. As Chatterjee (2011:14) notes:

Governmental authorities do not try to punish or put a stop to such illegalities [illegal use of utilities or occupations of land] because of the political recognition that these populations serve certain necessary functions in the urban economy, and to forcibly remove them would involve huge political costs.

Once again, the precarious position that the government is put in becomes apparent. One can also note that what is normal in this case, the immediate eviction of the illegal occupiers, is

suspended and an exception to the norm is adopted; this is done in order to secure their own popular legitimacy and support of citizens within the country. However, it is untrue to assume that the state remains passive in its battle with the occupiers that is often fought on public platforms. Both the City of Cape Town and RTC are constantly in the process of bargaining and trying to advance their agenda.

RTC, however, is continuously focused on maintaining the occupations because they have come to mean so much more than merely being buildings that house a few hundred people. The occupations stand as a physical and symbolic reminder of their daily struggles and contestations in relation to the state, as well as a public demonstration of the efficacy of the services that RTC can provide for its members, which is often not the case with social movements such as the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign (WCAEC). Therefore, the leaders of RTC have used certain mechanisms to 'control' those within the occupations so that an individual cannot cause the entire occupation to be lost. For example, there is a regulation with regard to what the occupiers can and cannot do within the occupation; for instance, they are required to abstain from drug use while in the occupation. Signboards adorn the walls of the meeting room and corridors of the Woodstock occupation, stating that drug use is forbidden within the space. Leaders of the chapter also, at times, remind the members of this, by noting how it can take one person breaking this rule to get the police involved and have the occupation closed on the grounds of safety and security. The regulation of behaviour in the occupation can also be seen as a way to control deviance and to develop a positive image of the movement, showing that stigmatised and marginalised people are respectable and deserve to live in the neighbourhood. Therefore, one can note that considerable effort is put into keeping the relationship between RTC, the CoCT and the broader community as cordial as possible.

The real tactical engagement takes place when RTC and NU must decide when, where and what issues to protest against, which again puts them on the radar of the City of Cape Town. While they might want to strike a balance that will not test the tolerance limits of the City of Cape Town, they also need to stand by their mission of advocating for affordable housing within the inner city, which will likely not be realised without a certain amount of protesting and legal challenging of local government. Once again, returning to the case of the protests

in light of the sale of Site B, one may consider the protests to have disturbed the delicate balance between the CoCT and RTC. After these protests had persisted for a few weeks, including at the head offices of Growthpoint, the City of Cape Town arrived early one morning at the Woodstock occupation to “take a census” of all of the occupiers. This was interpreted by many at RTC as retaliation for the ongoing protests. Therefore, one can conclude that such demonstrations may have disturbed the threshold of tolerance of the City of Cape Town.

3.4 The Ever-Present State

During the day, I came across a post on social media from RTC detailing an incident between Cape Town Law Enforcement and the leaders of RTC. Naturally at the beginning of this meeting I, as well as other members that had seen the post, waited in anticipation for a leader to recount this story. Before the meeting, I was asked by the new security guards at the gate to sign in. I asked if any of them could tell me what had happened in the morning, but was met with silence and excuses. As I walked upstairs, I noticed the lights were not on, with the meeting room turning darker by the second with the sun setting. As we started the meeting, the lights came on, which dispelled my assumption about the possibility of the City of Cape Town shutting them off.

Bevil, one of the house leaders, then explains the happenings of the morning. Law enforcement apparently arrived at 6 am to do a ‘headcount’. The new security company that controls the gated entrances had consented to this. The leaders of the Woodstock occupation then requested the reasoning and legality of their presence at Cissie Gool House. It is believed that this is a retaliation for the ongoing protests about the sale of Site B. One of the members argues that they believe the City of Cape Town has a lack of political power; therefore, they are now resorting to the use of intimidation tactics. The question is then rhetorically posed to the members, “How do we fight back? Should we just accept this?” This question was answered by the speaker, “We come from apartheid, we bear the scars, we aren’t scared.” The chapter leaders of CGH then, ironically, do their own ‘census’ and ask how many of the people in the meeting are living in the occupation, which turns out to only be about a third of the people present. The criticism is then turned onto those occupiers that do not come to meetings. A member at the meeting even puts it so bluntly as to say, “When these people come in [and are allowed to occupy the building], they just say go fuck yourself, they don’t care about the movement,” with which there is much agreement.

The above excerpt from the field notes taken during this research once again shows the complexity and tumultuous engagement that occurs between RTC and local government. One can quite confidently assume that the presence of Cape Town Law Enforcement officials at 6 am was nothing short of a 'power move'. As is stated above, this was seen as a retaliation by the state in the wake of ongoing protests by RTC on Site B, where land had been sold at a reduced price to the corporate powerhouse, Growthpoint. The fact that a 'census' was to be taken is also noteworthy within this interaction. This form of Foucauldian governmentality can be understood in terms of the unequal power relations that it may demonstrate and foster (Foucault, 1975). The state may have knowingly or unknowingly used this pretext of a census to show the relational power they have vis-à-vis the occupiers; if the state could not immediately evict these people, they could still perform their political power. What is also notable through this engagement is that the security company that controls the influx of people into the occupation is hired by the City of Cape Town and can be seen as another apparatus of control imposed by them. Surprisingly, there was little response by RTC to this move made by the CoCT. While RTC could have contested this, it may have been seen as an imprudent course of action, which potentially could have unsettled the already frayed relations between them. Similar to this, the CoCT, while acting through its various agencies such as the police, have shown their legal and jurisprudential power in relation to RTC.

As already noted in the previous chapter, the incumbent mayoral committee member for safety and security is JP Smith. To the members of RTC this comes as a cautionary signal. JP Smith, according to members of RTC, has a history of being excessively punitive, which seems to instil concern among some of the members. At most, if not at all protests RTC has coordinated, the police have been present, demonstrating the power and presence of the state in relation to the movement.

South Africa has clearly defined laws that govern protests in the country. However, RTC is able to use the 'grey areas' (see Yiftachel, 2009) in the law itself to further its campaigns. During the protest that occurred at Japie Hugo's house in connection with the sale of Site B, the protesters were confronted by the local police force of the area of Camps Bay. Their arrival was swift and occurred soon after our own. In a matter of minutes, three police cars had arrived, as neighbours looked on cautiously with interest. One of the employees of NU who

was leading the protest instructed those who were not wearing Reclaim the City T-shirts to stand in a separate group from that of the RTC group. This was done tactically to ensure the protest did not contravene the *Regulation of Gatherings Act* (Republic of South Africa, 1993). This law states that when a group of fifteen or more people come together it can be referred to as a ‘demonstration’, and therefore be liable to punitive action by the police. Since the group had divided into two seemingly separate entities, the police had no cause to disrupt the protest. This was carefully explained to the police by those members of RTC and NU who were aware of the minutiae of the *Regulation of Gatherings Act*. After this, the police stood by passively and some of the officers even half-heartedly attempted to usher Japie Hugo out of his house to negotiate a conversation between the two parties.



