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**HOUSING STRUGGLES, LAND OCCUPATION AND EVICTION
PROCESSES: NEGOTIATING LIVED EXPERIENCES IN ZILLE-RAINE
HEIGHTS, CAPE TOWN**

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Supervised by Dr Sophie Oldfield

Declaration

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Abstract

This paper examines the everyday realities of land occupations and city attempts to forcibly remove residents from their homes. The case of Zille-Raine Heights (ZRH) shows the ways citizens negotiate land occupation, build homes and protect their community. Through these processes, residents articulate their claims to ownership of homes and of their right to be in the city. Yet these claims are tenuous, contested by the City of Cape Town physically in attempts to evict them, legally through the courts and symbolically in the way the City labels land occupiers. Residents perceive these experiences to exacerbate their insecurities and lack of trust in the various stakeholders involved in eviction processes. It is in the tension between the security of building homes and a community and the insecurity generated in city attempts to remove them, that ZRH residents experience of living in informality is situated. Nonetheless, through collective mobilization and drawing on social networks, have built homes and community, and have actively shaped their personhoods, as city dwellers and as citizens.

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1. Introduction

Despite democratization and extensive government subsidized housing delivery since the political transition (Huchzermeyer 2003), South African cities face a persistent housing crisis (Oldfield and Boulton 2005). In practice, the delivery of housing by the state has generally been insufficient to alleviate the desperate conditions in which many homeless families find themselves (Huchzermeyer 1999, Oldfield 2000). In the Cape Metropolitan Area alone, informal settlements¹ have mushroomed to 240, with an increase of 10% since 2005 (Cape Argus 05 March 2007)². In this context, families and communities without housing sometimes occupy land. Increased land occupations in recent years (Huchzermeyer 2003, Oldfield and Stokke 2007, McDonald 2002) highlight the tensions in meeting the Constitutional right to housing (Republic of South Africa 1996) and the reality that there is a scarce supply (Centre for Housing Rights and Evictions 2003). The state's response to land occupation in the post-apartheid period, especially in well-located central areas in the City, is forced removal to the urban periphery, where land is cheaply available for low-cost state-subsidized housing schemes. We sit in an uncomfortable position, where citizens have rights, but at the same time, old apartheid-like practices of removal persist.

Understanding this crisis has been sought through extensive discussions in literature, which has subjected the post-apartheid state's policy to scrutiny (Lalloo 1999; Tomlinson 1998, 2002; Charlton, 2008, Oldfield 2000; Khan 2002; Huchzermeyer 2001; Goodlad 1996). This literature raises critical issues pertaining to the policy's market-based commoditisation (Bond 1999, Daniel, Habib and Southall 2003) and the pressure it exerts on government to deliver housing units rapidly and within a predetermined cost structure (Lalloo 1999). This literature also addresses the perpetuation of apartheid-style policies in the locations of housing projects

¹ Informal settlements (Gaffney's Group, 2004) can be characterised by no title deed linking the residents to the land. The land is occupied without municipal planning permission and the sites are provided with only emergency services. These environments are subject to disease, high rates of violent crime and rapid population growth. Social ills exacerbate inequalities and place further demands on limited resources.

² Blake (Personal communication 27 August 2008) estimates that just over half of the population of Cape Town live without secure housing. Approximately 430 000 households live in informal accommodation, with 3.8 persons per household. Therefore an estimate of 1, 63 m homeless people make up a population of 3.2 m people – 51,1% (ibid).

(Huchzermeyer 2003, Lalloo 1999). Issues have also been raised regarding the rate (Gaffney's Group 2004) and quality (South African Institute of Race Relations 2007) of housing delivery, highlighting long waiting periods (Oldfield and Boulton 2005), as well as poor budget expenditure (Local Government Research Centre 2007). While useful, the contemporary South African literature has tended to address macro-scale causes for failure in rollout of homes for the urban poor.

In parallel, feminist geographical and anthropological literature has interrogated social dynamics that underpin the realities of poor people's lived experiences in a range of housing contexts (Ross 1995, 2005; Oldfield 2000, 2001, 2003; Lee 2005; Oldfield and Boulton 2005). This research examines communities' strategies to find housing (Oldfield and Stokke 2004) and to negotiate living circumstances (Ross 2005; Lee 2005). Authors argue that households and meaning of home are formed in fluid (Bell and Valentine 1995) and contingent circumstances (Ross 1995) which are saturated with complexities, situated in ambiguous and messy human experience (Knopp 2007). Building home and community requires drawing from a range of social and political relationships. Collaboration, with neighbours, communities and social organizations, plays an important role in people's understandings of what it means to be citizens, and in the formation and negotiation of gendered, racial and class-based identities (Oldfield and Zweig under review, Oldfield and Stokke 2004, Huchzermeyer 2003, Oldfield and Boulton 2005, Ballard, Habib and Valodia 2006). Together, policy-orientated and ethnographic research offers a deeper understanding into how the housing crisis in post-apartheid South Africa is embodied.

A smaller body of South African literature has addressed housing evictions (Huchzermeyer 2003; Oldfield and Stokke 2004, 2007; Macgregor 2007, Miraftab 2006, McDonald 2002, Legassick 2001,2004, Desai and Pithouse 2003, Lalloo 1999). Today, 14 years after the constitutional change, forced removals³ of the South African poor surprisingly continues to feature as one of the main methods for slum eradication (Macgregor 2007), yet driven by a different logic than that of the

³ Forced removal or eviction is the permanent or temporary removal of individuals, families or communities from the homes and/or land they occupy (Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions [COHRE] 2003). They are usually characterized or accompanied by an element of force or coercion, and are related to a specific decision, legislation of policy of the State (ibid).

apartheid era (Miraftab 2006). This literature offers insight into the grave socio-economic implications of relocation to the urban periphery (COHRE 2003, Macgregor 2007, McDonald 2002, Lalloo 1999). While policies and politics of evictions has been analysed in this literature, I will focus here on the community-scale negotiation of the threat of eviction, land occupation in the everyday.

My project examines the everyday realities of land occupations and city attempts to forcibly remove and evict residents from their homes. Through research on the case of Zille-Raine Heights (ZRH), I show the ways that citizens negotiate land occupation, utilizing social and organizational networks to occupy land, to build homes, and to protect their community. In these processes, residents articulate their claims to ownership of homes and of their right to be in the city. These claims are tenuous, contested by the city physically in attempts to demolish the settlement, legally through the courts in processes undertaken to evict the community and to remove residents to the urban periphery, and symbolically and discursively in labelling ZRH and its residents as illegal invaders. It is in this tension between the security of building homes and a community and the insecurity generated in city attempts to remove them, that ZRH residents experience of living in informality is situated. In this complex and contested context, they come to understand themselves as citizens, women, community members and activists.

In this paper, I begin with a discussion of residents' housing histories in order to gain insight into how perceptions of self, community and meanings of home have been shaped in the past and build individual and community perceptions of the experience of land occupation. I describe the way that the community and settlement was built, and how these conditions shaped its development. By looking at residents' relations with state representatives involved, the case study shows the ambiguous relationship between families and communities living informally and officials and representatives of the City of Cape Town. At the same time, ZRH's legal struggles provide insight into the limited ways in which informal settlement residents and communities have access to legal resources and representation, particularly in this context where they have been taken to court by the state. In the lived experience of residents and their daily struggles, the case demonstrates how state processes of eviction and removal

exacerbate the insecurities of those living in already very tenuous conditions. Nonetheless, through collective action, adaptability, innovation and social and political connections, individuals, families and collectively the ZRH community, have maintained their homes and, for the meantime, their right to stay on their site. In community building, daily struggles, difficult fights with the state in court, the paper demonstrates the ways in which residents have actively shaped their own personhood and identities as city dwellers and as citizens.

2. Research on land occupation and evictions: The housing crisis, grassroots mobilization, personhood and home

2.1 Homelessness in post-apartheid South Africa

Contemporary transformation in national legislation called for the restructuring of many aspects of South African society. Today, national authorities hold the mammoth task of counteracting decades of geographically enforced racial divides. Historically, apartheid and colonial policies fractured and dislocated black families through forced migration and influx control policies (Oldfield and Boulton 2005). This crisis of accessing housing and asserting ownership in urban centres has persisted into the post-apartheid era (ibid).

Progressive housing legislation protects South African citizens housing rights in terms of the Bill of Rights in the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) stipulates that “everyone has the right to have access to adequate housing” (Section 26). Legislation is designed for all South African citizens to access “permanent residential structures with secure tenure”⁴ (Oldfield and Zweig under review); and which ensures that evictions take place in a manner that is consistent with the values of the new constitution⁵ (Legal Research Centre, 2007, Huchzermeyer 2003). Yet despite these mechanisms, post-apartheid South Africa has been marked by an increase in social inequality, particularly in the context of macroeconomic policies of neoliberalisation and privatization of market-based urban land and services (Bond 1999; Daniel, Habib and Southall 2003).

This has perpetuated and deepened unemployment, material deprivation, poverty and geographical inequality (Oldfield and Stokke 2004, Harvey 2003, Adelzadeh 1996, Natrass 2003, Natrass and Seekings 2001). Poor communities remain on the urban periphery, whether through forced removal, living in townships or through receiving beneficiary status of state-subsidized homes. Here, land for low-cost housing

⁴ Republic of South Africa, Housing Act (Act 107 of 1997)

⁵ Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation Land Act, 1998 (PIE)

schemes can be bought cheaply by the government⁶, far from economic opportunities and service infrastructure. As a result, the standards of living for the majority of urban populations around South Africa have not improved considerably, and communities remain divided - no longer along racial lines, but along divisions of class (Macgregor 2007; Bond 1999). Thus, due to the scarcity of housing opportunities and the location of these schemes, urban residents often have sought alternative housing options (Huchzermeyer 2003).

Many homeless families and communities initiate, direct and drive the process through which they secure state-provided housing (Oldfield 2000). Land occupation is one means of doing this. Increased land occupations in recent years (Huchzermeyer 2003, Oldfield and Stokke 2007, McDonald 2002) indicate that people are recognising the need for civil society to gear the provision of housing.

