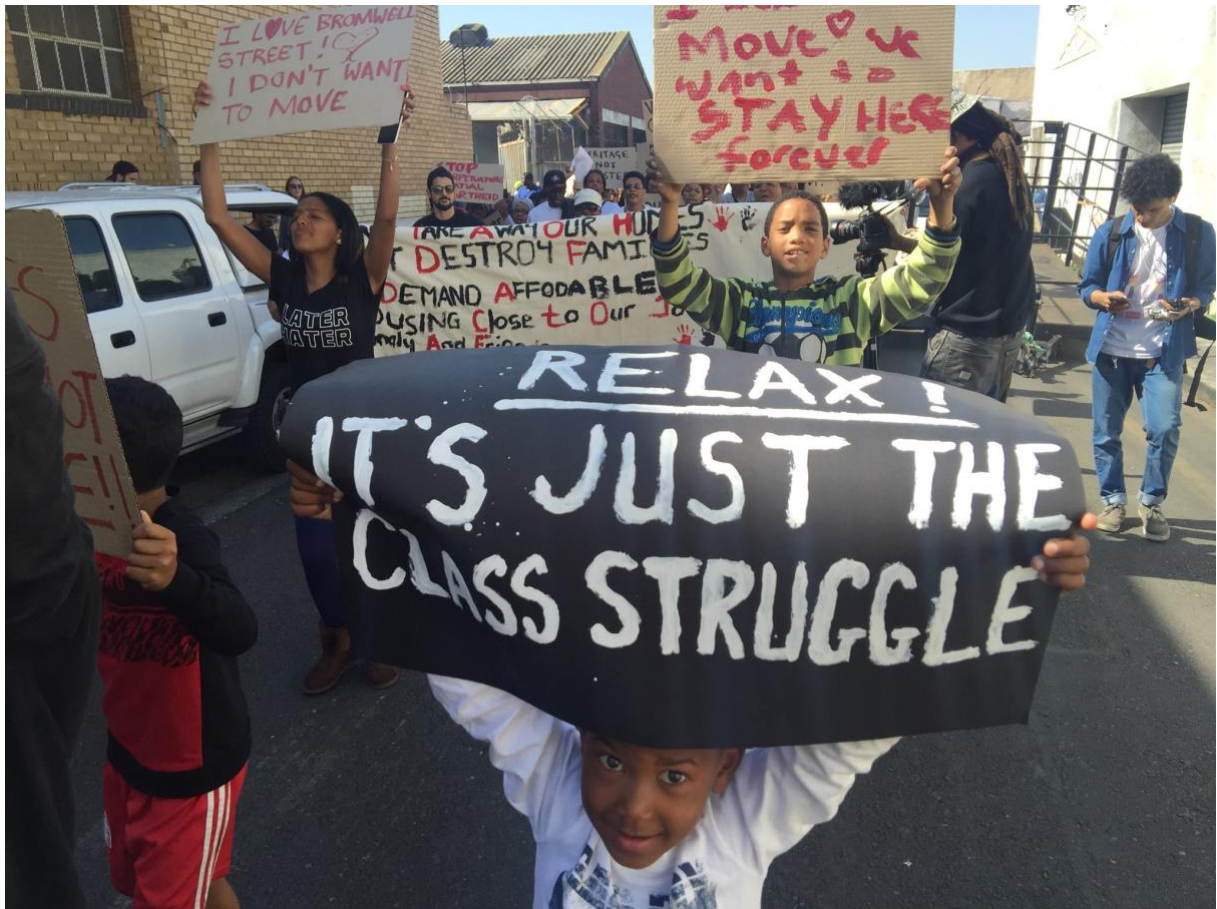


“Not the bulldozers but the money”

Producing space in a gentrified neighborhood

A case study of Woodstock



Demonstration in Woodstock 2017 ©Photo by Omar Badsha



**MASTER THESIS CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY:
SUSTAINABLE CITIZENSHIP**

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15th of August 2018

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The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights.

- David Harvey

The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.

- Marcel Proust

Foreword

First and foremost, I want to thank Mara: merci beaucoup monsieur. You opened a whole new world for me while making me feel so at home. Your resilience, spirit and perspective on life have inspired me endlessly. I can honestly say that you gave me new eyes to this world, I am extremely grateful for that.

My gratitude goes out to everyone I met in Cape Town, this amazing city with beautiful people. Thank you all for opening up to me and for sharing your stories, you enriched my knowledge and perspective about the research topic – and life for that matter.

In addition, I would like to thank everyone who has supported me during this past few months in this –sometimes very difficult- process of writing. Special thanks go out to my parents, sisters and friends who supported me no matter what. Last but definitely not least, I want to thank my supervisor Nikkie for being supportive and patient during the whole process.

The decision to study anthropology has been one of the best choices in my life: with the knowledge and insights I have gained over the past year, a new world has opened up for me. And I hope that I will never stop wondering about life as I learnt in the process of becoming an anthropologist. That is why my last word of thanks goes to the department of cultural anthropology of Utrecht University.

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Introduction

“It is like a modern war ... or should I say the modern survival of the fittest?” I just took a seat at a hip hair salon in Woodstock. “A modern war,” I hear myself repeating what I just heard, realizing I find this metaphor striking. When I tell my hairdresser—a White, twenty-something guy originally from Johannesburg—that I research gentrification, the abovementioned is his first reaction. It surprises me to hear this bold description from someone working in a typical ‘gentrified’ place. He continues: “It is so sad, yet so hard to stop. What should we do about it?”¹ By ‘sad’ he refers to the displacement of people, often the original inhabitants of Woodstock, who are forced to move out because of rent increases. The barbershop is located on Albert Road, the main road of Lower Woodstock. This street has become the décor of classic gentrification: it is lined with trendy shops, hip coffee spots with mostly young people zipping on ‘flat whites’, art galleries and a beer brewery.² It is not the only gentrified neighborhood in Cape Town, but it is the area where gentrification has manifested itself the clearest. Nowadays, Woodstock is seen as the example of a gentrified neighborhood in South Africa (Wenz 2012).