Figure 6: Leaders from NU and RTC confirm their compliance with the *Regulation of Gatherings Act* (Wingfield, 2018)

It is clear that local government has various governance options that would seemingly give them the upper hand in this process of ‘negotiating’ the occupations held by RTC in both Green Point and Woodstock. However, the laws that benefit local government can be used equally by the occupiers and members of RTC.

3.5 The Resilience of Reclaim the City (RTC)

Local government, therefore, seems to hold a strong position in relation to a social movement such as RTC. With the vast resources it possesses, as well as the illegality of the occupations, one might assume that negotiations between these two parties would be one-sided. However, the rights afforded to South African citizens, as seen in the *Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act* (PIE) aided by the right to housing in Section 26 of the South African Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996) are often utilised by social movements. RTC leverages such legal frameworks and largely relies on rights-based activism to increase the probability that affordable housing will be provided. However, Section 26 of the Constitution itself has a caveat when referring to the delivery of housing; it dictates that “the state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of this right” (Republic of South Africa, 1996). What this effectively does for those in need of housing is the slowing of delivery of infrastructure under the guise of a “lack of resources”. Therefore, when pressed on the subject, local government can use either the limitations of their constitutional obligation or simply blame national government, which is led by the African National Congress (ANC), as a scapegoat. Therefore, this leaves a group of a few hundred people living in an illegal occupation with no hope of timely respite from their precarious predicament.

As shown in the case of the fatal stabbing of a chapter leader from Ahmed Kathrada House at the Green Point occupation, there are other rights that the members of RTC call upon in various ways. These rights are not automatically and instantly attended to by local government, and by extension by the Department of Public Works; RTC spends countless hours encouraging and pressuring the parties to do so. Service-delivery protests in South Africa, which have become common throughout the country, are often characterised by outbursts of violence from the often-desperate protestors (Alexander, 2010; Tsheola, 2012). RTC’s constitution states that the movement does not participate in violent modes of activism, which is different from many other social movements within the country. It seems the political logic of many service-delivery protests is that violence is the only way to be heard,

and that it becomes a potential space of engagement between local government and the protestors. This is not, however, the case for RTC.

As Zuern (2011) argues, among a wide range of other authors and political commentators, if one is to wait for one's basic services to be fulfilled by the state, one will be waiting for an extended period. Therefore, social movements like RTC cannot engage in a short-sighted form of politics and activism, especially when the negotiation of illegally occupied buildings has such high value to the state and private developers. RTC and NU have subsequently used a form of politics based on patience and long-term activism. Robins (2014) has coined the term 'slow activism' that describes the non-spectacular administrative and long-term activism that is utilised by similar movements to RTC. As previously discussed, RTC cannot snub the government and rely on 'spectacular' protests; such a form of politics, violent or not, is more easily managed by local government. But a continuous form of pressuring local government using creative and calculated methods is considered by RTC to be more effective.

Alongside protests and public engagement with local government, RTC, aided by NU, are able to fight their campaigns on legal grounds. These contestations can be seen to have contributed to the success of RTC in maintaining the occupations for over two years. Many of the poor and working-class people in Cape Town and around the world are not legally literate regarding housing, which leads landlords to illegally evict them, overcharge for certain utilities, and even escalate rents astronomically. NU's Law Centre is kept busy by attending to such issues on behalf of the RTC occupiers, often on a pro bono basis. However, it is in the fight against the City of Cape Town that legal expertise is needed most.

During this research, an emergency house meeting was called at Ahmed Kathrada House (AKH) in Green Point. This was my first experience within this occupation, which was disorientating. I was confused as to why there was no electricity in the occupation, and why an overwhelming smell of faeces hung in the air. When enough occupiers had gathered, members from NU's Law Centre took turns explaining the reason for the house meeting, while also brazenly alluding to the fact that the weekly meetings at AKH had been poorly attended. What was conveyed to the members was that the Department of Public Works had approached five of the occupiers and asked them to sign a document (which they did without

thoroughly reading or understanding the document). NU subsequently offered their legal services to those members; however, only two of them showed up. When these members of RTC walked into the process of ‘meaningful engagement’ that was meant to take place with the Department of Public Works, they were shocked to find that they were greeted by senior advocates and other high-ranking officials from the City of Cape Town. They were given an ultimatum similar to that of an evictee; if they earned over R3500 per month they would be offered accommodation in Belhar; otherwise, they would be sent to Blikkiesdorp (an option which is often rejected by RTC and other community members). Most surprisingly of all to NU was that four of the five occupiers did not ask for or accept the help of the Law Centre and attempted to contest their evictions individually.



Figure 7: A lawyer from Ndifuna Ukwazi's Law Centre briefs the occupiers about the City of Cape Town's push to evict them (Wingfield, 2018)

While popular politics, and the rights-based activism that RTC engages in, are at times effective, some engagements cannot be won by protests and public action. Therefore, one can argue that the role of NU's Law Centre is vital to the success of the RTC campaign and the retaining of the occupations. Often these different approaches work in a mutually beneficial manner, to engender a multi-faceted form of resistance and the pressurising of the state.

Indeed, there are spaces in which the legal aspect of a campaign may prove ineffective and therefore RTC will rely on protests and public action to try to further their cause. In fact, it became evident that both forms of engagement were often required in the ongoing bargaining with local government. These activist strategies are similar to Pahnke's (2018) account of how a Brazilian landless movement turned from being subjected to ongoing state repression to using legislation and other tactical forms of activism to bolster their campaigns.

3.6 The #OpenStreets Campaign

During my first few visits to the occupation, the leaders of both Ndifuna Ukwazi and Reclaim the City had been planning an event to coincide with the Open Streets day held in Woodstock itself. It was decided that there would be an 'open house', where the Woodstock occupation would be open to the public. The purpose of this was to try to dispel false rumours that had spread about the occupations, and to show the public that the campaign of RTC was one that many in Woodstock and similar neighbouring communities could relate to. The leaders of RTC explained that they had heard that public opinion about the occupations was shrouded in misinformation; people understood them to be cesspools of drug abuse and prostitution. The preparation for this event took over the weekly chapter meetings, becoming the main focus of the organisation, other than the Site B protests that were ongoing during that time. A schedule was formulated to have the occupation ready for the event, which even included participation from members from the Green Point occupation.

The tasks that needed to be completed to prepare the occupation ranged from the cleaning of the surrounding grounds, to the creation of a tour route through the occupation and a display of stories from the occupiers. A full exhibit was constructed in one of the larger spaces in the former hospital building that was modelled around an immersive experience, which aimed to convey some of the stories of individuals within RTC (see *Figure 8*). While this was being done, many of the members tried to garner support from the local community to ensure that community members would come and take the tour. As the day approached, greater portions of time during the meetings were allocated to talking about the upcoming Open Streets, and the final Friday before the event was spent by many RTC members fixing up and

cleaning parts of the building. However, on the Saturday morning a string of events turned the occupiers' excitement into frustration and disbelief.