2.2 Land occupation, state responses and legal processes

Some insights into the City of Cape Town's response to land occupation can be drawn from the research of Oldfield and Stokke (2004) and Huchzermeyer (2003). The cases of the informal settlements of Valhalla Park and Grootboom show how shack-dwellers have successfully adopted legal channels to fight for their right to a home in the city by challenging South African policy of land occupation (Oldfield and Stokke 2004). This literature illustrates how the legal route has “potential for progressive policy change in conjunction with a range of other forms of direct action” (Oldfield and Stokke 2004: 27). At the same time, it highlights the ambiguous position of judicial processes regarding land occupation (Huchzermeyer 2003), particularly because different cases have had varied outcomes when evictees faced similar living circumstances.

The first case (Oldfield and Stokke 2004) involved the City of Cape Town and a group of people who occupied land in Valhalla Park on the Cape Flats⁷. The City's policy does not allow land occupation, arguing that allowing newly established

⁶ Land values have risen due to the shift of policy to market-based commoditisation (Bond 1999). Thus well-located central land is only available at a costly sum. Competition for limited land relatively close to the city centre is high and rationed budgets of government departments are won over by offers from private buyers and foreign investors.

⁷ The City of Cape Town and Neville Rudolph and 49 others Case 8970/01

settlements to remain sets a dangerous precedent, possibly resulting in 'massive invasions in numerous other areas [around the city]' (Selikowitz, 2003). The court's judgement contested this however, in that the outcome of the case ruled in favour of the land occupiers. Judge Selikowitz (2003) stated that the City denied their constitutional and statutory obligations with regard to housing, as it was unable to make reasonable provision for people who had no access to land and were living in crisis situations (ibid).

In the second relevant study, Huchzermeyer's (2003) comparison of three eviction-related cases⁸ reveals the ambiguous position of the judiciary in relation to access to urban land by the poor. In the case of Grootboom⁹, where the municipality of Oostenberg filed an eviction order against 900 land occupiers from Wallacedene, the court ruled in favour of the squatters. The case is very influential, as the precedent set obliges the government to provide temporary emergency shelter for those living under the worst conditions (Davis 1999). Yet, Huchzermeyer shows that in the case of Bredell in Johannesburg, the court forcibly removed shack-dwellers living under similar circumstances as the people of Grootboom. Rather, the Minister of Housing, in a response to the matter, called for the tightening of legislation to criminalize any instigation of *land invasion*. These cases highlight incongruous approaches of the judiciary to land occupation.

2.3 Forced removals and grassroots mobilization

Since 1994, two million people have been evicted from their homes due to service arrears and inability to meet rental payments (McDonald 2002: 18). The eviction crisis cuts across Cape Town's disadvantaged and racialized groups (Miraftab 2006). Research suggests the socio-economic implications of relocation to the margins of the city are serious. Macgregor (2007) and (COHRE 2003) describe that evictions result in ongoing negative experiences for the evictees, such as the disintegration of social and economic networks, impaired economic wellbeing, exponential increases in transportation expenses, as well as loss of opportunity for education, health, equality, security and social participation. Laloo (1999), in her discussion of

⁸ Two cases will be used for the purpose of this research.

⁹ Irene Grootboom and Others v. Oostenberg Municipality Case 6826/99

citizenship and South African housing policy, depicts the failure of policy to incorporate 'access to place'(41), which she describes as a fundamental social right of citizenship. Eviction to the urban periphery does not provide for well-located settlements in relation to opportunities and amenities that help sustain a reasonable standard of living.

In the apartheid city, black communities were uprooted and relocated to remote locations, which lacked reasonable and convenient access to employment opportunities and other amenities (Lalloo, 1999). Ironically today, although poor sectors of the population are afforded Constitutional rights to housing (Republic of South Africa 1996), apartheid divisions of spatial inequality persist.

Responses to evictions from informal settlement residents throughout the country are increasingly collective, where solidarity reaches beyond individual settlements (Huchzermeyer, 2007). Increased evictions in recent years (McDonald 2002) have fuelled grassroots mobilization in the form of social movements¹⁰ (Miraftab 2006; Oldfield and Stokke 2004, 2007; Huchzermeyer 2007), community networks, street committees and neighbourhood organizations (Oldfield 2003). Chronicles of community organization, land occupation and eviction, are illustrated by a branch of literature dealing with Cape Town case studies¹¹. While mobilization is a political strategy, this collaboration also plays an important role in shaping people's understandings of what it means to be citizens, and the formation and negotiation of gendered, racial and class-based identities (Oldfield and Zweig under review, Oldfield and Stokke 2004, Huchzermeyer 2003, Oldfield and Boulton 2005, Ballard, Habib and Valodia 2006). Like some of the research discussed here, in this research, I pay particular attention to the everyday realities of families and communities who occupy land and continuously face the threat of forced removal.

¹⁰ Such as the cases of the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign (Miraftab 2006, Oldfield and Stokke 2004, 2006) and Abahlali Basenjondolo, a Durban-based shack dwellers' movement (Huchzermeyer 2007)

¹¹ These are the cases of Tafelsig (Turok 2001), Joe Slovo (MacGregor 2007), New Crossroads (Huchzermeyer 2003), Grootboom (ibid), Bredell (ibid), Alexander (ibid), Mandela Park (Legassick 2001, 2004) and Valhalla Park (Oldfield and Boulton 2005; Oldfield and Stokke 2004,2006; Miraftab 2006).

2.4 Lived experiences in housing contexts

Ross (2005) persuasively argues that it is important to focus on the ways people, families and communities affected by policy grapple with these experiences and opportunities in the urban environment (Ross 2005). Addressing the ways housing insecurity is embodied can highlight how unequal legacies of the apartheid past are re-invented in post-apartheid present day lived realities (Reitzes 1998, Oldfield 2001). By looking at peoples experiences and challenges of building community and how families assert their right to be in the city, a focus on embodied materialities allows us to understand practice, meaning and the socio-cultural construction of place. Through this, we uncover social hierarchies and relationships that families and communities draw on to negotiate living in informality. Power relations are constantly negotiated, shifting and changing, through everyday acts of resistance (Baines 2003, Chari 2004). Acknowledging these shifts allow us to understand the refashioning of spaces and thus relations of race, class and gender (Chari 2004). In the case of ZRH, for example, we see how individuals are able to alter class-associated circumstances, through gaining a sense of permanence in land occupation, even if temporary.

In addition, we stray away from conflating the divergent experience of individuals into the generic category of evicted families (Oldfield and Stokke 2007 in Miraftab 2006). This approach also counters a tendency to erase ambiguity and complexity (Baines 2003) of land occupiers' experiences and their relations with each other and with City officials. Research into lived experiences also allows researchers to identify opportunities for and spaces of activism and resistance to localized power inequalities (Knopp 2007; Appadurai 2002). In the case of ZRH, the ways residents organize themselves, and build their political and leadership capacity, highlights 'the embodiment of social relations of empowerment and disempowerment and the arena through which they operate' (Swyngedouw 1997:169).

This body of literature also highlights the people's internalization of the meaning of home - as physical protection and a place of economic opportunity (Charlton 2008); independence from family members (Oldfield 2003); a symbol of ownership,

belonging (Lee 2005); as well as security; respectability, privacy and stability (Ross, 2005). Home is understood as a testament to ones rootedness and right to stay in the city (Lee 2005).

My conceptual analysis also makes use of Oldfield and Stokke's (2004, 2007) and Miraftab's (2006) conception on the dialectic, complex and ambiguous relationship of people contesting state and City authorities' forced removal practices. Shack-dwellers maintain relations with city officials while contesting state practices through the court, for example.

Political action and community organizing are grounded in local everyday life and local political spaces, but they are also framed by and contest decisions and actions of local authorities (Oldfield and Stokke 2007). Oldfield and Stokke (2007) use the case of the Valhalla Park United Civic Front to show how by mobilizing against eviction, the community engages with officials and institutions, but does not depend on these relationships to resist evictions or improve living conditions in their neighbourhood. Community decisions are taken on appropriate strategies and responses to state action – in particular “when to work in the system and when to disrupt and challenge it” (ibid: 16). Therefore, communities creatively combine strategies of engagement and disengagement (Oldfield and Stokke 2007). Borges (2006) suggests that in these relations with the state, both sides reinforce a political belief of what is considered as legitimate practice. She explains this by showing how civil society engages in practices of collecting documents on a daily basis as legitimate tools to accessing secure housing, which reinforces their relations with the state (ibid).

Miraftab (2006) coins the phrases 'invited' and 'invented' spaces of citizenship. Actions taken by the poor within the 'invited' spaces of citizenship aim to cope with hardships within the sanctions of government institutions, while within 'invented spaces' actions of defiance resist the status quo. 'Grassroots activities move back and forth between those spaces' (ibid: 195). This describes the relationship of City officials and community members as mutually constituted - an interacting rather than a binary relationship.

Insight into the housing crisis, civil society engagement with housing processes, and state responses in the form of forced removal, serves as a useful basis in framing the case of Zille-Raine Heights informal settlement.

3. Ethnographic research methodology

My research in Zille-Raine Heights¹² draws from my experiences in the field from July to September 2008. Access to the community in ZRH was a crucial element of the research and established through involvement in a community leaders' feminist forum¹³ where I met community leaders, Loraine Heunis and Eleanor Hoedemaker and through my supervisor, Dr Sophie Oldfield, who had conducted prior research in the settlement.

Participant observation, in the form of assistance in accessing legal representation for the appeal case¹⁴, shaped the qualitative data drawn on, and 12 in-depth interviews of residents' of ZRH helped me understand life histories and lived experiences. I was recommended respondents by Eleanor, after their permission for interviewing had been obtained. Interviewees ranged between the ages of 25 to 53. Initial semi-structured interviews evolved into open-ended interviews, lasting between 45 minutes to 2 hours. Interviews were conducted often in the interviewees' second language, English. It is possible, therefore that this language barrier could have led to slight disparities in meaning. Ethical considerations, such as confidentiality, objectives and contextualization of the research, were openly discussed with participants prior to commencing interviews. My qualitative analysis draws from our discussions surrounding life on ZRH, activities, relationships, jobs, hobbies, disputes with the ratepayers, encounters with the police and City officials and the press.