Gentrification is a complex urban process. Since the 1960s, researchers from various disciplines have been studying the phenomenon (Murphy 2008). Gentrification occurs globally and marks a neoliberal era in our world. While originally described as a process of expulsion of the lower social class in neighborhoods due to rising house prices (Glass 1964), today many researchers shift the focus away from the negative effects (Slater 2006). As ‘hipster’ coffee shops and galleries make their appearance all around the globe, gentrification nowadays gets the image of a positive innovative trend (Slater 2006).

Gentrification has become an eminent subject in modern global society, since it is inextricably linked to consumerism and the neoliberal city. Cape Town is a neoliberal city, as it aims to increase its competitiveness on the global stage by adopting a ‘world class marketing agenda’ to attract investments and tourists (Lemanski 2007; Dider Morange, Peroux 2013). However, neoliberalism often goes hand in hand with the further deepening of segregation in cities. As the number of people living in cities rapidly increases, questions of justice cannot be seen independently from the urban

¹ Informal conversation with de hairdresser, Woodstock, April 10 2018

² Fieldnotes Woodstock 21 april 2018

space. Moreover, it is the neoliberal city that “condenses the manifold tensions and contradictions that infuse modern life” (Swyngedouw 2010, 80).

While many researchers are mostly concerned with defining the process of gentrification, Rose (1984) and Beauregard (1986) argue that gentrification should not be perceived as merely the invasion of inner city areas by 'yuppies'. They focus on the complexity and chaotic character of the process. Stutton (2015) also emphasizes the complexity of gentrification, stating that “people often define gentrification as renewal of a city, but that is highly simplistic.” She tries to shift the focus towards the social perspective, referring to gentrification as “the manifestation of social inequality.”³

In South Africa, the urban space is highly defined by the struggle to achieve inclusivity, as apartheid left the country with deep marks of inequality (Samara 2011). The apartheid regime, which ruled between 1948 and 1990, shaped both social relations and space. This also applies to the urban space of Cape Town, where traces of apartheid are embedded in and inextricably linked to its contemporary society (Minty 2005). The recent apartheid history of South Africa makes its urban space an interesting terrain to study power relations (Samara 2011). Urban space, after all, was and still is the field where the battle for equality is fought. This struggle is inscribed in space and is inevitably linked to race, since the apartheid regime divided the city along racial lines.

As gentrification continues to spread around the world, there is a danger of it being perceived as a universal process. This would not help the understanding of gentrification, since it is formed to a large extent by context-dependent and local factors (Smith 2002), which makes the impact different in different places. Van Weesep (1994) already pulled the emergency bell in 1994, arguing that we rather need to look at the effects — not the causes — of gentrification. In line with Van Weesep, Slater (2006) Wacquant (2008) and Watt (2006) point out that there is little literature about the non-gentrifying groups living in neighborhoods invaded by middle class groups. They argue that the attention is often shift away from the negative effects of the process. Policymakers have the same tendency and present gentrification as “a boost for everyone”, which it is clearly not (Lees 2014). By analyzing more bottom up

³ Sutton, Stacey. 2015 What we don't understand about gentrification | Stacey Sutton |

TEDxNewYork <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XqogaDX48nI>, assessed last on 14 July 2018

perspectives on gentrification, the real impact of it can be explained (Wacquant 2008; Watt 2006).

While gentrification is often seen as “class-based colonization of urban land,” the racial dimension cannot be denied (Moore 2009, 138). Studies have shown that gentrification is strongly linked to class (Smith 1996) and race (Lees 2000). Several researchers even refer to neoliberalism as “a new racial project under conditions of democracy” (Hetzler, Medina and Overfelt 2006, 638). The impact of gentrification, silhouetted against the history of South Africa, opens old wounds and, as this research shows, instigates processes of exclusion along ‘old’ racial borders.

A lot of the literature concerning gentrification and the neoliberal city is written by geologists and urban planners. It is the anthropological eye that differs by emphasizing everyday experience, imagination and cultural representation. As Jaffe and Koning (2016) argue, “it is precisely this perspective that consistently runs through the discussions on place-making, urban livelihoods and power dynamics.” Thus, analyzing the neoliberal city using an anthropological approach sheds light on the social and cultural aspects that shape the urban space on the local scale.

The aim of this thesis is to analyze how space is socially produced and shaped in the process of gentrification in Woodstock. Smith (1996) suggests that gentrification is simply “the most visible element in a complex makeover of the urban landscape.” Hence, it is crucial to further interrogate the urban change in which neighborhoods are gentrified. To go beyond the visible, I engage with Lefebvre and his famous work ‘The production of space’ (1991). Space, as described by Lefebvre, is not neutral—it does not exist “in itself” (Sayre 2009, 28). He argues that space is socially constructed, as it involves reproducing the social relations that are bound up in it. As stated by Lefebvre (1991, 116), ‘The analysis of every space brings us up against the dialectical relationship between demand and command, along with its attendant questions: ‘Who?’, ‘For Whom?’, ‘By Whose agency’, ‘Why and How?’’.