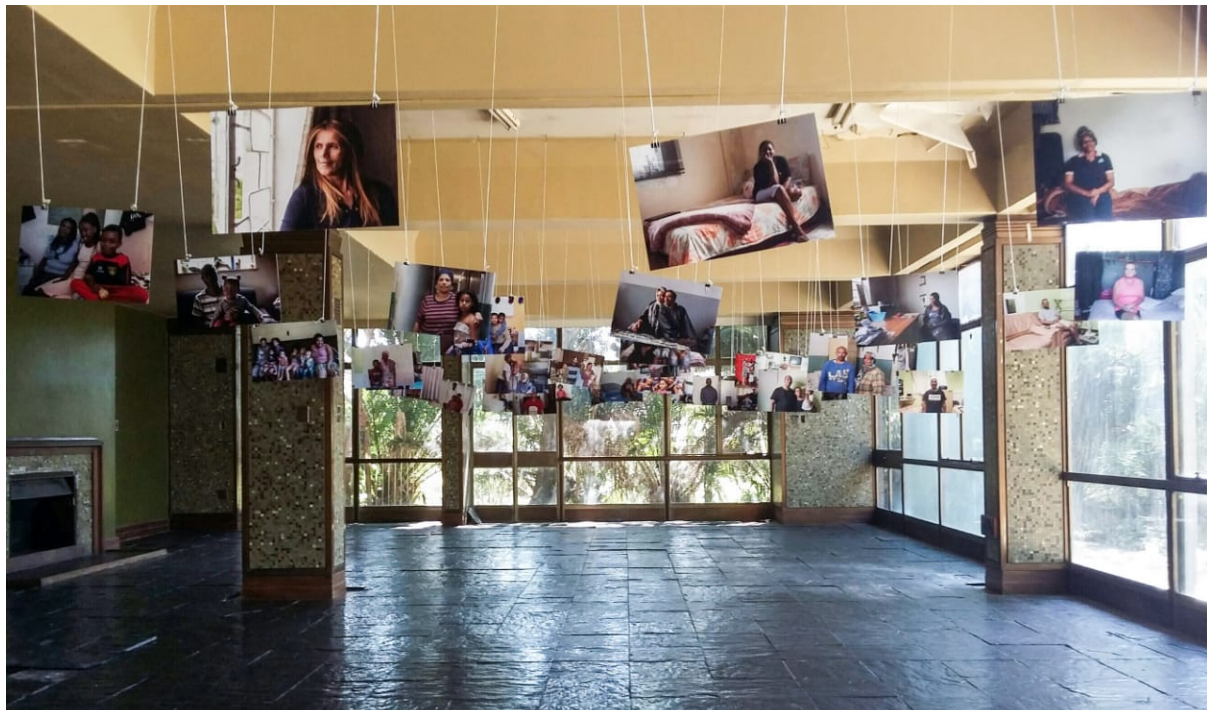


Figure 8: The interactive display constructed for the Woodstock Open Streets event (Reclaim the City, 2018)

At 08:46 on Saturday morning, Jared Rossouw (a co-director of NU) sent a detailed message to the RTC media WhatsApp group explaining how the City of Cape Town was taking RTC to court with an interdict to stop the proposed 'open house' that was to take place tomorrow as part of the Woodstock #OpenStreets. [NU worked through the night formulating a rebuttal.] This sounded like an immediate call to action where many of the members start mobilising for the High Court where the proceedings were set to take place at noon. As I arrived at CGH, I was informed that the taxis had already left with the second load of people, after which I drove to the court with a few members of the occupation. Arriving outside the High Court I was surprised at the number of people that had come to protest; it must have been about 100 people, which was a far cry from than any protest I had previously been to.

The chanting and singing started near 12:00 where RTC members lined the steps of the Western Cape High Court, notably facing outward toward the street. After an hour we were met by NU's lawyers who told us they had been filing more affidavits, and now the judge would take one hour to read their rebuttal to the City of Cape Town (CoCT), after which the actual proceedings would commence. The RTC members somehow interpreted this as an indication that no more protesting was necessary, so most of the members sat on the sidewalk in boredom until called upon. When the time came for the

proceedings to commence, we were told that the case was allocated a small courtroom where only twelve RTC members could be in at a time, owing to 'lack of security'. The lawyers were ushered into the building by clapping and singing RTC members, which abated shortly after. From then on, the waiting resumed, with occasional updates of the proceedings from within the court provided via WhatsApp. This lasted until 15:00, when NU bought lunch for all the RTC members who had dwindled to about fifty at this point. We were then met by NU's lawyers, who gave us an update. The CoCT had offered a sort of ultimatum to RTC whereby they were accused of inciting mass occupation in CGH. The case resumed while we waited outside until 19:00, sitting on the side of the road by the High Court. By this time there were about ten RTC members left. The court case ended shortly after this, where we learned that the interdict was passed and that all the preparation that had been done for the open streets was somewhat in vain.

When all the available and willing members from each occupation arrived at the Western Cape High Court, the chanting started in a powerful and supportive manner. It was unusual for so many people from each occupation to mobilise, which indicated the importance of the events about to occur. The group of sixty people were then briefed by the members of NU's Law Centre, where they outlined the possible proceedings of the day. They first had to go to the police station to have more affidavits drafted and commissioned, which would then be added to their compilation of papers for their defence, which they had spent the entire night preparing.

After a wait of about an hour, the lawyers aided by a senior advocate entered the court surrounded by an animated group of RTC members. However, a short time after they had entered the courthouse, the RTC members grew weary and the chorus of struggle songs and dancing died out. With intermittent updates on the proceedings inside the court, coupled with the blazing sun, many members retreated to the shade and sat down, talking among themselves. At this moment, it became clear that this 'battle' had to be fought mainly inside the courts, with the legality of 'open house' being somewhat immune to forms of popular protest. This was soon realised by those members that had arrived in support, because once 'protest fatigue' set in, people vacated the steps in droves. By 19:00, when the lawyers emerged from the court flanked by those privileged enough to make it into the courtroom, there were only a handful of supporters left.

The lawyers from NU then informed us that on strategical grounds, they did not contest the interdict by the CoCT. This was decided because of the implications it would have for the future of the negotiation of the occupation. This, therefore, meant that the occupation was still sustained by RTC, but it came with legal restrictions and a palpable sense of uncertainty about the future of both occupations. The City of Cape Town legally won the right for the occupiers to submit a list of those living in the occupations at that moment, which would then be accepted as the final number of people to be accommodated within the space; from this point onward, no new occupiers would be allowed into the building, even if RTC so wished. This enumeration process can once again be seen as a demonstration of the CoCT's capacity to perform a certain form of bureaucratic state power (Foucault, 1975). By ensuring that they possessed a list of all the people in the occupation, the CoCT could be seen to have once again 'taken control' of the occupation and the people within it.