My analysis also draws from quantitative data. A survey of relevant circumstances quantifying the details of the site population was compiled in March 2007¹⁵ and updated in August 2008¹⁶. A map of the site established during the same periods was

¹² See location of settlement appendix A

¹³ Building Women's Activism, Community House in Salt River, Cape Town from March 2008.

¹⁴ During our days of "walking"- which community leaders often referred to as their search for representation- consultations, periods of sitting in waiting rooms, or around a bench at lunchtime, we learnt about one another's lives. I attended community meetings, housing workshops, and marches. We published flyers and newsletters, conducted research, and met with other community leaders in housing struggles. We spoke to politicians, the media and the broader surrounding community residents.

¹⁵ Relevant Circumstances 24 March 2007(ZRH residents, Benson, Oldfield, & Wesso)

¹⁶ Updated: 8 August 2008 (Hoedemaker, Thorn, Waddel, Heunis)] See appendix B

also updated¹⁷. Finally, my research draws from secondary resources, including legal documentation, minutes of community meetings, state correspondence and press releases from local newspapers. The combination of this research methodology promotes the projects validity and offers a close look into experiences and perceptions of lived realities of land occupation and eviction processes¹⁸. However, this research is framed within a certain understanding of the nature of what can be knowledge.

“What binds societies, made up of multiple assemblage and disjunctive syntheses, is some kind of artifice they come to believe in.” (Mbembe and Nuttall 2004: 349)

Mbembe and Nuttall’s describe how ethnographic research is grounded in the messy realities of the human experience and is based on the understanding that all knowledge is situated, partial and incomplete (Knopp, 2007). Thus, knowledge is contingent on other knowledge(s), and by acknowledging my positionality in relation to my prior connections with the research subjects, as well as efforts to contribute to their political struggle, my description presents a partial lens into the complex lives of the families and community of ZRH. Nonetheless, this research highlights the ambiguities and fluid relationships that stem through residents' experiences. This suggests that their realities are continuously changing, and thus knowledge(s) is always evolving, in the flow of becoming (ibid). Central to this research, is my commitment and hope that reflexive activist scholarship may help us better understand and grapple with the complexities of our time and of South African democratic transition.

“To write, said Maurice Blanchot, is the same thing as to form. To a large extent to write is to bring something into surface that is not yet there or that is there only as latent, as potential [...] It is the ongoing negotiation, that is, between what is and what could be” (Mbembe and Nuttall, 2004: 348).

¹⁷ See appendix C

¹⁸ The semantic use of the word ‘they’ in this paper, in the absence of no substitute, automatically imposes a distance, and an *othering* of the research subjects.

4. Zille-Raine Heights, Cape Town: Historical context, community mobilization and land occupation

I enter Zille-Raine Heights. Children playing in central Tamatie Straat duck out of the way of the vehicle. Boys shout for the ball, girls scream in their contribution to the soccer game. Women and men sit on crates outside Lydia's house-shop gossiping. An elderly lady sweeps her stoep¹⁹. A few toddlers huddle together as they build a castle out of the beach sand put there to stop the flooding when the water table rises. Gentle-eyed Romano and her daughter wait for the bucket to fill at the water tap. The air is hazy from the smoke of wood fires. The rays of twilight, amplifying the sounds, fears, tensions and squeals, bring people out of their homes...away from the pot plants, televisions, gas stoves and magazines.

(Extract from journal, 14 July 2008)

In 2006, 63 families occupied vacant land in Grassy Park in response to the lack of state housing provision in the area over the past 50 years²⁰. The City of Cape Town temporarily relocated families to an alternative site, now known as Zille-Raine Heights²¹.

Although the occupation took place in 2006, discussion of ways to alleviate family housing crises in the area began as early as June 2005, when insecurely housed and homeless residents of Grassy Park started mobilizing through collaboration in the form of meetings held monthly. Culminating in the decision to occupy vacant land in the area, on a Saturday evening in March 2006, families hauled wooden planks and sheets of corrugated iron onto a piece of land adjacent, on the corner of Lake Road and Civic Road, Grassy Park²². The following day, law enforcement came to break down the structures, without a warrant for eviction. Families slept outside without adequate shelter for three weeks, waiting on the City's designation for an alternative site for their temporary relocation.

¹⁹ Afrikaans meaning porch or veranda

²⁰ Loraine, personal Communication 09/09/08

²¹ The settlement was named after two key role players in its formation: community leader Loraine Heunis, and Executive Mayor of Cape Town, Helen Zille. Loraine initiated the community mobilization, and still plays a core role in the political, legal and social events of the community. Zille designated the land on which the settlement is located, and assured the community a part in her first pilot housing project.

²² This land had been lying vacant since Loraine, now 39 years of age, was a child – allegedly being held for a housing development by the city council, which had since not materialised.

The following Sunday, 26 March 2006, erf 77856 was identified by the City of Cape Town in Parkwood Estate, a low-income area neighboring Grassy Park. Within the month, all families were relocated to the new location. Nonetheless, seven months later, an order for their eviction was issued on behalf of the City council, as the land was earmarked for a sports development. Hereon began the legal battle between the City of Cape Town and the residents of Zille-Raine Heights²³. Approximately two years and three months after residents had been relocated, and following a court indictment, the High Court ruled that the eviction the residents of ZRH to Happy Valley, Blackheath – located over 30 kilometres from Grassy Park. One month later, a day before their eviction was to be implemented, an order for appeal was served on behalf of the community,²⁴ an ongoing process through which the ZRH community is contesting their eviction. The case of Zille-Raine Heights²⁵ provides an interesting and important context to investigate how citizens negotiate land occupation, utilize social and organizational networks to occupy land, to build homes, and to protect their community. I will now address residents' housing histories to gain insight into how residents' past experience of housing shape their experiences of building a ZRH community.

4.1 Residents' housing histories: The foundation on which the occupation was built

Chronic insecurity of housing and a lack of alternative accommodation in the Grassy Park area led the ZRH families to occupy land. Living in overcrowded apartments, informal backyard housing, as well as struggling to pay for bank- mortgaged homes and apartments are the contexts from which residents moved. All mediated overcrowded and often expensive living contexts.

²³ City of Cape Town v. Jennifer Tango and 39 Others Case No. 11038/06

²⁴ See the settlement's chronology appendix D

²⁵ ZRH is one of four informal settlements in Grassy Park and surrounding areas. Of a population of 254 inhabitants, most people work on contract bases or are unemployed. Many of these people are those with specialised trades, such as nurses, carpenters, plumbers and teachers. The majority of the residents are women, children and dependants (Hoedemaker, Heunis, Thorn and Waddel 2008).

Overcrowding in flats, backyards and struggling with home expenses

Marie: For me... just to be separate from the crowded house. It was quite fine for me... I took it for my house, as here now. Because I was desperate. I wanted to be on my own- for my children's sake. (21/07/08)

Romona lived in a two-bedroom apartment with 12 others. Overcrowded conditions often resulted in family disputes and a lack of privacy. In winter, children were prone to contracting illnesses from living in cramped conditions where airborne infections spread rapidly. In our discussion, she compared herself and her relatives to chickens living in coops.

Romona: The house was very full and I was on the waiting list. I couldn't wait *that* long. So then I decided, no I must do something. I had to come out of there. And that's where I got into this project.

Jessica: How many people were staying with you altogether ...?

Romona:...Only my mother and father were sleeping in the one room and all the others were sleeping in the one room (*11 in one room*). Yes, two double bunks, just like, as you know, like chickens. (22/07/08)

Unable to afford to rent, accommodated in the homes of relatives, many families longed to escape overcrowded conditions.

Lydia lived in backyard shacks²⁶ for most of her life. Dwellings were small and overcrowded. Before occupying land, she, her husband, and three children, lived in a one-bedroom home. Rental fees increased every three months, and as a result, they were no longer able to afford the rent. Her home in ZRH now affords her the spaciousness and a degree of financial security that she did not have while living in backyard shacks. Felicia also lived in a backyard shack for 14 years, with 10 other dwellings on the same property. She felt that her family needed privacy and that the compact environment was not appropriate to rear her children. There was also the issue of theft. People would steal clothes off the washing line, and take personal possessions from her home. Another challenge was payment discrepancies. She would often receive water bills that did not seem reasonable. These issues led Felicia to search for an alternative. Other families grew up in formal homes with all the concomitant comforts.

²⁶ Backyard shacks are informal dwelling structures attached to a main house on a formal residential property (see Urban Foundation, 1991). Living informally in a backyard allows for another opportunity other than renting apartments and houses at unaffordable rates. However, evictions are routine as renting practices are not well regulated (Umzabalazo we Jubilee Housing Workshop 2008), and tenant conflict and theft are commonplace due to overcrowding.

Connie: You see most of us were brought up in houses. There was electricity. There was water. There was everything. (17/07/08)

For many of these families, resorting to living in informal conditions was a new experience. Through a series of unfortunate events, such as the onset of illness and resultant job losses, as well as business failures, people were no longer able to meet their monthly instalments.