Essential to the theory of Lefebvre is the idea that every society produces its own space. Hence, to understand a society, the production of its space should be analyzed (Healey 2007). Thus, the primary task to understand gentrification and its impact, is to examine the productive process of space rather than simply observing “things in space.” Therefore, I show how urban space in Woodstock is socially produced by analyzing how

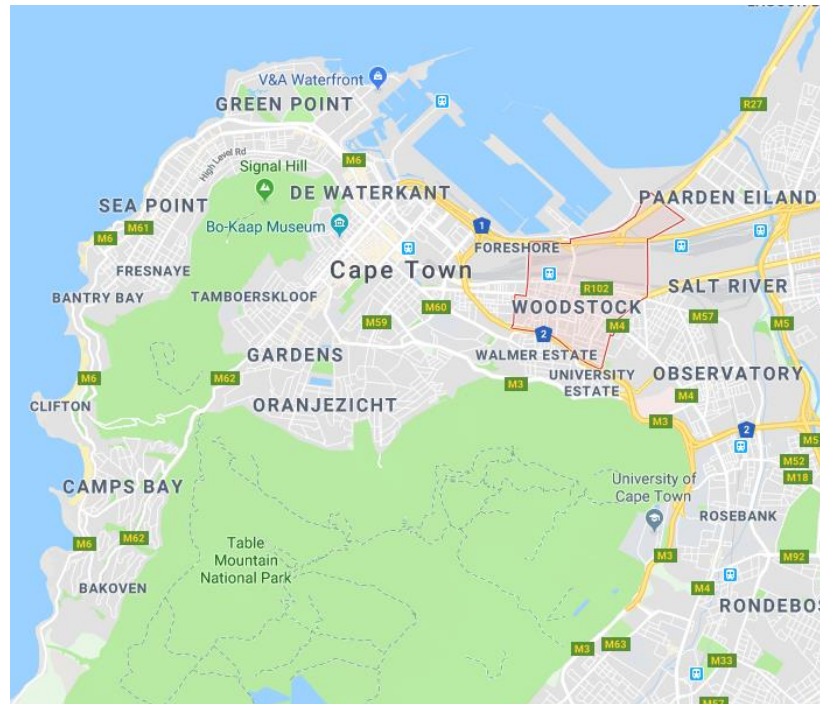
the urban life is experienced, what actors are involved and how the production includes and excludes people. This leads to the main research question:

How is urban space produced in neoliberal and post-apartheid Woodstock?

To understand urban space and the associated production process, I choose to study it from two perspectives: the 'gentrifiers' and the 'non-gentrifiers'. By gentrifiers, I refer to the group of people whose power is reproduced through the process of gentrification. The non-gentrifiers are the people unwillingly facing the process of gentrification⁴. I am aware that this dichotomy is far from ideal, since the true composition of society is much more varied. Furthermore, this division may suggest that both groups are understood as homogeneous, which is far from the truth. However, this dichotomy allows me to scrutinize how power is enacted throughout the production of space and to shed light on the experiences of this process by groups facing the consequences of gentrification. Logically, there is also a group that lives through gentrification (Doucet 2009); this group remains underexposed in my thesis, since my aim is to show how gentrification manifests itself in the urban space.

⁴ The term 'non-gentrifier' has been used by several researchers, see for example Gkartzios and Scott (2012) and Doucet (2009).

Figure 1: Map of Cape Town⁵



Research location

The research is conducted in Woodstock, Cape Town's oldest district, located eastward of Cape Town's City Business District (CBD) (see figure 1). According to the last census in 2011, Woodstock has around 10.000 inhabitants.⁶ Over fifty percent of the inhabitants belongs to the group of 'Coloreds'⁷, which I will elaborate on in the next chapter. Woodstock was one of the few neighborhoods in Cape Town that initially remained racially mixed (Garside 1993). In the early days of post-apartheid Cape Town, Woodstock became a popular place to live for suburban white and Colored professionals who worked at the city center. In addition, an invasion of creative entrepreneurs came to Woodstock, being attracted by Woodstock's Victorian architecture. These movements were the start of the gentrification in Woodstock (Garship 1993). As will be described in chapter one, a new wave of gentrification followed at the beginning of this century. Nowadays, Woodstock is described as the 'hipsterheaven' of Cape Town². In the last ten years, the district has become more and more of interest to property developers and other business people who want to benefit from Woodstock's popular image.

⁵ Map is downloaded via Google Maps at 13 August 2018

⁶ <https://census2011.adrianfrith.com/place/199041> accessed on 17th of June 2018.

⁷ When I refer to Coloreds as a group of people, I write it with a capital letter, same with referring to 'Whites', 'Blacks', etc. When someone's skin color is named as an adjective, it is written without a capital letter.

Methodology

To find answers—and subsequently more questions—about how urban space is produced in Woodstock, I conducted fieldwork from the beginning of February until the beginning of May 2018. To decipher urban space and the social relations that are bound up in it, Lefebvre emphasizes that his theory needs to be embodied ‘with actual flesh and blood’ (Merrifield 2000, 175). In this regard, I strongly believe in the benefits of engaged urban anthropology as it ‘engages explicitly with the questions of how social life is structured by and experienced within urban contexts’ (Jaffe and de Koning 2016, 3). Applying this approach enabled me to assess gentrification as it actually unfolds in everyday situations in Woodstock. Moreover, the ethnographic approach is valuable to urban space in its ability to combine the local discourse with larger economic and political structures (Low 1996).

Participant observation allowed me to better understand the impact of gentrification on the daily lives of Woodstock residents, which according to Lefebvre (1991) is where the theory should be practiced. It also gave me the opportunity to become familiar with the history and meaning of the urban space to numerous individuals, both gentrifiers and non-gentrifiers. In the beginning, I walked around a lot to explore Woodstock, observe public spaces and talk to people. I performed around twenty interviews with people I met and I collected information via internet and social media. I often conducted interviews using the so-called ‘ethnographic imaginary’. According to Forsey (2010), this approach entails listening to stories and asking questions outside the scope of the immediate research question. As I tried to understand the lives of my interviewees, I often asked questions outside the scope of my research question.

Interestingly, I often gained the most useful information during informal conversations. Wherever I went, I took a notebook to ‘jot notes’ or ‘scratch notes’ (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2002: 144). Interestingly, I often gained the most useful information during informal conversations. It was helpful that I knew what I wanted to learn from people (gentrifiers and non-gentrifiers), so I could still incorporate those questions in an informal conversation.