This occurrence cannot be seen as a singular event, but the leaders and members of RTC seemed to be aware that this 'victory' for the City of Cape Town could set a precedent for the future and for other contestations that will surely take place between these two organisations. In speaking with an NU employee about the knock-on effect that will come out of the halting of the 'open house', I was told that it certainly would influence the way the courts would weigh their decisions. This is relatable to how RTC has conducted 'court monitoring' and other practices at the courts, to try to influence the way local magistrates perceive and respond to the cases of eviction. While there is a legal framework of precedent that must be followed by magistrates in making their decisions, there is room for the subjective weighing of circumstances that RTC hopes will work in their favour. However, as seen by the momentum gained by the legal victory of the City of Cape Town, this influencing of the courts may be used against them.

Looking at the occupations within the current context of housing and land in South Africa provides another layer of analysis. As stated above, illegal land occupations are increasing in number, and the 2019 South African national elections seemed to be focused on which party had the most comprehensive and promising (or wildly ambitious) plans for land redistribution. If the Democratic Alliance (DA), which in early 2019 was still ruling the Western Cape, were to evict the occupiers of RTC, their promises of land redistribution and housing

development might fall flat. This might explain why, since the #OpenStreets debacle, the CoCT has made little effort to use the legal momentum gained against RTC. Other political parties such as the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) have all but explicitly encouraged citizens to occupy the land they find unoccupied, which has gained them equal measures of notoriety and support throughout the country. It is clear that the current context around housing and debates on land reform in the country will influence the way in which the occupations held by RTC are dealt with by the CoCT.

Chapter 4: Navigating representation: NGOs and social movements in practice

4.1 The Bolstering of RTC

Within South Africa and throughout the world, social movements and other community-based organisations (CBOs) jostle for representation and recognition from the state and other institutions. However, grassroots social movements specifically are accustomed to prolonged campaigns to gain such recognition. As has been previously discussed in this thesis, through the act of gaining recognition from the state, in the hope of service delivery and the fulfilment of the rights afforded to citizens through the Constitution, organisations must find a way to ‘stand out’ and make themselves visible to the state. Without resources, both material and social, a movement such as RTC would face tremendous difficulty in gaining the attention of the provincial government. Furthermore, their ability to pressurise local government through methods of popular politics and jurisprudential contestation would be considerably hampered. Therefore, many social movements have attached themselves to similar organisations and joined in coalitions with them, or they have become reliant on non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to provide such support.

To contextualise this, one may find the case of another housing advocacy organisation within South Africa as informative. Similar to that of RTC, the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign (WCAEC) was formed to contest evictions and to fight against an ongoing ‘spatial apartheid’. The context surrounding this movement is akin to that of RTC, where poor and working-class people have felt the consequences of gentrification coupled with a seemingly indifferent state. While the organisation has utilised modes of popular politics, they too have recognised the need for certain administrative resources such as those that NU provides to RTC. Oldfield and Stokke (2006:116) observe that, “To be heard today, you’ve got to sit with these bastards [*sic*] in the boardroom,” while referring to community activists having to engage with local government. A ‘Legal Coordinating Committee’ within the WCAEC provides legal aid to those members of the organisation who have faced persecution, prosecution and eviction. Without such a committee, the movement would lack the administrative and legal resources needed to formally engage with the state. Oldfield and Stokke (2006) also argue for a united form of resistance that encompasses various groups, formalised or not, some with and some without

resources. What is evident through their research on the WCAEC is that a form of activism that is under-resourced cannot rely on supportive state intervention.

Therefore, to hope for service delivery, whether it be for basic water supply or housing within the inner city, one must first understand what type of politics and activist practices the state is receptive to, and then seek to gain access to these resources and capabilities. While rights-based activism has proved to be an effective strategy for organisations such as the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), which consequently illustrates the state's responsiveness to this type of politics, there are certain capabilities and resources needed by a social movement to be able to leverage this form of politics effectively. Therefore, while an organisation may have a vast supporter base, it may not have the financial and administrative resources to transport supporters to spaces where their form of popular protest may be most effective. For example, many of the actions and protests that are held by RTC are located within the inner city, in close proximity to the offices of certain representatives of the City of Cape Town. For these actions to be successful, transport must be organised from both the Woodstock and Green Point occupations for a protest to be carried out. Social movements often do not have the financial and administrative resources to coordinate such events, leaving them somewhat powerless.

RTC and NU have worked in conjunction with each other since the inception of RTC in 2016. This has created an interesting dynamic between the two organisations, as will be discussed later. However, it is common for NGOs and social movements to work in conjunction with one another, especially in the neoliberal age where the state has taken on a more passive role with regard to issues such as welfare (Gautney, 2010:13; Harvey, 2005). Such coalitions often lead to an increased probability of recognition from the state, therefore ensuring access to resources and service delivery (Van Dyke & Amos, 2017).

Similarly, in Mumbai, groups of marginalised citizens and social movements alike are sometimes aided by other organisations and NGOs that can help to bolster their campaigns. Arjun Appadurai has written about three organisations that have come to form a coalition known as 'the Alliance', which represents poor and marginalised citizens in Mumbai, ranging from poor women to groups of "slum dwellers" (Appadurai, 2001:24). Appadurai refers to

this coalescing of multiple movements to strengthen their collective campaign as a practice of “deep democracy” (Appadurai, 2001:25). The relationship and possible dependency of social movements on NGOs have even been characterised by the phrase “the NGOisation of Resistance” (Roy, 2014), a term used to illustrate how influential NGOs have become in campaigns of mass mobilisation and resistance. While this may overstate the relationships between such organisations, it is a useful idea to consider. Not only does this give rise to an understanding of the dominant role NGOs have come to play in the realm of popular politics, but also shows how social movements have, at times, become dependent on such organisations, sometimes to a detrimental extent. However, this tactic of alliances with NGOs is sometimes chosen by social movements, even in the face of such possibilities. In the politics of representation, the creation of an alliance between similar organisations may improve the chance that their concerns will be tended to by the state. The pooling of resources and willing activists and protestors can be counted as a great advantage to each movement individually as well as to ‘the Alliance’ as a whole.

The relationship between RTC and NU is not as straightforward as ‘the Alliance’ is made out to be. Employees of NU are focused on keeping their relationship non-hierarchical, and the NGO insists that it is only there to aid RTC. In speaking with one of the NU employees about the matter, I was given the following insight into this relationship:

After noting the complicated relationship between RTC and NU, I am told by a then-NU employee, that it is a big struggle for NU and RTC to maintain a horizontal and equal relationship. Referring to the circular formation of the chairs at the meeting the night before, and with the NU employee taking on a facilitator role at the meeting, he notes that it is hard not to be seen as a figure of authority (a label that he and other NU employees explicitly try to challenge). He explains that the role NU aims to play is to facilitate peer-to-peer empowerment, whereby they let the members use their agency to fight their own legal battles, even though NU does provide significant help in this.