Jan and Magdelene owned a house in Grassy Park for many years, for instance. However, with the onset of Magdelene's illness, the family became unable to sustain themselves on the income of one spouse. They moved into the home of relatives, until privacy and overcrowding became an issue. The regular changes in living environments, led people like Magdelene to search an alternative solution:

And from there it starts, we can't afford this, we can't afford that. We stay here, we stay there... It (*land occupation*) was the only option. You see that very moment, it doesn't concern me whoever think what. We are coming out of such a beautiful place and all that. It doesn't concern me. So we moved on the land. (28/07/08)

Similarly, Eleanor grew up in a house in Third Avenue, Grassy Park. Years later, she lived in a home in Mitchells Plain. When her marriage ended with her second husband, she had to sell the house because he insisted on his share of the property value. She then moved into her new partner Piet's flat. However, when their business went bankrupt, the home was sold on auction. For Eleanor, her decision to occupy land was taken at a time when she was no longer able to fight eviction.²⁷

These housing histories frame people's motivations for seeking alternative housing options. Land occupation in particular is a response to cycles of mobility and dependency, and, at the same time, demonstrates how impoverished families take charge of their living circumstances. In the following section I describe how, by

²⁷ Eleanor's life history also illuminates the interconnectedness of gendered relations and precarious housing security. Her living conditions were swayed by her relations with male figures in her life. Women who lack economic security and independence often struggle to develop equitable relationships with their male partners (Development Action Group, 2008). As a result, some women remain in abusive relationships. Women who contest this may remove themselves from one condition of insecurity, into other challenging conditions, such as overcrowding. The occupation of land allows for a new type of gendered autonomy, as Connie describes:

For me unfortunately I can't wait for Mr Right. And I am not doing it for a husband or what. I am doing it for my children. (17/07/08)

finding the agency to occupy land, homes are built, and community is established - all shaped and in response to ZRH families' past experiences of housing insecurity.

4.2 Making homes, building community in informal conditions

Most of the homes are constructed from wood and corrugated iron and zinc, built mostly by community members. Alternatively, people purchase prefabricated wooden bungalows. The ways in which persons in the settlement access materials and fund purchases are varied, but a common strand is their dependency on social networks²⁸.

In terms of service provision, the settlement has three standing water pipes, two of which currently function. Three households share each portable toilet. Some households, especially those with elderly people, prefer to use a bucket and deposit waste into the toilet, as a means of respect, cleanliness and privacy. Many residents visit relatives' homes to make use of improved sanitary amenities²⁹. There is no electrical provision on the site, as the City of Cape Town's policy is not to provide this service for temporary settlements³⁰. To solve this problem, residents use gas stoves, candles, paraffin lamps and even generators for lighting and cooking. Other items, such as cell phones and televisions, are utilized through accessing a power supply via a car battery. Yet, the lack of electrical provision is a major barrier for these people in terms of costs, safety and with regard to environmental conditions³¹. Residents perceive that the high costs of fuel consume any money, which they believed they would have saved by occupying land and not paying monthly

²⁸ For example, when the settlement was being built, a church in the area offered loans to four households in order to buy bungalows. Another informant recounted that her sister bought her bungalow.

²⁹ Eleanor, personal communication, 23/08/08

³⁰ According the South African National Housing Code

³¹ The settlement is situated on a wetland (see appendix F). In winter, water tables rise and flood the settlement. Romona accounts for how flooding is a serious challenge for the community and is a core issue in their daily lives:

Jessica: What do you do when it gets wet?

Romona: No (*last year*), I didn't have pallets (*wooden planks*). Last year I had to scoop up buckets and buckets of water. The water was about this deep here (*gestures to her knee*.) And in winter they don't stay with me (*her two daughters*) because it's too cold... You could still see the water underneath here ... The shoes was like boats on the water. Ja (*yes*) it was hard work... To me I will survive this time. But last year... (22/07/08)

instalments³². To tackle the high costs of using certain types of fuels, people share a communal fire to cook or heat water³³. Cheaper alternatives, such as paraffin lamps, however, exacerbate children's asthmatic and respiratory conditions, along with the cold and wet of the winter months.

Life is not only challenging physically, it is also quite fluid socially. Family members move into separate dwellings when entering relationships and bearing children. People leave the settlement in response to marital failures and employment opportunities³⁴. As a result, shacks may lie vacant, and in turn, new residents come to occupy the space³⁵. Children also move in and out of the settlement, into the care of relatives, when environmental conditions prove to be detrimental to their health. Thus, the settlement is constituted in different ways at different times, with reference to specific circumstances and insecurities, around which people negotiate in order to gain security.

Life without flush toilets, electrical provision, harsh environmental conditions and precarious shelter, presents many challenges for the community. Yet ZRH residents negotiate these living circumstances. Key to their adjustment is the importance of community networks, and external family support. In spite of constraints, they find comfort and have built spacious living areas. Despite material impoverishment, the space is communal. This is the way in which homes become their own, how these families build their homes, and create a community. As Jan, a resident and committee member explains:

But for me, you learn a lot of things... how to survive. For me it (*the land occupation*) was a good experience. For me, for here to learn (*that*) I must go fetch water. That is what my parents did those days. They went to fetch water, wood for fire, they burn candles - like we do now. You learn... I am not sorry that I did what I did - you know squat. Because I am doing this for my children, I also want a house. (17/07/08)

Inside the homes it feels like any permanent brick house. Walls are decorated with framed paintings, posters, posed wedding pictures and religious symbols. Indoor

³² An average household pays between R350-400 per month on alternative fuels. This cost is significant. To illustrate this, a child grant for example, on which many of the households depend, would cover only half of this cost.

³³ See image appendix E, figure 1

³⁴ Rebecca, personal communication 21/07/08

³⁵ The community prefers this to the alternative, of untenanted spaces attracting drug abuse and related practices.

plants, lounge suites, coffee tables³⁶ and carpeted floors all blend together to present a respectable home – used as multiple spaces for entertaining guests, holding prayer meetings, building relationships and rearing children. Living in informal conditions, perhaps ironically, allows individuals the luxury of spaciousness. Lounges, garages, yards and private bedrooms offer people a new type of comfort, which overcrowded living environments did not afford – of the freedoms of privacy and independence. Once inside, television sets, microwaves, ovens and sinks distract one from the realities of living without electricity and running water. People innovatively find alternative uses for articles that cannot be used without electricity and running water. Sinks are used for washing dishes and draining water into buckets³⁷. Microwaves become bread bins. Ovens are transformed into fridges, or are used as storage space for pots and kettles. The fact that residents own these items are a reminder of formal housing histories, while the ritual of storage both reveals and reinforces hopes for a future of housing security. Anna’s description indicates that in building their homes, residents assert claims to ownership.

Now that we living here for two years it feels like a house. Now this is now our places. It belongs to us now. It feels like that. (28/07/08)

Building and maintaining homes has called for innovation and flexibility. In doing, ZRH residents have developed a community, but in challenging circumstances without resources and security - issues discussed in the following section.

³⁶Many of these decorative items and pieces of furniture are acquired through personal connections. Connie for example, described how all the items which constitute her colourful home were accessed through social networks (See appendix E, figure 2).

³⁷ This removal from an immediate impression of informality was exemplified when I went to the sink in the home of Eleanor and opened the tap to wash a glass from which I had been drinking. I felt both surprised and embarrassed when I realised no water came from the tap.

5. The challenges of and possibilities for building a Zille-Raine Heights community

Building community for the people of Zille-Raine Heights is filtered through the threat of eviction by the city and residents' technically illegal status in the settlement. Any community building faces the challenging tension of pending forced removal. The way residents relate with City authorities is saturated with complexities and ambiguities, characterised at once by engagement and oppositional resistance (Oldfield and Stokke 2004, 2007). Claims of ownership of homes are contested physically in City attempts to demolish the settlement, legally through the courts, and discursively by labelling residents of ZRH as *invaders*. In this section, I will describe how residents of ZRH simultaneously contest and support land occupation practice, by looking at experiences in their relations with legal institutions, City officials and law enforcement.

5.1 Experiences with City representatives, legal processes and law enforcement

“Living in an informal settlement implies a constant struggle against forces working to eliminate one's authorized and hazardous home” (Huchzermeyer 2007: 1).

Loraine: They are playing political games with us (10/08/08, *Informal Settlements in Struggle meeting*)

Despite the threat of eviction, residents continue to use the state as a means to negotiate for secure housing³⁸. Yet, they contest practices of city officials and legal processes on various grounds.

ZRH residents felt they were not appropriately consulted during the legal implementation processes framing the pending forced removal. For instance, on the day the judgment was passed, the residents were not notified of the emergency hearing, and consequently neither their attorney, nor community leaders were present at the hearing. The community was only informed of the outcome of the case when a

³⁸ For instance, the majority of residents are welfare recipients of child and disability grants – of which monthly receipt reinforces dependency. In addition, as the community began to organize themselves, they developed the need to collect, or archive (Borges 2006) documentation to establish their rights of occupation and to build the case for the legitimacy of the settlement. Documentation has been crucial in their High Court case and is now even more essential in the appeal process of the eviction. In so doing, however, they also reinforce their dependence on the state through the daily ritual of archiving (ibid).

reporter from a local newspaper came to the settlement to interview the residents. Through experiences such as this, residents perceive that their voices were sidelined.

In addition, the community found it challenging to access legal representation for their defence trial, and then in their efforts to appeal the eviction order³⁹. This was partially due to under-resourced non-governmental and governmental organizations offering representation *pro bono*. Consequently, community leaders had to represent ZRH in court without lawyers on two occasions. Eleanor describes how the accessibility to language used within the court environment proved to be to her disadvantage. This inaccessibility of language highlights power hierarchies that may arise in the court environment, illuminating an impartial element of the judicial process, as she describes:

That was when we were running around now - trying to get lawyers-, we didn't have any money... And for two days I had to speak in court because we didn't have attorneys... To be honest, I don't remember a thing anymore because I was so freaked out. At one stage I had to tell the judge to ask (...) them (*the City's legal representation*) to speak in my plain language because I didn't understand. (23/08/08)

Furthermore, City authorities challenged residents' tenuous claim to ownership and security. Residents contest what is perceived as a lack of accountability of state officials. The Executive Mayor of Cape Town, Helen Zille, visited the occupiers on the day after they had settled next to Civic Road. According to an article published in a local newspaper, the City said "residents could be accommodated in a new housing project of 2800" homes in the suburb of Pelican Park (People's Post 10 July 2006: 3). The Mayor suggested that the community's permanent relocation would be in close proximity to Grassy Park, and assured residents that temporary relocation would take place between 0-18 months. On the day of the land occupation, while the unhinged shelters were being pulled down, the image of Helen Zille standing barefoot on a mattress is etched in the memory of the community:

Felicia: She promised us a lot of things. And she even said that she will not let us go beyond boundaries (*of Grassy Park*). And she never came to court... She lie in the first place because she said that when they will be busy with the project we will be her first pilot project (*in Pelican Park*) and that the houses what they going to build will be, like, for us first. And she never gave her promise that she said, she didn't plan for it. And for the two years that we staying her we never seeing her again, only that there. (17/07/08)

³⁹ For details of the challenges of searching for legal representation, see appendix G.