I used the eclectic approach to theory in my research, as described by Fetterman (2010), O’Reilly (2012) and many other researchers. During the data collection and the

development and interpretation of the collected data, I used theory to better understand what I had observed. Especially when studying the work of Lefebvre, it helped me to analyze the work of others that analyzed and applied his theory, some examples are Watkins (2005) Stanek (2008) Merrifield (1995). Reflecting on and connecting to theory is thus an essential part of the process of understanding the research field.

An important aspect to note here is the topic of 'informed consent'. As O'Reilly (2013) explains, it is difficult to balance between informing your informants enough and not explain all about the research as this may influence the informants. Whenever I interviewed someone, I always made sure they knew my background and the purpose of the interview. Even though none of my informants hesitated to tell their stories, I decided to use pseudonyms.⁸ This is a conscious decision since it is difficult to estimate, especially with the wide reach of the internet, who, in which context and with what understanding, this thesis will be read.

The main challenge during my research was to select those methods that met "the anthropologist's need to link experience with practice and structure (Low 1996, 863). To broaden my understanding of the urban space, I got involved with the social movement Reclaim the City (RTC) and participated in their twice weekly meetings for ten weeks. Those meetings were mostly aimed at discussing topics regarding social housing and to share ideas about ways to resist the current politics of the City⁹. To strengthen the triangulation of methods in my research, I attended several public meetings¹⁰ and I took a tour of the street art with a local to understand its meaning. To determine how gentrifiers shape the urban space, I analyzed three websites on which three new housing complexes are being promoted. I also examined several websites on which Woodstock is described as a tourist attraction. Besides, I visited two 'temporary relocation camps', in the outskirts of Cape Town¹¹. Those visits were intended to get a better understanding of the consequences of gentrification that occur outside of Woodstock.

Case study researchers are usually advised to set up the research based on objective selection criteria. However, as Healey (2007) argues, pragmatism often shapes

⁸ In some cases (like the interview with the Council) it was inevitable to mention organizations or companies.

⁹ When 'City' is written with a capital letter, I refer to the municipality of Cape Town.

¹⁰ I visited the Urban Land Dialogue on 27 March in Cape Town, City Bowl. For more information, see: http://www.sacities.net/images/Eastern_Cape_-_Many_dimensions_of_urban_land.pdf assessed last on 14 August 2018

¹¹ Those places are called Blikkiesdorp and Wolverivier, I will elaborate on those visits in chapter 3.

the selection more than strict criteria. This matches my own experience. Researching urban space offers an almost inexhaustible range of actors and spaces that can be investigated. During my fieldwork, I chose actors and places that enabled me to tell the story about gentrification that I want to tell. A criticism of the case study is that these studies produce context-dependent knowledge. As Flyvbjerg (2006, 223) argues, however, “social sciences have never succeeded in producing general, context-independent theory, and, thus, has in the final instance nothing else to offer than concrete, context-dependent knowledge”.

A case study then, becomes the perfect format for producing this kind of knowledge. In accordance with this statement, (Eysenck 1976), who originally considered the case study to consist of solely anecdotes, later realized that “sometimes we simply have to keep our eyes open and look carefully at individual cases—not in the hope of proving anything, but rather in the hope of learning something!” Or, as Campbell claims, “After all, man is, in his ordinary way, a very competent knower, and qualitative common-sense knowing is not replaced by quantitative knowing.... This is not to say that such common sense naturalistic observation is objective, dependable, or unbiased. But it is all that we have. It is the only route to knowledge—noisy, fallible, and biased though it be.” (Campbell in Flyvbjerg 2006, 224). This explanation of a case study matches what I want to achieve in my thesis: it is not about finding hard facts or a truth, but about gaining insight that contributes to the better understanding of the process of gentrification

Structure of the thesis

The first chapter provides the research context. To understand contemporary Woodstock, it is essential to understand the history of South Africa and especially the history of the neighborhood. The life story of Fabian, born and raised in Woodstock, offers rich insight of the present and the past of Woodstock. His story takes us along the main aspects that together tell the story of contemporary society in Woodstock.

Chapters 2 and 3 show the two different sides of the gentrification process. Chapter 2 sheds the light on the gentrifiers involved in the process of gentrification. Analyzing the practices of several groups of gentrifiers unravels the process of space making. Analyzing the gentrifiers, shows who they are and what they do, which leads to a better

understanding of their agency and how this shapes the urban space. Chapter 3 analyzes how the process of gentrification is experienced by the community of Woodstock. The neoliberal character of Woodstock, as demonstrated, exposes the prevailing power relations, as well as values about what is 'in and out of place'. The last chapter provides a conclusion in which the most prominent findings are summarized. The outcome of this analysis shows that gentrification is not a spatially or culturally uniform process (Rofe, 2003).

Chapter 1: A complex city

“It is a very complex city within a very complex country.” Fabian, 53 years old, has just taken a sip of my coffee when he makes this comment. I met Fabian in my second week of fieldwork. He was sitting outside on the pavement while taking a break from his work together with two co-workers. They were in the middle of an amused conversation when I approached them. Once they knew my origin, they enthusiastically started to talk Afrikaans. “Hoe gaan het met jou?”¹² they asked, and so we chatted for a while. They spoke Afrikaans and I did my best to catch up by responding in Dutch. This helped to feel a certain click right away. I told them about my research and soon I noticed that Fabian had a lot to say. Fabian was born and raised in Woodstock: “I grew up fighting the apartheid regime.” Fabian has been a social activist for most of his life. He explained: “I worked for the Trade Union Movement and the Anti-Apartheid Movement and I supported the Catholic Church that tried to end the apartheid.¹³ I come from what we refer to as ‘the school of 1976’, a group of young people who grew up fighting the apartheid.” After our first meeting, we started to meet regularly, mostly in one of the coffee shops at Victoria Road, the main road of Woodstock. This is the second time we discuss the development of Woodstock over a cup of coffee. When I ask Fabian about the impact of gentrification, he remark the following: “From a global perspective, we are facing challenges in South Africa that are not specific to us. The struggle is about re-imagining a city that must make space to accommodate all levels of society within a city. This happens all around the world. What makes it complex in our context, is our history.”¹⁴