From this exchange, one can note that NU does not try to explicitly reinforce the power relations that are almost inevitable, given the resources they provide to RTC. Through informal conversations during this research, a few people from RTC illustrated their confusion about the relations between the organisations, whereby they questioned what the real

relationship between these organisations is. It is apparent that just by providing resources to RTC, NU is perceived by rank-and-file RTC members to be a driving force behind the organisation, regardless of what is hoped for by the employees of NU.

As has been further expanded upon in Chapter 3, NU provides valuable legal advice and other resources to those in RTC who are facing eviction and for the campaign as a whole. Often at NU's own cost, their lawyers will prepare the case for the opposition of an eviction, with legal advice also being provided on a pro bono basis. However, this is not the only form of support given by NU. The decision-making process behind forms of state pressuring and protests seem to be led by the employees of NU, with the leaders from RTC providing suggestions regularly.

4.2 The Purposive 'Coalition'

As seen in the examples above, generally the relationships between NGOs and social movements are understood to be mutually beneficial. The same can be said of the relationship that exists between NU and RTC. In the past, RTC did not have formal leaders, therefore leaving the NU employees to run the weekly meetings which subsequently led some members to mistakenly characterise them as 'in charge' of RTC. However, this was only done for practical reasons, with the employees from NU repeatedly down playing their role within the movement. Once leaders were elected at the first RTC congress in late 2018, these meetings have been increasingly organised and facilitated by the leaders of RTC, with employees from NU attending only in a supportive role. However, owing to the role that NU employees had played in the past, some members have unintentionally constructed incorrect perceptions about the role that NU play with regard to RTC.

The nature of the relationship between the two organisations is therefore not explicitly clear to many of the members of RTC. However, the relationship is set up in a mutually beneficial way, where NU provides certain resources to RTC, while RTC provides the grassroots support and legitimacy to the work of NU. During an interview with Jared Rossouw (an outgoing co-director of NU) this relationship was questioned:

I think you have to understand that the NGO and social movement are not as separated as they seem, especially in the case of RTC and NU. It's not similar to the public protector, which is an institution mandated by the Constitution with its own resources.

Ndifuna Ukwazi is an idea. You know, when I arrived, NU was not the place that it is now. It's an idea that depends on who is in and who is out. The same staff who were there two years ago are not the same staff members there now. So, what we see is that we should describe it as the NGO and the social movement; I think it is a constellation of different people pulling together for a political campaign. Using various institutions and things for their cause. It's much more than the simplistic view. So, to say it's a coalition or a coming together ... historically that is not how it worked. Those boundaries are [seemingly non-existent at times] and it would be manufactured if you understood them as totally separate.

From the interview excerpt above, one can see that the relationship that exists between RTC and NU does not conform to formalised and clearly demarcated roles and hierarchies. It should also be noted that the relationship is not static but is instead contingent and can change depending on the group of individuals in the organisations. Most of the NU staff members have not been at the organisation for a long time, which has reduced the probability of an undemocratic and centralised leadership emerging. In addition, leaders of RTC were elected in the first congress of the movement in late 2018, and these RTC leaders, who are all occupiers bar one, have run the meetings and have made substantial contributions to the planning of the actions and protests that have been undertaken.

The differentiation between these two organisations is rather determined by the purpose each can serve rather than a fixed structure. As Jared Rossouw noted, "I think it is a constellation of different people pulling together for a political campaign." Therefore, the relationship between RTC and NU is tailored to fit each situation, with differentiation being born out of a proposed function rather than organically. This once again ties into an understanding of the types of pressuring that the state responds to; if the social movement known to the City of Cape Town as Reclaim the City is not eliciting a sufficient response, then the organisation known as Ndifuna Ukwazi will take the mantle in the campaign.

An example of the purpose-driven differentiation of the organisations can be seen in the research that NU does on the sale of public land and zoning particularities by the City of Cape Town. Members of RTC gathered multiple times at the actual location of Site B, the property sold to Growthpoint at an alleged reduced amount by the CoCT. Occupiers from both the Green Point and Woodstock occupations came together, sang 'struggle songs' and even

erected a symbolic 'shack' on the property in defiance. This eventually led Growthpoint to involve Cape Town Law Enforcement, who swiftly ended the protest. While these events ensued, it was deemed tactical for NU to write a formal complaint to the property powerhouse to elicit a formal response to the sale, as well as answers to a barrage of other questions. Members of RTC then marched to the Growthpoint offices to submit this document, with a staff member of NU using a megaphone to convey to the boisterous RTC members what the document contained. One can note that in this case, the legal and bureaucratic expertise of NU is leveraged while the demonstration from the members of NU illustrates the legitimacy of the cause to both Growthpoint and local government.



Figure 9: A member of Reclaim the City paints an erected shack on Site B (Reclaim the City, 2018)

What the case above shows is how NU and RTC work in a mutually beneficial way, with their relationship being contingent on the specific situation they are confronting. This has opened up various new political arenas in which the movement as a whole can operate. Consequently, the politics of RTC and NU are not only limited to bargaining with local government about the delivery of housing. Rather RTC and NU have also targeted the private sector.

Through the work of NU's researchers, information came to light showing that only a small amount of affordable housing would be included in the restructuring of the Somerset Hospital precinct, which is in close proximity to the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront. The precinct also consists of the land that the Helen Bowden Nurses' Home is built on, which is the building in Green Point occupied by members of RTC. An NU employee, speaking on behalf of both NU and RTC, had been included in the proceedings where it would be determined how the restructuring of this precinct would be done. In presenting the NU's findings on the lack of proposed affordable housing, and with this the co-opting of the City's representatives, NU was able to force the private architectural firm to reformulate their plans, which would only be revisited by the tribunal if they included more units of affordable housing within the precinct. It is clear that even though there were scores of RTC members in attendance, proudly donning their red RTC T-shirts, their usual form of popular politics would not have been as effective in this case. However, by presenting a case to the Municipal Planning Tribunal, based on facts surrounding housing inequality and statistics of the lack of spatial transformation, NU could act as a representative to the shared interests of both organisations.

What this form of purposive organisational relationship does, as has been argued, is open up new forms of politics to the organisation. Levenson (2017b) has been critical of social movements that only engage with the state in their fight for infrastructural service delivery. In arguing for a diverse range of 'targets' for social movements, he notes the pivotal role the private sector can play in many social movements' campaigns. In light of the increasing privatisation of services such as electricity and water, Levenson (2017b) argues that by only hoping to pressurise the state, social movements may limit their possibility of success. While this may be true, it could be argued that in a democratic context, the bargaining of citizens with the state might be more valid than that of consumers targeting the producers of a product. However, NU and RTC have not only targeted the state in their campaign; instead, they have fought to use any means necessary to fight the continual 'spatial apartheid' and to demand affordable housing within the inner city. Their campaign against companies such as Growthpoint are examples of this. Such campaigns have been further enabled through the purposive relationship that RTC and NU cultivate.