Felicia's description of the Mayor's pledge has also been documented in the City of Cape Town documents⁴⁰, yet the community of ZRH as a unit has not been accommodated for in the project⁴¹. These undertakings were not afforded to the people of ZRH in the outcome of the court case. Instead, the assigned relocation area is Happy Valley. The impacts of relocation to the urban periphery, already alluded to at the beginning of the paper, would severely impact upon the livelihoods of the people of ZRH. Specifically, Loraine raised the concern of the viability of permanent relocation⁴²: 'We are happy but we want permanency' (People's Post 29 May 2007: 1)

Overall, due to the residents' lack of resources and access to information, legal channels for challenging the City have been limited and offered minimal support⁴³. The community engaged with the courts as a means to assert their citizenship and right to a home in the city, yet judicial processes presented questioned their evidence, the representativity of their community organisation, both which were used as grounds for the community's eviction. Disparities involved a dispute over the length of time the community had been on the land prior to the issue of eviction, influencing upon how the City dealt with forced removal processes⁴⁴. Community members question authorities' motives for forced removal of the settlement.⁴⁵

ZRH residents also contest the receipt of contradictory messages from authorities, and poor lines of communication within government institutions. For instance, on the day before the order for eviction was to be carried out, City officials arrived on the settlement offering transport for the residents to Happy Valley, despite the serving of the appeal by ZRH legal representation and consequent postponing of the judgment.

⁴⁰ See appendix H for supporting press documentation

⁴¹ A few individuals received notices of their beneficiary statuses

⁴² According to the South African National Housing Code (Schedule 7 Part 5) the City is required to temporary relocate any given community only once before finding a permanent relocation area. The location of Happy Valley is not a permanent solution and thus contravenes relocation policy (Semaai, personal communication 04/08/08). Future research into the conditions and lived experiences residents of Happy Valley is recommended. (See appendix I for living conditions in Happy Valley)

⁴³ The community's experiences with legal processes support Huchzermeyer's (2003) argument of the ambiguous position of the judiciary regarding land occupation and forced removal.

⁴⁴ See Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation Land Act, No 19 of 1998

⁴⁵ In addition, the City possesses a priority list of 240 informal settlements, which it plans to remove. Currently, ZRH settlement features as number 63 on the list, yet the City currently stands at the 12th informal settlement's relocation (Nyman, personal communication, 04/08/08). This disparity in systematized proceedings provokes community members to question authorities' motives for forced removal of the settlement. Further research into this would serve an interesting project.

Due to poor communication between the City's legal representatives, this event caused much concern for residents, who were already filled with apprehension and confusion over the scheduled eviction⁴⁶. These varying messages severely impacted residents' tenuous hold of security. Deep sentiments of insecurity and mistrust of state processes were shown when two families left the settlement, believing that the alternative was eviction to what they referred to as the 'dumping site' (People's Post 13 March 2007, 17 June 2008).

Finally, community relations with law enforcement officers have led to a common perception that the police are a barrier rather than a support structure⁴⁷. Residents sense a stigma attached to their community, evident in their interactions with the Grassy Park police force. In a press release, they remarked 'Shack dwellers are [...] angered that the youth are subjected to repeated police harassment and arrests by the Grassy Park SAPS' (ZRH Residents' Association 12 February 2007: 1). Residents claim that people are arrested without reasons given for charges made against them. The police are thus perceived to be out of the reach of the law, as individuals are not held liable for inappropriate behaviour. In consequence, residents feel intimidated and threatened by this lack of accountability.

The residents sense they are 'treated with utter disrespect by the police' (ibid: 1). Eleanor and Lydia's description of violent clashes involving the ZRH community and ratepayers from Parkwood Estate illustrate these sentiments. During the struggle, two police vans drove past and did not intervene in the conflict. Eleanor saw this inaction as discrimination against residents of an informal settlement:

Eleanor: I think it is because we are on an informal settlement. They (*the police*) always ignore our calls and things like that. And I don't know how many times we phone them - like someone phone and tell them that David has a stolen generator at this place... Things like that they come out quick- things against us.

Lydia: The Schemes people is fighting with us, someone can die - like Henry was nearly killed that day - they didn't come out. But if they hear its fighting between us here, or someone here... maybe there is a thief walking on the field (*settlement*), then they are very quick to come here. (15/07/08)

⁴⁶ This was evident in that the usually vibrant Tamatie Straat stood empty, as residents hid in their homes of the day of the pending eviction (See appendix E, figure 3).

⁴⁷ While there are a range of other external relationships connected with the events surrounding ZRH's land occupation and eviction processes (such as with the ratepayers, backyard dwellers and family members), it is the lived experiences of families and ZRH community, somewhat moulded by their relations with authorities, which is the base of my empirical project.

The residents in their everyday experiences with state officials and authority face a contradiction. In their search for security, permanence and stability, they meet uncertainty, ambiguity and disorder. These processes entrench a sense of lack of support, and even neglect in many circumstances - where they feel vulnerable and unaided⁴⁸ - pushed to the urban periphery.

Yet this morose portrayal of the many barriers that this community faces is challenged in ways in which the residents of ZRH mobilize. Through collaborating with social movements, activists and researchers, while drawing from their support networks, the community temporarily halted the eviction - at least for the meantime, and continues to engage in a dialogue with the City. Consequently, these experiences transform into sites of empowerment. For instance, Anna affirms occupying land to have been a good experience:

In the beginning when we put up there I thought we weren't going to make it....there was no help. Nowhere to go [go] now. When they came to throw the places down. And I thought, like I gave up that time, and then I was going to back. But then they decided that no, that we going nowhere, we are going to stay just there. And we were sleeping like open. Nothing over us, nothing. In the night when you open your eyes you just see stars (*laugh*). It was for me actually a nice experience. (28/07/08)

The various mechanisms and processes that are implemented by the City are negotiated and adapted to by the people on the ground in ZRH. Nonetheless, these experiences exacerbate a sense of insecurity and lack of trust in the various stakeholders involved in the eviction process.

5.2 From mobility to mobilization: Building community through collective action

Through collective organization, the community was able to respond quickly to challenges that arose with adaptability, flexibility and innovation – through drawing from their abilities to organize, connect and adjust.

⁴⁸ Loraine: The state is the people, the very same people that put the rule there that. And I mean they didn't care how people felt that moment (*of the initial eviction*). The state is the people, they supposed to protect us, neh. They supposed to, when you don't have a house, to help you with a house ...So it frustrates me to think year after year you are in the same situation and the government can't get you out of it. (09/09/08)

Community mobilization is a key factor in the preservation and maintenance of the settlement. The project began with a few people attending meetings. Three years later, ZRH is an example for other communities that contest housing delivery. ZRH is a recognized social movement in the broader community of housing activists in Cape Town. In their organization, they network with other housing activists, social movements and organizations, which continue to support them in establishing alternative routes for accessing housing security. This is also how people came to know their rights and the position of the state on land occupation⁴⁹.

Strong leadership is central to the successes of the community. Political correspondence, minute-taking, agendas, drawing up a constitution, writing press releases, and learning how to negotiate with different bodies of the state, are some of the skills that assist in their struggle to access housing. Under the leadership of Eleanor and Loraine, as well as others, the community is aware of legal and political issues by holding regular meetings. This also allows the space to make collective decisions and in turn facilitates elements of trust and understanding. The committee, which is also established for crime prevention and local issues, has also helped build up social relationships within the area, crucial to the community's security⁵⁰. In addition, ZRH has various projects aimed at uplifting the youth⁵¹.

Unity and a sense of communality have been built from adversities in struggles against eviction - from both Civic Road and from the land on which they are currently situated. The struggle to stay on the field of ZRH created a level of trust within the community. Two collective experiences indicate the significance of this bond. On the first day that the community came together as a unit⁵², they stood in a circle on the field and prayed for support as police vans arrived to break down the

⁴⁹ Community leaders have moved also into a wider-reaching housing project, through developing the organization Informal Settlement's In Struggle (ISIS), bringing together informal settlements and backyard shack dwellers in the surrounding suburbs to work towards driving the state to establish a housing programme in the area.

⁵⁰ See Oldfield 2004 for a discussion of such processes elsewhere in Cape Town.

⁵¹ In establishing these projects, the broader community of Zille-Raine Heights is supported through fundraising, education and donations. For instance, the community is currently in the process of producing its second play, performed by the children. This serves as a space to build children's confidences, fundraise for the community, while providing an appropriate space to openly address the realities of living in ZRH.

⁵² The day after the land occupation, 19 March 2006

structures. Their unity supported their resolve to remain on the field⁵³. During the month of searching for an advocate and attorney in order to file an appeal for eviction, every community member contributed R50 towards the legal fees, even though this was a large sum for unemployed residents. This allowed them future financial security to retain legal representation for the appeal if need be. These moments of unity in adversity illustrate how elements of trust and understanding are central to this cooperation.

There is a sense of communality situated in recreation that is uncommon in secure housing communities, which are gated off from one another. The streets of ZRH embrace a vibrant, alive and busy ambiance. Every Sunday, people come outside and sit in Tamatie Straat – *die plek waar alles gebeur*⁵⁴. They play dominoes and cards, read magazines, listen to music, or share food over a fire. Connie describes the symbol of Tamatie Straat as representing unity in communal activity:

Everything happens in Tamatie Straat...Like when the sun shines on the weekends...Then everyone takes a chair from their house, or like a *kissie (wooden crate)* ... then you go sit in the street. Here is the people that play cards, there are people that play dominoes there. There are people that listen to music or braai (*barbeque*). So it is like you are in Sand Vlei, Soetwater. It is like you are camping. (17/07/08)

In these specific spaces and temporalities, residents claim their ownership of the land. And through these experiences, people build their meanings of home.