This chapter is meant as a sketch of the context in which gentrification takes place in Woodstock. Following the story of Fabian, this chapter gives insight into the history of Cape Town and more specifically of Woodstock. As becomes clear, race is a highly defining aspect in the production of South African urban space, so this chapter discusses how race can be understood in the production of urban space. Besides, this chapter sheds the light on the change that Woodstock has experienced in the past twenty years, which is the result of the neoliberal policy of Cape Town. Investigating how

¹² Informal conversation with Fabian, Woodstock, 20 February 2018

¹³ The Trade Union Movement and the Anti-Apartheid Movement fought for equal rights for Blacks and Coloreds. <https://tavaana.org/en/content/struggle-ground-anti-apartheid-movement-south-africa> accessed last on 10 July 2018.

¹⁴ Semi-structured interview with Fabian, Woodstock, 26 February 2018

gentrification shaped the urban space provides a first insight into the influence of neoliberalism in urban life of Woodstock. This context, the history, the unavoidable role of race combined with the theory about the production of space shed the light on the dynamics, both social and economic, that play a role in the current urban landscape of Woodstock.

Legacy of apartheid

“Watch out, do not get too familiar with Woodstock or you will get bitten by the bug.” It is a sunny afternoon and I am ‘hanging around’ with Fabian and some of his co-workers when the oldest of them, Patrick, makes this remark. “The more time you will spend in Woodstock, the more you will love it. We are just one big family,¹⁵” he proudly exclaims. By ‘we’, Patrick refers to the original inhabitants of Woodstock, of whom the Colored community forms the majority.¹⁶ South Africa's Coloreds are descendants from the Cape's indigenous Khoisan, slaves brought from South and East Asia and Madagascar during the 18th century, and European settlers from the Netherlands, France, England, and Germany. The name ‘Coloreds’ was given to the mixed-race, residual populations descended from these points of contact during the 19th century mainly by a colonial administration focused on the legal and territorial separation of Europeans from other groups (Goldin 1987; Robinson 1996).

This classification informed later practices during apartheid. The implementation of the apartheid regime was done by the ‘Afrikaners’, the White descendants of European settlers, of whom the Dutch were the first to colonize South Africa. Apartheid means separateness in Dutch. The regime that ruled between 1948 and 1990, held the White race superior to all. Thus, two distinct sets of laws were implemented: one applying to Whites and the other to non-Whites. In this way, non-Whites were denied “active and equal role in the moral and political decision-making process” (Shore 2009, 75). This legislation shaped both social relations and space. “There was never any form of recognition as a person, you were a number, you were contracted. Your first identification was with your race, not with your human dignity,” as Fabian describes the impact of decades of apartheid. “Only for Whites it entailed being seen as an individual, being able to develop your own identity. For Blacks, Coloreds and

¹⁵Informal conversation with Patrick, Woodstock, 4 March 2018

¹⁶ According to the most recent census in 2011, 51% of the residents in Woodstock is Colored, for more information see <https://census2011.adrianfrith.com/place/199041018> assessed on 10th of June 2018

Indians, it was horrible. People were forced to leave their houses, it was impossible to move freely,” he continues, his voice is powerful and clear¹⁷. Fabian’s description shows how people were labeled as members of racial groups.

African cities, too, were rigorously organized along racial lines (Garship 1993). The Group Areas Act, as the apartheid system was called, divided urban space along racial lines. Whites lived in pleasant, green suburbs and Coloreds, Indians and Blacks were forced to live in underdeveloped and geographically isolated or marginal areas (Jelly-Schapiro 2014).

However, racial segregation was not new to South Africa’s pre-apartheid society. The racial and spatial structure of the apartheid state were built upon “a solid colonial fundament” (Jelly-Schapiro 2014, 47). For Example, the Group Area Act was, revised and expanded version of the Native Urban Areas Acts instituted in 1923. According to this law, Blacks were prohibited from residing in urban areas unless they were employed there (Jelly-Schapiro 2014). Cape Town, however, was an exception at that time.

Before well into the twentieth century, people in Cape Town could live together with different racial backgrounds without being restricted by legislation (Bickford-Smit 1995). The introduction of the apartheid system radically transformed Cape Town from one of the least segregated cities into the country’s most divided urban environment (Western 1997). The legacy of this structuring still informs South Africa’s cities; although democracy replaced the apartheid regime in 1994, the social segregation remains embedded in South African urban space (Houssay-Holzschuch and Teppo 2009; Garship 1993). To better understand the impact of apartheid in Woodstock, I first discuss the history of the neighborhood. Afterwards, the analysis continues by scrutinizing post-apartheid South Africa, and more specifically Cape Town.

‘Blue print of a future open society’

Woodstock was one of the few neighborhoods in Cape Town that remained racially mixed during apartheid, a so called ‘grey area’, and stood at that time “as a blueprint of a future open society” (Garside 1993, 31). The fact that Woodstock remained a mixed neighborhood was mainly due to practical reasons. “There were too many people of

¹⁷ Semi-structured interview with Fabian, Woodstock, 26 February 2018

mixed descent living in and around the area,” Fabian explains, “From one house to the next, there were too many different people. It was impossible for the government to individually work out who lived where and who could stay where.”

The mixture of ethnicities living in Woodstock, can be explained through successive waves of immigrants, such as the post-Boer war British settlers, rural Afrikaners in the 1920s, Eastern European Jews in the 1930s, Southern Europeans in the late 1930s and early 1940s, and most recently, Portuguese immigrants from Angola and Mozambique in the 1960s and 1970s. Besides taking in these waves of immigrants, Woodstock remained home to generations of working class White and Colored Capetonians (Garside 1993).