While the relationship between RTC and NU has many beneficial aspects, there are also complicated and contentious power dynamics that get played out as a result of the co-dependence of social movements and NGOs. Astrid Ley, notes, for example, that “the relationships between NGOs and grassroots organisations can become manipulative, because NGOs seek legitimisation through grassroots leaders, and local leaders seek access to NGO resources” (Ley, 2015:164). Ley (2015) further contends that as the boundaries between such organisations become fluid and less rigidly definable, it becomes increasingly difficult, with any accuracy, to perceive examples of dependency and domination that may exist. Such a complex issue has been aptly captured in the title of Ley’s text, where she asks if organisations in such close relation are either “Entangled or Empowered?”. However, this question excludes the possibility of the relationship between organisations being both “entangled” and “empowered”. The case of RTC and NU can be seen as an example of this.

As previously discussed in this thesis, social movements should not be considered as static organisations that rely on the same form of strategies and tactics (De Certeau, 2005) throughout their lifetime. While social movements grow, often their objectives shift, and therefore, new capacities are required to be as effective as possible. As Pahnke (2018) has shown, a social movement can first be focused on forms of activism grounded in popular politics and mass demonstrations, but can also evolve into an organisation that uses more formalised forms of pressuring the government, such as legislative competencies. Relating to the case of RTC, some of their most significant ‘victories’ have come from the work that NU does with regard to administrative and jurisprudential pressuring of local government. This is primarily based on the technical expertise and resources that NU has at its disposal. This in turn can potentially undermine the autonomy of RTC as an independent social movement.

4.3 Power Relations Negotiated

While the power relations between NU and RTC are purposively played down by employees of NU, there still exists an implicit power relation between the organisations based on the resources that NU does possess. Jared Rossouw discussed this implication during an interview:

Yes, money is power. But I don't think it is absolute power. And I don't think it is unfiltered through structures and so on. NU has said at times that they won't spend resources on certain things, that they don't believe some things are a good use of their money. And what NU funds, it is also a burden. The machinery it takes to develop those resources is massive and the time and the energy to manage it. For example, NU spends R60 000 on auditing alone. Again, it is the best of worst choices; if you had a movement that could fund itself, they would have to report on that and find out where the donors are at, and how to tailor the movement to secure services. They would also need the capacity to manage that. So, I think that we recognise money is power, we recognise who is managing that money, and there is a system for debating for the use of those resources. It might be better rather than letting them (leaders of RTC) manage it. There are people in this movement that are earning less than R5000 a month, so for them to have access to a budget of R1 million, it could be a considerable burden.

Jared Rossouw notes that a social movement such as RTC can have some degree of control over how to use the resources they need and desire. Yet, the NGO and its professional workers are usually the ultimate decision makers when it comes to the allocation and use of donor funding and NGO resources. Some scholars have, at times, focused too closely on the power relations born out of an organisation possessing resources. However, they do not adequately question if a social movement will be able to deal with those resources appropriately (Van Dyke & Amos, 2017). However, with an NGO controlling and managing resources, there may be less of a 'burden' placed on the leaders of the social movement to deal with such issues. The role of accountability to donors and other funding organisations is also noted within the interview excerpt above. To secure funding, often an organisation must 'tailor' their objectives, methods and campaigns to appease the funders they are targeting (see Robins, 2008; Rauh, 2010). The relationship that exists between NU and RTC may once again come to be seen to be mutually beneficial when considering this.

For a representative or leader of a social movement firstly to secure and then manage large sums of capital might be considered a burden. With this may come an undemocratic of developing the movement and its campaigns, one which is weighed down heavily by expectations and prescriptions from donors on how they want their funds to be used (Corrigall-Brown, 2016). What NU does then is to mediate these problems to some extent and deal with issues around securing and spending funds. This allows RTC to coordinate their campaigns without having to negotiate the agendas of private donors directly. Without NU,

the leadership of RTC would probably be very different. Since leaders of RTC offer their services on an unpaid, voluntary basis, there is less of an incentive for accumulating personal political or financial gain; this might not be the case if large sums of money were entrusted to them.

The financial resources held by NU are provided to RTC through deliberation by members of both organisations. Therefore, while RTC leaders do possess some bargaining power around the use of resources, they are not entirely responsible for their attainment and methods of use. This could be interpreted as a benefit to those from RTC, where NU has taken on the burden of acquiring such resources. This certainly has implications for the relationship between RTC and NU. While NU acts as a gatekeeper to certain resources, they attempt to not stand as an authority over RTC by dictating what protests and actions the movement must conduct. Without this complicated and contextually shaped relationship, where RTC and NU are both separate and combined at different times depending on the specific campaign and situation at hand, the resources that NU possess might have become a more significant factor of division and hierarchy between them.

Financial dependency, whether it be to an NGO or another social movement, can strongly influence the trajectory of a social movement. The role of financial capital itself is vital in the workings of social movements that are often under-funded as has been shown throughout this chapter. However, there are other forms of 'power' that NGOs possess which lead to unequal power relations in coalitions between such movements. Not only do social movements require economic resources to function efficiently, but social, bureaucratic and theoretical resources are equally valuable. As shown in the case of NU's legal centre, a social movement like RTC is somewhat dependent on the legal competencies of NU's lawyers in resisting evictions and spatial exclusion on a broader level. However, this dependency can stretch to encompass the various resources that NU possesses.

Abahlali baseMjondolo (ABM), a similar community-based organisation based in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, has drawn attention to the problematic role that NGOs play in relation to social movements. This was highlighted in an article appropriately titled, 'Once again the name of our movement is being abused by the NGOs' (Abahlali baseMjondolo, 2010). ABM

questioned the claim that NGOs such as Slum Dwellers International (SDI) have been working in collaboration with the movement. ABM's sharp criticism of SDI and NGOs in general implies that the collaboration of NGOs with the government is done to "help control the poor" (Abahlali baseMjondolo, 2010). Their conscious aversion to working with NGOs is supported by their objective of being autonomous, rather than being a supposed political tool for an NGO to justify their cause. This criticism of NGOs using their engagement only to control, dominate and contain local communities is a recurring theme throughout South Africa (Sacks, 2018).

While ABM's aversion to NGOs may come across to some as 'radical', their experience of being used to boost an NGO's political legitimacy is shared by many other social movements that have been enticed by the resources of an NGO. RTC and NU are an interesting case to examine through this lens. The lack of a formal and explicit hierarchical relationship between the organisations has been seen to benefit the campaign as a whole. The perceptions of an NGO such as those expressed by ABM might not apply to the relationship between RTC and NU, with both organisations working together in a seemingly amicable and collaborative spirit. One can pose the critique that NU might use RTC only to legitimise their campaign against 'spatial apartheid' within the inner city, but this would be an inaccurate and simplified characterisation of the reality on the ground. Rather the 'purposive coalition' that has been developed seems primarily to foster many of the positive aspects found in a coalition between an NGO and a social movement, while remaining flexible enough not to inhibit the function of each organisation. Both organisations are therefore seemingly made to be more effective through their relationship, rather than being caught up in destructive hierarchies and power relations that are often detrimental to social justice organisations.