5.3 The importance of social networks for activism and everyday living

Living in a space where insecurity and informality characterise lives, social networks are central to the survival, well-being and building of the ZRH community. These connections allow people to negotiate around the challenges of living in informality, through actively meeting material requirements, and attaining socially sanctioned goals (Ross 2005; Oldfield and Boulton 2005). By drawing on networks in their community and also by linking externally with Capetonian, South African and international activists and organizations, ZRH have attempted to consolidate their claims to stay in their settlement. Social networks are crucial on a day-to-day basis, central to family survival strategies.

⁵³ Loraine, personal communication 09/09/08

⁵⁴ Meaning 'the place where everything happens' (Lydia, personal communication, 15/07/08)

What ties the community together is a trust and dependency on one another. This is illustrated, at the base level of survival, in ways people come to access food. Many spaces of the settlement transform into places of food sharing - outside when cooking pot-roasts over the fire, inside homes in family structures, and across homes, as people knock on one another's door requesting items on a daily basis. The multiple ways the community supports one another also involves money lending and pooling, childcare, funeral assistance as well as visiting the sick⁵⁵.

In creatively negotiating the physical constraints of living in informality, support networks also extend beyond the boundaries of the community. Accessing employment by gaining knowledge of vacancies via acquaintances is common. Residents of neighbouring communities allow families to use their freezers and fridges to store meat and to use electrical connections to charge cell phones⁵⁶. Exchanging labour for food is a regular practice. The account below of Connie highlights the importance of these support systems.

Sometimes there is no food but I survive...If there is nothing here, I ask them (*ZRH residents*) for something and they give it to me. It's just yes or no. Or you will do something for them... When I go to my friend (*in permanent housing*), I ask if I can do anything around the house. If she got ironing to do I do her ironing. If she got washing to do I do her washing. She doesn't have to give me money. She can imagine now there is nothing. And then she gives me a few potatoes, and a piece of meat, and some rice. And I can have something to eat. (17/07/08)

Support of relatives is also a central necessity in many people's daily lives. Some residents send their children to stay with family members during the winter season. Other people spend weekends at the homes of family members. However, within these acts of family support we again see a tension of assistance and resistance. During the initial stages of the settlement's development, some family members resisted the decision taken by people to occupy land. As a result, some refused to visit the settlement, nor assist the land occupiers⁵⁷. The residents of ZRH negotiate this ambiguity in support and opposition carefully. Engagement with the community, from all those affected upon by land occupation and evictions, is continually shifting.

⁵⁵ Rebecca, personal communication 21/07/08

⁵⁶ Eleanor, personal communication 23/08/08

⁵⁷ Lydia, personal communication, 15/07/08

According to Eleanor, connecting with social movements, activists and researchers has played a central role in accessing information and resources that were significant in supporting their efforts to access secure housing:

I think the more support you have, the more information you have, people can't just evict you. You know your rights. Because as I said, myself and Loraine went blind into this and we didn't know our rights, nothing. And by trial and error we came to know all our rights. And with all the organizations we came to know more. So in that sense, I think it is because we had all the organizations behind our court case, that we not evicted here. (23/08/08)

From the initial stages of the community's development, links were established with movements⁵⁸ –'in the beginning...they were there to guide us' (Eleanor, 23/08/08). These networks have been instrumental in accessing legal representation in the case, which the City of Cape Town lodged against the community, as well as the appeal. Leaders have been afforded the opportunity to establish political skills, and residents have cultivated their knowledge of their housing and services rights. These connections have also allowed members of the ZRH community to support other communities fighting eviction and housing insecurity. Networking has thus allowed the community entry into broader political, economic and social housing debates.

While residents continue to engage with city officials as a means to access secure housing, individuals and the community of ZRH are hindered in their efforts for secure living conditions due to City representatives' procedures, legal processes and law enforcement attitudes. In these experiences and struggles, the case demonstrates how state processes of eviction exacerbate the insecurities of those living in already very tenuous conditions. Yet through collective adaptability, innovation, collective mobilization and social and political connections, individuals, families and community have maintained their homes, and for the meantime, their right to a home in the city. In these tensions, people make sense of home and personhood.

⁵⁸ Such as the Homeless People's Crisis Committee, the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign, International Labour and Research and Information Group and the Social Movements Indaba.

6. Conclusion: Making homes and building personhood

Anna: I'm quite happy. And it feels like my own house. Because I made it well comfortable for me and my children. And my children are quite happy here. They take it as a house. (28/07/08)

People's experiences of land occupation and responses of the state representatives inscribe very particular meanings of how they come to understand themselves as individuals, positioned in the multiple layers of society. In these experiences, residents of ZRH come to understand themselves as citizens, activists, shack-dwellers, fighters, individuals and community members. These multiple identities are bargained and filtered through racialized, gendered and class-based lenses (Salo 2003). Yet, understandings of the self are negotiated, balanced and shifted on a daily basis through these everyday practices and relations.

Legal and state institutions assign the label 'land invaders' to the ZRH community, a label that imposes very particular meanings of personhood. As citizens of the state they are identified as illegal – perceived as prohibited, illegitimate, criminal, not belonging⁵⁹. In their search to build homes and security, they are paradoxically threatened with dislocation from Cape Town – physically and symbolically. They are removed from their social networks, away from employment opportunities, schools, sports facilities, families and neighbours. These fundamental needs are essentially denied in the everyday lived experiences of people residing in insecure and informal environments.

Home is an ideal towards which people strive, over which they struggle and in relation to which they construct aspects of identity (Ross 2005). The private sphere is a platform into the public realm – where individuals both reproduce and contest these categories (Marston 2000). Home is a place where children are reared, where religious services are held, where political action plans are developed, where information is distributed, and where the unemployed become independent

⁵⁹ This labelling, and the way the state handles land occupiers by forcibly removing people to the urban periphery, is similar to the state practices and categorization methods adopted during the apartheid era (Huchzermeyer, 2003).

entrepreneurs⁶⁰ (Charlton 2008). Home is a place that symbolizes independence and gendered empowerment, a symbol of ownership and respectability (Ross 2005). Ownership is what halts cycles of uprootment and insecurity, offering a secure place to establish oneself and to both physically and emotionally invest in (Lee 2005). Homes represent a place and symbol of urban legality and permanency (Oldfield and Boulton 2005). In this stability, people claim their citizenship. In these spaces, complexity and diversity speak to one another. Home is thus a space in which agency is built and identities are shaped.

I have used the case study of Zille-Raine Heights to gain insight into the lived experiences of housing struggles, land occupation, and forced removal practices, and how through these experiences home, community and personhood are established. The ambiguities and complexities intertwined in these accounts suggest that perceptions of processes and relations are continuously evolving and carefully negotiated. Residents adapt and shape their lived realities, such as Eleanor, the community matriarch who has marched in Prince George's Drive, sat in boardrooms of lawyers, and chaired community meetings; Loraine, the founder of the initial housing project who publishes newsletters and speaks confidently to academics and politicians; Lydia, who writes minutes and initiates theatre productions; Jan and David who knock on residents' doors to canvass about responses to the eviction order; and Connie, who waits in anticipation for the weekend to sit in Tamatie Straat.

Experiences, such as these have shown that although City threats of eviction advance the everyday lived concerns of families in ZRH and the insecurities that leaders mobilize against, through collective action, drawing on social networks, and nurturing the community from within, individuals and families nonetheless inscribe meaning in their lives.

In conclusion, the case of Zille-Raine Heights illustrates ways in which people strategically assert themselves into particular merging points of community and state-driven processes in housing delivery. ZRH community-based activism illustrates how role-players establish the possibility for, and build their capacity to,

⁶⁰ See appendix E, figures 4, 5 and 6

make use of democratic institutions, discourses and rights (Stokke and Oldfield 2004, Oldfield and Stokke 2007, Tornquist 1999, 2002). The ways the Zille-Raine Heights community mobilizes and negotiates living in informality exemplifies the potential for participatory democracy in the post-apartheid era and how marginalized populations can promote citizenship through formal and informal arenas.