Even though Woodstock itself was never declared a ‘White area’, the district did not escape the impact of the apartheid regime. In 1966, the adjacent neighborhood District Six, which was declared ‘White’, was evacuated aggressively. During this brutal event, 60,000 people, mainly Colored families (Bickford-Smith, van Heyningen & Worden 1999, 183), were removed by the government and sent to the desolate new townships on the Cape Flats (Hart 1988, 1990). As many of Woodstock’s factory workers’ families and friends lived in District Six, some of them tried to find new homes in Woodstock (Garside 1993). “I know stories of several families who were forced to move out. My uncle and his wife for example, they used to live in District Six. When the bulldozers came, they had to leave everything, their house, their possessions,” Fabian said. “They stayed at our house for a couple of months before they found a new home in Woodstock.”¹⁸ Many of the original residents of Woodstock were directly or indirectly confronted with evictions in the past.

Woodstock has always been a working-class neighborhood with many industries. “Labor has no color,” as Fabian once explained to me. He elaborated: “Whoever wanted to work hard, was welcome in Woodstock. Woodstock was one of the least attractive places to live, located directly at the beach; the wind was always very strong. Hard-working people of all kinds came here to earn their money as fisherman.”

From 1920, the industries started to reshape the neighborhood. The beach had to make way for the extension of the harbor and new railway lines that still form a solid barrier between Woodstock and its seafront (Wenz, 2012). Fabian explains: “A significant number of textile industries and factories settled in Woodstock and created

¹⁸ Informal conversation with Fabian, Woodstock 18 March 2018

jobs for the working classes.” But globalization soon had its impact on the structure of Woodstock. When South Africa in the seventies opened their market to the global, most factories started to close as it was easier and cheaper to import fabrics from Asia that were already manufactured (Garside 1993).

As many workers resided in Woodstock, the decrease of work changed Woodstock’s society. Fabian explains: “With this change of trading patterns, their old cultures and lifestyles, many people had to move out. They could not afford to stay in Woodstock.” This decline caused rises in crime, drug abuse and poverty in the neighborhood (Wenz, 2012). From the late 1980s, attracted by the proximity to the city center of Cape Town, middle class families made their way into Woodstock. In addition, Woodstock’s Victorian architecture appealed to many artists, architectural businesses, and small advertising enterprises, who settled down in the neighborhood.

With this new influx, Woodstock changed more and more from surrounding districts as a mixture of residential, retail and warehousing activities. The location, the history and the old architecture caused a first wave of gentrification in Woodstock in the early days of post-apartheid South Africa (Garside 1993). Back then, this gentrification was not initiated from the top-down, but rather by changing economic patterns and the preferences of people moving into the neighborhood (Wenz 2012).

As the present gentrification in Woodstock is inseparably linked to the neoliberal city, the following paragraphs go deeper into the the post-apartheid and neoliberal context of Cape Town. Subsequently, the current transformation of Woodstock is explained.

Neoliberal Cape Town

The end of the apartheid regime was an enormous human accomplishment. However, the elections in which the African National Congress (ANC)—with Nelson Mandela as the new president— emerged as the winner, did not change the gigantic division in wealth between the majority of Blacks and Coloreds and the minority of Whites (Peet 2002). In the early days of post-apartheid, the government took a neoliberal turn. This transition was “relatively seamless, though far from uncontested” (Samara 2011, 7).

From the redistribution and development programme (RDP), a social development policy implemented after the first democratic election, the state switched to the growth, employment and redistribution strategy (GEAR) in 1996 (Peet 2002).

This implementation was aimed at removing racist legislation and establishing a constitution guaranteeing a set of human rights, which included the right of access to land and decent housing and services (Napier 2007).¹⁹ However, despite these legal changes, South African cities and towns continue to manifest the historical inequality of class and race in their spatial patterns of land use and ownership (Seekings and Nattrass 2005). This is where the neoliberal character of South Africa is exposed very clearly. As land governance systems are designed to promote economic development, land has become a complex commodity globally (Piketty 2014). Yet, the underlying system that determined the urban planning of cities in South Africa was designed to deliver inequality and exclusion. The land market, therefore, is based on race, as racial laws governed who could own and access land (Napier 2007).

Although the idea behind the neoliberal turn was that growth and investment would work for the benefit of all, the new policy reinforced the enormous divide between rich and poor.²⁰ People who already own capital, of which land is a component, have become disproportionately wealthier over time while those unable to access capital have become, comparably speaking, poorer (Piketty 2014).