Therefore, one can conclude that the perceived hierarchical power relations that often exist between social movements and NGOs have not taken root in the relationship between RTC and NU. The lack of a formal hierarchical structure between the organisations has mitigated many of the consequences of the undemocratic power relations that typically come with the possession of financial resources. Through financial, social, ideological, legal and bureaucratic resources, NU has a position of power over RTC. However, NU has introduced various

organisational measures to dilute this power in ways that have come to benefit the two organisations.

4.4 Coalitions or Co-Opted

In the navigating of representation and in making RTC's cause legible to the state, organisations often form relations with other movements similar to their own. By examining RTC's relationship with organisations other than NU, one may once again consider Appadurai's concept of 'deep democracy'. 'The Alliance' comprises one NGO and two grassroots organisations. Their working together is portrayed in a positive and mutually beneficial way, where the individual organisations and their members benefit from the coalition. However, some relationships are not as formalised and well-structured as those between RTC and organisations like Unite Behind, the Social Justice Coalition (SJC) and, for a short period, the Alliance for Rural Democracy (ARD). With both Unite Behind and the SJC being based in proximity to Cape Town, they are more regularly in contact with RTC. Representatives from Unite Behind sometimes attend a weekly meeting in the Woodstock occupation and promote the cause they are fighting for, thereby attempting to recruit the members' support. One of these causes was the ongoing train debacle in Cape Town, which implicated the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (PRASA) in issues of lack of safety, cable theft and corruption (that immobilise train functioning). As both RTC and NU are affiliates of Unite Behind, they requested their members to participate in a protest at the Woodstock train station. Those members of RTC that did avail themselves of the opportunity were largely part of the group of members that are the few regular attendees at chapter meetings and other protests. However, many of the irregular attendees did not take up this opportunity.

This case of supporting Unite Behind in its *#FixOurTrains* campaign illustrates how, once again, those members who are more willing to be active 'activists' are separated from those that are less active. This can be seen to create a division in the RTC group as a whole, where some members take on identities as 'committed activists', rather than only being members of RTC. However, to those members who regularly attend meetings and protests, these additional 'obligations', may exhaust them. Considering that many of the protests last for many hours and can be demanding in terms of hours spent organising transport and logistics,

it is not surprising that some of the members become fatigued. This is likely to affect their commitment to the actions and protests of RTC meetings. Yet, many members of RTC participate in these protests, and some possess T-shirts given to them by Unite Behind, showing the organisation's name in white text across the front of the black T-shirt. At times there are almost more RTC members wearing Unite Behind T-shirts than RTC T-shirts. While the wearing of a T-shirt certainly does not indicate their allegiance, it does show how many regular attendees of RTC meetings and protests are willing to be committed activists to more than one cause.

The relationship that exists between RTC and Unite Behind is generally positive, with RTC affiliated with Unite Behind as noted above. However, this is not always the case with the various organisations that RTC supports at times. During a Chapter meeting on 6 September, we were given a presentation by a representative of the Alliance for Rural Democracy (ARD), which is an organisation primarily contesting issues of land use and more recently focusing on the contentious topic of land expropriation in South Africa. The representative then invited RTC as a movement to support their members that had travelled from northern South Africa to march to Parliament that upcoming Tuesday. When we arrived at the march, members of ARD supplied many of the posters for the march to RTC members from both the Woodstock and Green Point occupations. However, the majority of these posters were advocating ideas that many of the RTC members are unfamiliar with, such as a critique of the Ingonyama Trust Board (which is a land ownership organisation based in KwaZulu-Natal) and other land-based malpractices by similar organisations.



Figure 10: Reclaim the City members holding various signboards provided by the Alliance for Rural Democracy (ARD) (Wingfield, 2018)

The march was relatively short, only taking the group around twenty minutes to effectively circle the parliament building. During this activity, the members of ARD led the march, singing songs mainly in isiZulu, which were mostly unknown to the members of RTC. When arriving at the statue of Louis Botha (our destination outside Parliament), we were informed that Parliament was in session and that we would have to wait half an hour to meet a Parliamentary representative to hand over the manifesto of demands that was compiled. During this wait, we once again sang songs in isiZulu, led by ARD members. After we had submitted our demands, the members of ARD dispersed, evidently moving back to their transport that would take them back to their destination in northern South Africa. RTC members were not given further information, which led to confusion as the members were told that ARD would provide lunch for the members' support. While this was playing out, another march hurtled loudly up the street coming to occupy the same space we were in. It turned out that it was the Social Justice Coalition (SJC), which is also an affiliate of Unite Behind. In the confusion, members of RTC were co-opted into their protest, which was aimed

at police accountability. After an underwhelming response from the Director General of the South African Police Service (SAPS), General K Sithole, the members of RTC were still uncertain of the proceedings to come.

The SJC had planned a march from Parliament, towards Grand Parade and then to the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), a 1.4km walk that was cordoned off by the police themselves. RTC members accommodated their request of participation and walked in solidarity with members from the SJC. Once again, when reaching our destination, members of the SJC slowly dispersed, leaving members of RTC to find their way back to their residences. However, before individually planning transport, leaders of RTC arrived with a large Gatsby delivery (a Cape Town staple comprising a large roll and *slap chips*), which most of the members gladly devoured after the many hours that had passed. The ARD had provided RTC leaders with money to purchase food for RTC members, but it turned out that they were not present, having departed Cape Town immediately after the manifesto was signed.

While it is logical for social movements to support other organisations fighting for a related cause, at times the members may not be appreciated and valued as they are in their home movement. In the logic of mass demonstrations and public marches, it seems that the more people that are involved, the more likely the march is to gain public visibility and recognition. However, these coalitions between organisations do not always form a unified front in their everyday practices. While RTC members were happy to support both the ARD and SJC, their participation did not demonstrate a strong feeling that the causes these organisations are fighting for could benefit their own campaigns.

Observing the above cases through various scalar perspectives (Hecht, 2018) can, however, alter one's perception of being co-opted by other movements. In the moments following the march in conjunction with the ARD and SJC, many of the rank-and-file members from RTC had expressed their disappointment and the feeling of being used. Understandably so, after the many hours spent in support of these organisations, they had left swiftly after their own campaign came to an end. However, looking at a broader context can lend perspective on the value of RTC's support of the ARD and SJC. The support of these campaigns may further boost the campaigns of housing and land redistribution, and the responsiveness by the state to such

issues. Therefore, even if many of the rank-and-file members of RTC felt unjustly co-opted by other organisations, their support may benefit their own campaign in the future.