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8. Appendices

Appendix A: Case study location

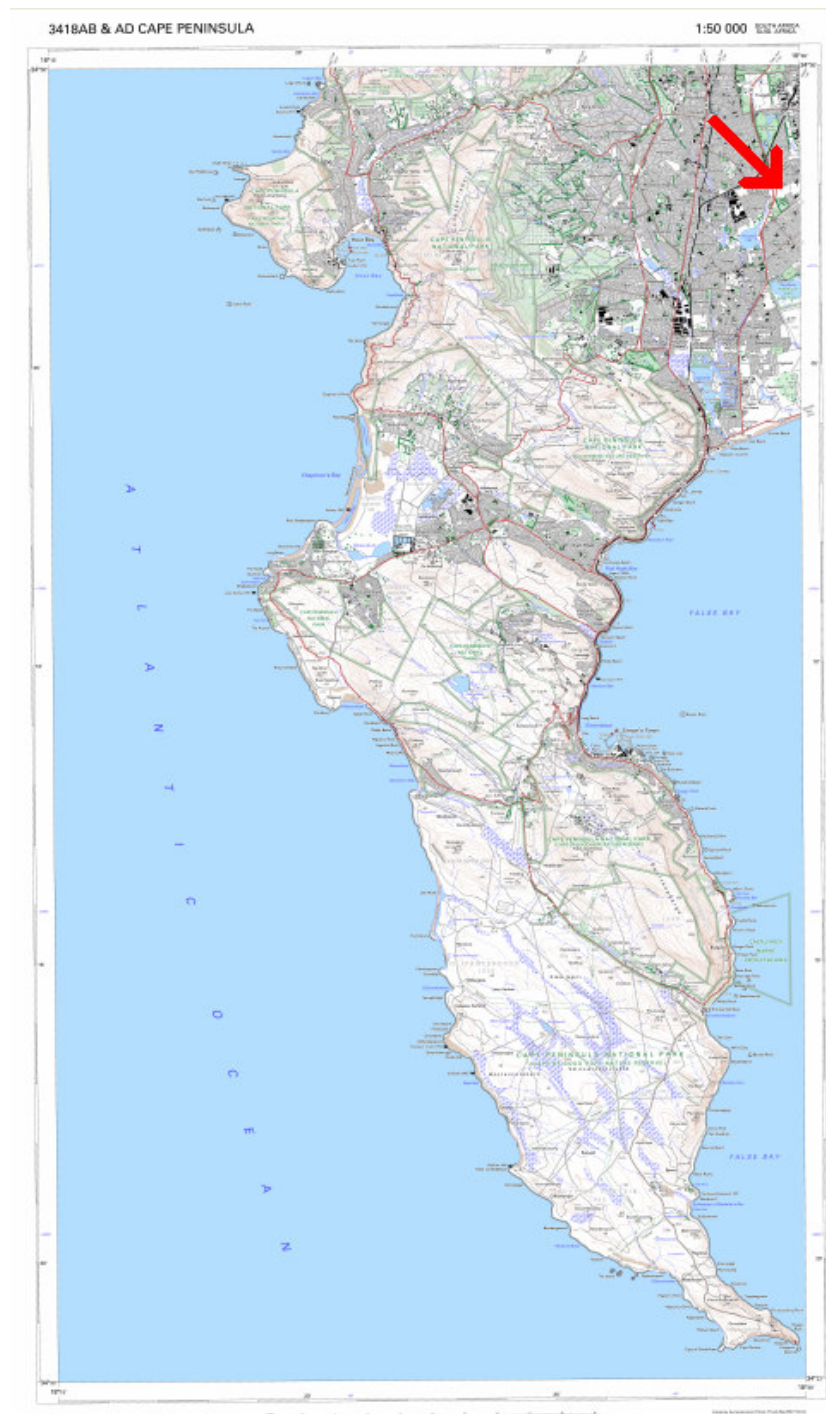


Figure 1:
Zille-Raine Heights is situated SE of the Cape Town central business district. (*Department of Land Surveying, City of Cape Town 2008*)



Figure 2:

Suburb map of Cape Town (closer view at the same map in figure 1). The cross indicates the location of ZRH. The settlement lies on the border of Parkwood Estate and Grassy Park. (Department of Land Surveying, City of Cape Town 2008)



Figure 3: Aerial view of Zille-Raine Heights. The central road running through the settlement is Tamatie Straat.
(Department of Land Surveying, City of Cape Town February 2008)



Figure 4: The settlement is situated on the corner of Klip Road and Acacia Road.



Figure 5: Level view of Zille-Raine Heights when entering the settlement

Appendix B: Summary Table: Relevant Circumstances in Zille-Raine Heights:

Completed by Zille-Raine Heights Residents and researchers from the International Labour Research Group (Koni Benson and Ronald Wesso) and Environmental and Geographical Science Department, University of Cape Town (Sophie Oldfield). 24 March 2007

Updated by Zille-Raine Heights Residents (Eleanor Hoedemaker and Loraine Heunis) and Environmental and Geographical Science Department, University of Cape Town (Joy Waddel and Jessica Thorn). 5 August 2007

Total Number of Individuals in Zille-Raine Heights in Different Relevant Circumstances Data Categories	Number	Percentage
Total number of residents	254	100%
Total number of women	136	53.5%
Total number of women headed households	38	62.3%
Total number of men	115	45.3%
Total number of children	104	40.9%
Total number of teenagers	61	24%
Total number of minors	165	65%
Total number of elderly (Pensioner age)	7	2.8%
Total number of disabled	12	4.7%
Total number of unemployed	64	25.2%

Women headed households: Female breadwinners (single headed or not)
 Elderly: Pensioner age (Over 65 years)
 Minors: Under the age of 18 years
 Employed: Many residents work on 3 – 6 month contract bases which does not afford benefits of full-time employment
 Unemployed: Currently without work – subject to change, usually depending on monthly government grants

Access to Services, Work, Schools and Facilities from Zille-Raine Heights	Name and Location of Employer/Institution/Service
Location of employment	Grassy Park, Parkwood Estate, Wynberg, Observatory, Wetton, Paaden Eiland, Diep River, Muizenberg, Pinelands, Blue Route, Athlone, Retreat, Woodstock, Cape Town, Tokai, Constantia, South Field, Noordhoek; Bellville; Mitchells Plain, Bonny Town; Strandfontein; Fairways; Rondebosch; Kenilworth; Montegu Gardens; Maitland
Type of work	Building labourer; Electrician; Buchery; Cleaner; Domestic Worker; Fixing Rooves; Shop Assistant; Cook; Ironer in Factory; Machinist; Embroidery; Nurse; Carpenter; Security Guard; Sowing; Hairdresser; Catering Employee; Creche carer; Till worker for general store; pharmaceutical worker; City council worker; Lorry Guard; Fish Company worker
Schools	Parkwood Primary School; Hillside Primary School; Fairmount High School; Plantation Primary School; EC Primary School; Lotus River Primary School; Grassy Park High School; Grassdale High School; Lotus River High School; Fairview Primary School; Montagu's Gift Primary School; Sid G. Rule Primary School; Mitchells Plain; Batavia High School; Douglas Primary School; Bakroad Primary School; St. Mary's Primary Catholic School; Perivale Primary School; Westlake College; High Park Primary School; Montegu Primary School; Lavender Hill Preschool; Hyde Park Primary School
Day Care	Zille-Raine Heights Relative care (with/out remuneration); Parkwood Estate; Lavender Hill creche; Dove Road crèche
Health Services	Lotus River Day Hospital; Grassy Park Clinic and Day Hospital; Klip Road Health Clinic (Grassy Park); Busy Corner Heath Clinic (Grassy Park); Retreat Day Hospital; Parkwood Clinic; None
South African Police Services	Grassy Park (Metro Police assistance on occasion)
Recreation and Sports Centers and Fields	Parkwood Recreation and Sports Centre, Fairmount High School, Lapland, William Herbert (Wynberg); Cape District

Services	
Water (communal tap)	3 (2 function)
Sanitation(portable toilets)	14 (3 households per toilet)
Electricity	None
Waste Disposal	Each Wednesday
Transport	Taxi and bus routes in/from Grassy Park

Appendix C: Zille-Raine Heights Settlement Map : Collated (5 August 2008)
 [Benson, Oldfield, & Wesso March 2007 , Updated: Thorn, Heunis, Hoedemaker, Waddel, August 2008]
 [Key: House number, number per people per household, family name]

UIWE STRAAT

56: (6) Hope	55: (5) Hendricks	54: (3) Jacobs	52b: (2) Dudley	52a:(5) Africa	51: (5) Ables	50: (4) Ables	49: (2) Van Zyl	47: (3) Botha	46: (4) Visagie	45: (4) Fransman	43: (5) Matthews	61: (6) Hendricks
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29: (5) Bezant	30: (3) Swartz	31: (4) Farmer	32: (5) Jacobs	33: (5) Rykliet	35: (5) Barnes	36: (6) Hoedemaker	37: (9) Poegenpoel	38: (4) Adams	39: (4) Alberts	40: (7) Williams	41: (9) Gordon
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28:(4) Achmat	27: (4) Ring	26: (4) Lubbert	25: (4) Cloeter	24: (4) Webb	23: (7) Koordom	22: (6) Jacobs	21: (6) Snyders	20: (3) Petersen	19: (4) Adams	18: (6) De Beer	17: (3) Hendricks	16: (3) Van Zyl	15b:5 Snyman
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1: (4) Tango	2: (4) Daniels	3: (3) Marinus	4a:(6) Peter - son	4b:2 Adam s	5:(6) Webb	7: (5) Moses	8a: (5) Antho- ny	8b:5 Anth- ony	9a: (3) Alberts	9b: (4) Jaftha	10: (3) Alberts	11: (5) Bruyns	12: (5) Anthony	13: (3) Hendricks	14: (3) Jones
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Appendix D: Chronology of Zille-Raine Heights (October 2005-August 2008)

Grassy Park residents and surrounding areas begin meeting monthly in the home of Loraine Heunis	October 2005
Connect with the Anti-Eviction Campaign, Homeless People's Crisis Committee, Indi Media, Anti-War Coalition	October 2005- March 2006
Decision taken to occupy land (corner of Civic Road and Lake Road)	16 March 2006
Sixty-three families settled on vacant land March 2006	18
Shelters demolished, Mayor visits site	19 March 2006
Meeting with Mayor, council officials, LOGRA and ratepayers	21 March 2006
Meeting to identify temporary relocation area (TRA) with Human Settlement Services	22 March 2006
Report back of TRA	24 March 2006
Mayor corresponds with Homeless People's Crisis committee, representing land occupiers confirming temporary relocation in close proximity to Civic Road	25 March 2006
First 10 families are moved to TRA erf 77856 (Metro Police 24-hour watch for a period of three weeks to control threats of ratepayers to burn down shacks)	27 March 2006
Interdict served on behalf of the City	30 March 2006
ZRH connect with the Hillview Housing Forum, BuildingWomen's Activism, Social Movements Indaba, International Research and Information Group	March 2006- October 2006
ZRH Committee positions established	03 April 2006
Code of Conduct Established	04 April 2006
Meet with Mayor for residents of ZRH to voice their concerns	05 April 2006
Meet with the City to discuss alternative land, such as that in Ottery and Pelican Park	06 April 2006
All 63 families completed relocation to designated site	12 April 2006
Council officials and ZRH Community - enquiring about length of stay on TRA, service provision of TRA, definition of 'beyond borders', plans in place for housing acquisition, organizational registration	25 April 2006
Ratepayers defecate outside homes of ZRH to indicate their discontent of the location of ZRH	25 April 2006
Follow up meeting to alternative sites with City	02 May 2006