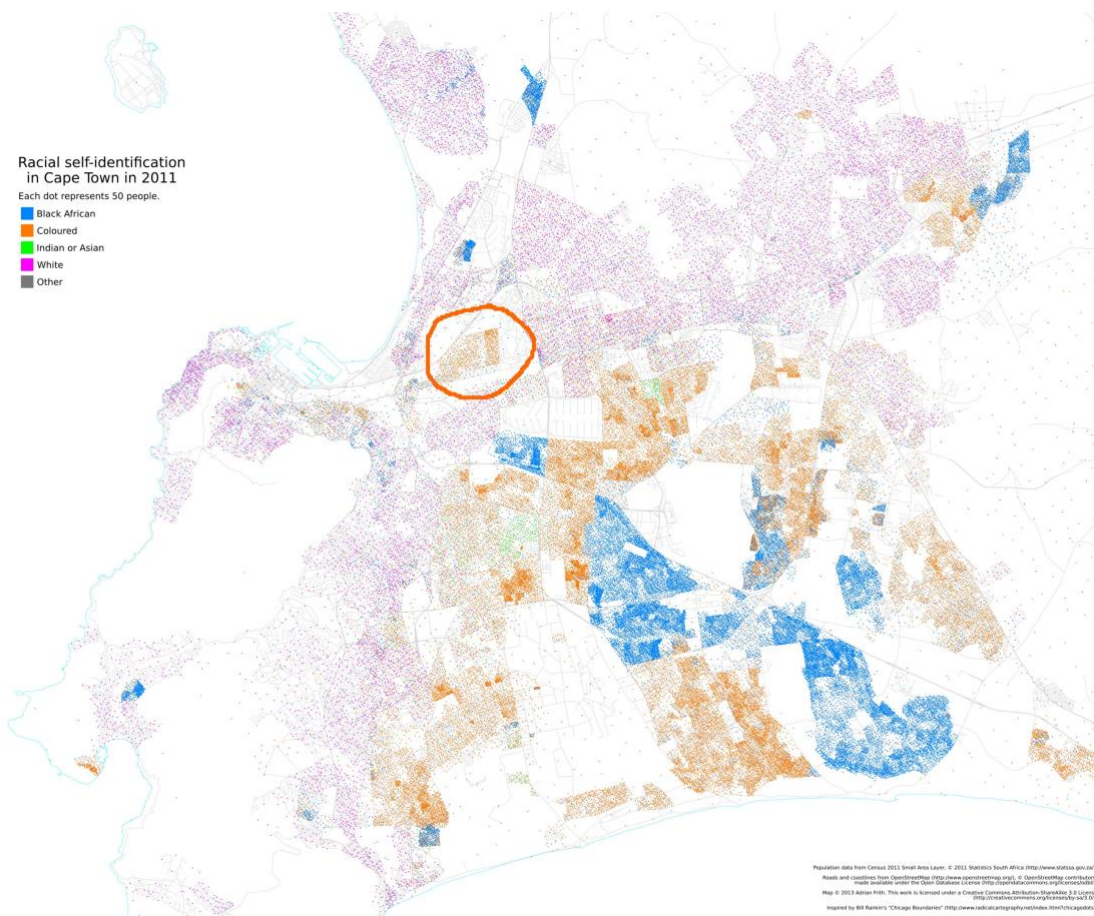
Today, therefore, the concept of 'the neoliberal city' reaches its fullest definition in Cape Town. As Bayat (2012, 111) describes, the neoliberal city is "a market-driven urbanity; it is a city shaped more by the logic of the market than the needs of its inhabitants; responding more to individual or corporate interest than public concerns." In Cape Town, differences of wealth are clearly visible and are made even more poignant by the proximity of wealth and extreme poverty. In some areas, townships unfold immediately next to beautiful residential neighborhoods.²¹

¹⁹ The South African Constitution adopted in 2006 states in clause 25(5) that "the state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to foster conditions which enable citizens to gain access to land on an equitable basis."

²⁰ It must be noted that apartheid had a devastated impact on many aspects of society, resulting in a very complex political landscape within a very complex society. Due the limit of my thesis, this cannot be elaborated. A good overview of the South African history is provided by Nigel Worden, *The Making of Modern South Africa: Conquest, Apartheid, Democracy* (Oxford 2007).

²¹ A good example is Hout Bay and the adjacent settlement Imizamo Yethu

Dot-map of racial distribution in Cape Town²²



To illustrate the segregated urban landscape of Cape Town, the 'Dot-Map of racial distribution Cape Town' is added (Woodstock is circled). The map shows how the inner city of Cape Town is still largely inhabited by White citizens,

whereas Black and Colored people live at a much larger distance from the inner city and many live in bad circumstances in townships²³. It does not require much imagination to understand what this division means for one's possibilities in life. The inner city has all

²²Map is made by Adrian Frith, I drew the circle to clarify Woodstock's position, the map is based on the census of 2011, for more information see: <https://adrianfrith.com/dot-maps/> last assessed on 14 August 2018

²³ According to the census of 2011 the two biggest Townships in Cape Town together housed over 600.000 people. In Cape Town for a detailed overview, the census can be consulted via [https://www.westerncape.gov.za/assets/departments/treasury/Documents/Socio-economic-profiles/2016/City-of-Cape-Town/city of cape town 2016 socio-economic profile sep-lg.pdf](https://www.westerncape.gov.za/assets/departments/treasury/Documents/Socio-economic-profiles/2016/City-of-Cape-Town/city%20of%20cape%20town%202016%20socio-economic%20profile%20sep-lg.pdf) <http://www.capetown.gov.za/Family%20and%20home/education-and-research-materials/data-statistics-and-research/cape-town-census> Assessed last on 10 August 2018

amenities one can ask for: good education, good medical care, well-maintained streets, enough police and enough space to give children a decent home. Whereas living in the outskirts or in the townships means living crammed together, often lacking the abovementioned facilities. Thus, where you live in Cape Town has an enormous influence on your future prospects. It determines to a large extent what kind of education you can enjoy, which job you can get afterwards and what status you will achieve in society.

The above analysis may sound short-sighted, because it mentioned only several facets that play a role in determining someone's future. Moreover, there are many social problems in the suburbs, which I do not explain here. The intention of this short sketch, however, is to indicate where race and class in the urban landscape mix and why these two constructs cannot be seen separately from each other in the context of Cape Town. This point is in line with the theory of Lefebvre, as he states that urban space is never simply given; rather, it is a social product. Taking into account the context of South Africa, it becomes very clear why Lefebvre emphasizes that 'more than before, "the class struggle is inscribed in space." (1991, 55).

The urban space of Cape Town, as evidenced by its history, is inextricably linked to the struggle for social equality. Following the theory of Lefebvre, the impact of 'race' in the experience of urban space cannot be neglected. The way we look at space today might be totally different from perspectives in the past, but this does not change how they are or have been perceived, conceived and lived (Millington 2011). At the same time, it demonstrates why Lefebvre argues not to treat spaces as absolutes and "to think beyond the here-and-now of urban reality in order to comprehend how spaces came to be, how they were produced (and in whose or what interests)" (Millington 2011, 5).