The relationship that exists between NU and RTC can therefore be characterised as mutually beneficial and contingent on the various situations that face the two organisations. This case shows that while resources often lead to hierarchies and power relations developing between NGOs and social movements, such issues have been mitigated by the 'purposive coalition' constructed between the organisations. This 'coalition' caters for different situations that require various forms of politics to be effective. As seen in cases such as the campaign against Growthpoint, the people of RTC provide a grassroots legitimacy to the work of NU, where NU provides an array of resources to RTC as an under-resourced social movement. The work that is done between RTC and other community-based organisations must also be put in perspective, as temporal coalitions may be beneficial in the bigger picture of rights-based activism in South Africa.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Concluding Remarks

This thesis has explored how a social movement and NGO have come to challenge the ‘spatial apartheid’ that exists around Cape Town, and the effects of evictions that stem from exclusionary housing practices. By using the concept of ‘insurgent citizenship’ (Holston, 2008), the methods and forms of insurgency used by both Reclaim the City (RTC) and Ndifuna Ukwazi (NU) were explored. What has been apparent throughout this research is the complexity of the nature of activism, the understanding of the idea of the ‘committed activist’ and the practices and orientations of social movements in general.

Chapter 2 examined the heterogeneous nature of the RTC members and investigated the primary research question of who the members of the movement are. By spending numerous hours doing participant observation within the occupation, at meetings, in court and at protests, it was found that the members of RTC are very heterogeneous and have their own motivations, subjectivities, interests, desires and commitments, which are balanced with their commitment to RTC and being an ‘activist’. While the members of RTC can be considered heterogeneous, this is heightened by both the specific building they occupy and the area in which it is located.

The chapter also addressed how RTC and NU have constructed certain pedagogies of activism. By holding meetings constituted on legally based ‘Advice Assemblies’ (AAs) and developing routine procedures of activism, the attendees at these meetings have been developed as ‘activists’ with certain competencies in the field of rights-based activism and illegal evictions. This thesis then argued that the development of what can be called ‘responsibilised activists’ is complementary to the success of a social movement such as RTC, where the members of the organisation work proactively to support the cases of individuals facing evictions and the broader focus of RTC and NU, as well as the development of affordable housing within the inner city.

Chapter 3 first considered the broader context of housing around Cape Town, which provides an understanding of why RTC came to occupy two inner-city buildings. As investment and gentrification have taken hold of Cape Town and its surrounding areas, many working-class and economically disadvantaged citizens have not been able to keep up with unregulated and skyrocketing rents. Therefore, as a reaction to the unrelenting will of private capital, RTC occupied two dilapidated buildings within Woodstock and Green Point. However, the retention of the occupation of these buildings has only been possible through great effort, where both RTC and NU have had to use both legal and political methods creatively to bargain and legitimise their occupation campaign with local government, the courts and the private sector. The City of Cape Town did not immediately evict the occupiers; however, they have not remained passive and wholly accommodating towards occupiers, regardless of the role that such community members play in making visible their political legitimacy.

RTC has also not stopped their campaign at the occupation of two buildings. They have continued to assist ordinary community members with free legal advice in individual eviction cases, as well as continuing to work with NU to ensure that the sale of public land is monitored closely, and the development of social and affordable housing is advocated. This thesis highlighted the 'grey areas' in which RTC and NU operate. Through an analysis of the *#OpenStreets* campaign, it was shown how RTC and NU bargain and negotiate with the City of Cape Town for certain allowances, and how rights-based activism is leveraged to validate their claims to both the City of Cape Town and the courts. However, the strength and leverage of the CoCT are apparent, for instance, through the favourable decision from the High Court that interdicted the 'open house' that was planned by RTC. However, RTC and NU at times do receive favourable decisions, for instance in the case of the Municipal Planning Tribunal, further adding to the constant bargaining and give-and-take that exists in the RTC's relationship with the CoCT.

By looking more closely at the relationship between RTC and NU, Chapter 4 served to develop an understanding of how and why these organisations relate to each other. As social movements are often under resourced, especially in the increasingly neoliberal South African context, they often attach themselves to other social movements or NGOs to bolster their campaigns. This is what remains at the core of the relationship between RTC as a social

movement and NU as an NGO. The chapter showed how the form of this relationship can be distinguished from the hierarchical power relations often associated with partnerships between social movements and well-resourced NGOs. NU and RTC have constructed their relationship in what I refer to as a 'purposive coalition', giving testament to the contingent and contextually shaped nature of the relationship. It was argued that this relationship has opened up a wide range of arenas in which RTC and NU can operate, becoming mutually beneficial and strengthening the campaign as a whole. This helps to understand the repertoire of resources that RTC uses in its campaigns. The financial and theoretical resources that NU possesses have been invaluable to RTC and its campaigns, while the research done by NU on the sale of public land has been vital to the success of the combined campaign of RTC and NU. However, the indisputable implicit power relations that emanate from NU's financial, logistical and technical resources are being negotiated and contested continually by NU and RTC, mainly among the leaders of each organisation.

While the positive nature of the relationship between NU and RTC was discussed in detail, there are times where the support of RTC and its members may negatively influence the movement. In supporting other social movements such as UniteBehind, the more active 'committed activists' within RTC often become fatigued owing to the toll of constant protesting, and this can negatively influence their commitment to RTC. Furthermore, when considering the support of organisations such as the Alliance for Rural Democracy (ARD), such coalitions can be seen to be less beneficial to RTC than they were to the other organisation. ARD seemed to co-opt the support of RTC members in a march that was not strictly associated with the campaign of RTC. Moreover, the members of ARD dispersed as soon as the march had finished, leaving RTC members confused and feeling somewhat that they had been treated as a means to an end. However, one can conclude that by viewing such events through various scales or perspectives, their meanings may shift. Therefore, instead of only focusing on the immediate feelings of being co-opted, one might understand such events as possible contributions to the broader struggle of equitable land use in South Africa and the reconfiguring of the state's receptiveness to rights-based activism. In other words, in the bigger picture, such events may come to contribute to the work done by RTC and NU.

During this research, I met many other researchers and journalists that were interested in understanding and sharing the story of RTC and NU. Two of those were Björn and Margaux, both of whom are PhD students from European countries. The time spent with them at meetings, protests and other places outside of RTC was invaluable to this research. We spent hours debating and discussing the ideas and understandings we had developed, and whether we were depicting the realities of the movement accurately. Such an experience leads me to advocate for similar ‘collaborative’ research to be done among other scholars, instead of the individualistic and sometimes competitive nature of research that has at times been done in such environments.

Throughout this research I have developed a more complete understanding of all of the ‘working parts’ within the ‘purposive coalition’ between RTC and NU, which has repeatedly shown how the two organisations have constructed a mutually beneficial relationship that is adaptive and creative enough to make an impact on the ‘spatial apartheid’ which they vehemently oppose. While it is logical to advise other social movements to enter into coalitions with NGOs, it should be made with the caveat that it might be more effective if the relationship remains unstructured and adaptive, somewhat filtering it of its implicit power relations.

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