Meeting with officials and consultants regarding service delivery	19 May 2006
ZRH Constitution established	28 May 2006
Happy Valley, Blackheath identified	June 2006
Community taken by City official to see Happy Valley	June 2006
Began search for legal representation	August 2006
Confirmation and application for the national housing database	17 August 2006
Meet with city officials to voice concerns of Happy Valley	15 October 2006
Eviction Ordered on behalf of the City of Cape Town	October 2006
1st Court appearance: City of Cape Town v Jennifer Tango and others Case No. 11038/06: Request trial postponement for ZRH to access legal representation	30 October 2006
2nd Court appearance without legal representation	08 December 2006
ZRH file opposing affidavits	08 January 2007
Recommendations for Pelican Park approved	13 March 2007
Residents march against their eviction on Human Rights Day, on a main arterial	21 March 2007
ZRH Children's Concert: <i>Alles Gebeur in Tamatie Straat</i>	31 March 2007
Violent clashes with Parkwood Estate ratepayers	17 May 2007
3rd Court appearance; ZRH community picket outside the Cape High Court	30 May 2007
Two shelters burn down	12 June 2008
Judgment for eviction served without ZRH representation	13 June 2008
Search for new legal representation	June- August 2008
First meeting with advocate and attorneys	04 August 2008
Collect affidavits from community	06 August 2008
ZRH community apply for an appeal; City officials visit site offering assistance for relocation to Happy Valley (residents decline)	12 August 2008
Eviction suspended	13 August 2008

Appendix E:



Fig. 1: Negotiating electricity costs – sharing heat from the fire to heat water in the evenings



Fig. 2: Connie's home is made up of articles given to her by friends and relatives. This illustrates the importance social networks.



Fig. 3: Tamatie Straat was completely still on the day of the contested eviction, as fear and confusion kept residents hidden in their homes.



Fig. 4: Small-scale textile industry



Fig. 5: House-shop
Home as a site for economic opportunity



Fig. 6: House-shop

Appendix F:



Figure 1: Flight map clearly shows the wetland upon which the settlement is situated (upper right-hand dark patch indicates a marsh).
(City of Cape Town Land Survey Department 2008)

Appendix G: Search for legal representation

(From the date of judgment was delivered 13 June – 4 August 2008):

[written in first person on behalf of ZRH community leaders]

Friday 13 June

Emergency judgment given without the presence of ZRH residents or legal representation of Mr Bodart

Monday 16 June

Public Holiday (Youth Day)

Tanya Pieterse from People's Post came to interview regarding the eviction judgment and that's when the community first found out about the judgment

Tuesday 17 June

Visited Mr Bodart who scheduled an appointment for the 23 July 2008

Monday 23 June

Mr Bodart suggested Zaine Matthews apply for legal assistance for the appeal, as Eleanor was currently not in a position to do so. He also said that the managers would need to decide whether they would take on the appeal case.

Monday 31 June

Met with researchers from University of Cape Town (Dr Sophie Oldfield and Jessica Thorn) to compile contextual information and letter for the Justice Board

Tuesday 1 July

Edited letter for Mr Bodart request for appeal

Thursday 3 July

Visit Happy Valley to collect evidence of conditions of the area. Collected voice recordings, photographs and interviews

Friday 4 July

Deliver grounds for appeal and attached evidence to Mr Bodart

Monday 7 July

Legal Aid Board:

Mr Rynard Bodart: On the day the appeal was supposed to be submitted, he declined our request for representation to appeal at 15h30. We were told incorrectly by the registrar at the High Court, Ms Phuswanethat the appeal was to be lodged the following day.

Monday 7 July

Spoke to Emma Holtman, who suggested Legal Resource Centre and the help of Peter van Heusten from Indomedia

Tuesday 8 July and Wednesday 8 July

Legal Resource Centre:

Spoke to Anthea Pillay (who assisted ZRH with Relevant Circumstances) and the Director of the LRC - Mr William. Steve Keinowitz was on leave, Shehaam Samaai from UWC was in Egypt . They spoke to the UCT Legal Aid Board (Mr Shamel Yansen) , UWC Legal Aid Board, Stellenbosch Legal Aid Board. The Legal Resource Centre referred us to the Cape Law Society

Wednesday 9 July

Cape Law Society:

Did not look the letter which was sent to them by the LRC. According the secretary Milaga, Mr Jean Roman , who she said is the only pro-bono attorney they have, is "out of capacity for next three months" –that is, not available to assist us. She then referred us to the Law School

Wednesday 9 July

Law School :

There are only para-legals and they give advice. We spoke to Sam who referred us to the High Court registrar.

Wednesday 9 July

High Court:

Spoke to Mojadi Phuswane Registrar (Wayne, and Hannes on leave and Fraser not available) who used the Hortes. She sent us to two attorneys: Batchelor and Associates - Mr Eric Louw - who said that the firm only deals with Delictual matters and would not help us. (Phuswane suggested Mr Louw should be reported to the Cape Law Society as any civil lawyer must accept the IFE.) Then went back to the High court and we were referred to Bowman Gilfillan Inc (Mrs Tamara Dini). Also met two article students attorneys who on requesting permission from their Masters were declined the opportunity.

Friday 11 July

Met with Shannon and Ward Counselor George March to ask for assistance at Independent Democrat offices, Grassy Park

Friday 11 July

Met with the Hillview Housing Forum: Spoke to Owen, Charmaine, and Sali to ask for assistance for legal representation

Monday 14 July

Mr Pillay from UWC rejected our request as he did not believe we had sufficient grounds for appeal. He said however he would consult with the director of the Law Clinic at UWC, Shahaam Samaai. The Hillview Housing Forum did not find us an attorney.

Monday 14 July

Delivered the Informa Pauperis to Bowman Gilfillan by hand, with attached documents.

Wednesday 16 July

Bowman Gilfillan got back to us saying Mr Athol Gordon would take the case

Thursday 17 July

Received a letter from Mr Gordon requesting confirmation of respondent as the Informa Pauperis was incorrectly filled in by the Registrar at the High Court

Friday 18 July

Athol Gordon suggested that he was not the appropriate choice of person to represent the community due to his personal views and his standing position in representing a corporate body which is currently promoting the eviction of residents in an informal settlement in Flamingo Vlei.

Monday 21 July

Attorney Michael Bagram rejected request for representation

Shahaam Samaai (director of UWC) law clinic accepted our appeal case working with Mr George Pillay and Genevieve

Monday 28 July

Requested written confirmation of appeal from Mr George Pillay

Friday 1 August

Brief delivered to Rosaline Nyman's chambers

Monday 4 August

First meeting with Roseline Nyman, Shahaam Samaai, Genevieve (article clerk), Eleanor Hoedemaker, Mandy Jacobs and Jessica Thorn in Nyman's Chambers

Appendix H: Documentation of plans for shackdwellers involved in the Pelican Park pilot project

Our investigation has determined that at the meeting held on 21 March 2006 the Executive Mayor advised that it was her intention to have a **pilot project** in the area where vacant land would be identified with the local community so that infill housing could be provided.

(Excerpt from report published by the City of Cape Town; City Ombudsman's Office, unknown date)

Zille finds new land for homeless

HANNAH ROBERTS
Staff Reporter

FIFTY homeless families whose shacks were ripped down 10 days ago in Grassy Park have dropped their court case against the city after the mayor offered them an alternative piece of land. Mayor Helen Zille was in Grassy Park at 1pm yesterday to announce the availability of temporary land for shelterless people, on which they could build legally, and said some people would move as soon as today. The families were to take their case to the Cape High Court yesterday as they alleged the evictions were illegal, but found Zille's offer too good to refuse. "It would have been foolish not to accept," said Colin Arendse, secretary of the Homeless People's Crisis Committee. "The court would not have looked favourably on us if we had rejected the city's olive branch." The new land in Bockwood, not far from Lake Road from where the families were evicted, is a temporary solu-



tion while permanent homes are sought under a pilot scheme initiated by Zille. Ultimately, some families will be accommodated in houses and some will be allocated land with services on which to build if their situation is very urgent, said the city project manager for the area, Basil Davidson. Zille heard about the land invasion and subsequent removal of the shacks and was in Grassy Park the same day to arrange meetings with community leaders. "We can't allow land invasions, but we recognise that there is a great housing crisis in this area," said Zille. On Human Rights Day, the city, Zille and community leaders decided that an alternative piece of land had to be found within a week.

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Keeping promises: mayor Helen Zille talks to homeless Grassy Park residents yesterday.

(Cape Argus, 20 March 2006)

Appendix I: Living circumstances in Happy Valley, Blackheath

(Research conducted and document compiled on 3 July 2008. Interviews conducted by Loraine Heunis and Eleanor Hoedemaker; Photographs taken by Jessica Thorn)

Sanitation



Fig.1 & 2: Every three households are provided with one toilet. Poor maintenance means toilet bowls are clogged up, faeces can be found on the floors of the toilets, and some structures are broken.



Fig. 3: Home-owners from a nearby suburb deposit their refuse on a rubbish dump within the settlement. Homes are within a few metres of these unsanitary mounds. Anonymous respondents accounted for that starving people eat off the rubbish dumps.

Overpopulation:



Fig. 4: The image shows a family of five who sleep in a single bed.

Electrical provision:



Fig. 5: Anonymous respondents described waiting eight months prior to being connected to the City of Cape Town's electricity grid. Connections are precarious and unsafe. Water seeps through the roofs of some of the shelters and consequently electrical shorts occur due to exposed electrical connections. Various homes have burnt down as a result.



Fig. 6 & 7: During winter months, the poor thermal properties of the materials which the homes are built from, require most homes to have fires within the shacks which is a safety hazard.

Materials



Fig 8: On arrival to Happy Valley, the government provides residents with a housing starter kit, which consists of plastic sheets, corrugated iron and poles (People's Post “No joy as Happy Valley looms large” 13 March 2007). Corrugated iron sweats due to the body heat produced in the overpopulated shelters, which makes the dwellers sick.



Fig. 9: Cardboard is also used to keep in the heat which is an additional safety hazard as fires are built inside the homes in the winter rainy months.