Despite this large degree of segregation, the City continues to implement its neoliberal policies by proving itself to be an ambitious city with many aspirations to strengthen its position and increase competitiveness on the global stage (Lemanski 2007). Until 2014, Cape Town operated under the slogan "the city that works for you." Then it changed to "Making progress possible. Together." While the previous slogan contained a message of a social nature, the current one reveals the neoliberal character of the political agenda of Cape Town.

The neoliberal perception of urban space illustrates a shift in the use of the city

space from industrial to commercial. In the new policy, culture is perceived as an important vehicle for local economic development and urban regeneration (Creative Cape Town 2010; Evans 2009; Rogerson 2006). Cape Town started to use city marketing to promote the city both as creative and touristic place. Its efforts succeeded—it became ‘the World Design Capital’ in 2014. With this title, the city both attracted a lot of creative people and tourists and caught the attention of investors (Dider Morange, Peroux 2013). The urban space in Woodstock has been transformed from industrial to commercial as well. The last part of this chapter analyzes the process of urban renewal in the neighborhood.

“The time has come”

It is a greyish, rainy day when I decide to look inside a curious-looking second hand shop on Albert Road. From the outside, the building looks dark and inconspicuous. It has a large window that you can barely see through. I immediately get the feeling that this is a store with lots of old stuff. The door is locked, but when I appear in front of the entrance, the door opens automatically. After I make my way through all kinds of trinkets—dolls with big eyes, old maps, silver dishes and pompous lamps—I see an old man sitting at a desk. The conversation starts easily, because Pierre—as he introduces himself—clearly likes to talk.

Born and raised a White Parisian, now in his mid-sixties, Pierre has seen the whole transformation of Woodstock. In 2003, he decided to buy this building. “Back in the days, this was a big drug hole, no one wanted to buy it or had any idea what to do with it,” he explains to me while enthusiastically making wild gestures. “I wanted to live close to the city center and this was simply the only building in Woodstock I could afford. Back then, there were no clues that Woodstock one day would become so popular.” He takes a moment to think and continues: “well, you know, the city center could not be expanded to other sides, only to the west, so that meant towards Woodstock.”

Pierre decided to renovate the building and then rented out the first and second floor and turned the ground floor into a club. “We had great years, it was very busy in the club, all kinds of youngsters came to have a great time here,” he said as he walks through his shop, Pierre shows me the bar in the back, which is still there. “After a couple of years, I felt like I was too old for having a club. I was thinking about closing it,

when I looked outside my window and saw women on the streets wearing jewelry. Then I realized: the time has come, I can open a shop myself and sell jewelry and what not.” When I ask him what he means with “the time has come,” Pierre elaborates: “back in the days it was very dangerous, you would never see women wearing jewelry in public, because they would be robbed immediately. Woodstock, say, fifteen years ago was a real shady place, there were no restaurants or nice shops, no tourists would come here. Gangsters ruled the streets. But then things started to change, they started to renovate buildings, I saw more young people taking up residence in the neighborhood and it became safer on the streets. So then I realized it created other opportunities. That’s about ten years ago.”²⁴

As the story of Pierre illustrates, Woodstock has gone through a major transformation. Gentrification has been the driving force behind these transformations, as it is nowadays generally understood as ‘the process of rehabilitation of working-class residential neighborhoods by middle-class home-buyers, landlords and professional developers’ (Visser and Kotze 2008, 2567). Gentrification in Woodstock started in the late 1980s and continued into the 1990s, when Woodstock became a popular place to live for suburban White and Colored professionals who worked at the CBD. In addition, an invasion of creative entrepreneurs followed, attracted by Woodstock’s Victorian architecture. This was the first wave of gentrification.

The second wave started in 2003, when several local business leaders joined forces to improve the urban environment of the neighborhood. Urban decay was their main concern to improve the areas’ safety, cleanliness and greenery.²⁵ Two years later, this initiative was intensified with the support from the City Council, leading to the establishment of the Woodstock Improvement District (WID) in 2005.

The beautification of the area became a focus point for the stakeholders in Woodstock. Reinvestment in the area followed these developments. The establishment of the Old Biscuit Mill is seen as the starting point for further gentrification in the neighborhood (Booyens 2012) after the opening of more shops and restaurants in Woodstock. This illustrates a wider understanding of the process of gentrification. As Smith (2002) argues, ‘retaking the city for the middle classes’ is not just about gentrified housing. New dynamics within the process, he notes, are based on ‘recreation,

²⁴ Informal conversation with Pièrre Woodstock 4 April 2018

²⁵ <https://wid.co.za/about-us/> assessed last on 26 June 2018

consumption, production and pleasure as well as residence' (2002, 443). These dynamics will become clear in the following chapter, when the production of the gentrified space in Woodstock is further studied.

Pierre's description shows that the external characteristics of the neighborhood changed, through the renovation of buildings, and so did the composition of the residents and users of the neighborhood. To understand 'gentrified' Woodstock, the last part of this chapter describes the neighborhood.

Current Woodstock

Before I came to Cape Town, when I was still in the Netherlands preparing my research, I was already fascinated by Woodstock. Not in the least because of the contradictions often related to Woodstock. As much as it is described as still 'a dangerous neighborhood'²⁶, it is praised for being 'hot and happening'²⁷. So when the time came and I walked into the neighborhood for the first time, I was excited. Following is a description based on my observations during my stay in Cape Town.²⁸

Woodstock is divided into two parts: Upper and Lower Woodstock. The road that runs through these two parts is Victoria Road, which forms an important passage for traffic towards the center of Cape Town. Along the road, you find many local supermarkets and cafeterias, as well as a KFC and some national bank offices. This part of Woodstock makes a somewhat messy impression on me. The local shops often look a bit tattered, with messy sidewalks. I see mostly Colored and Black people 'hanging around' at the local stores. Here and there I see White people but they are definitely the minority in Woodstock. People crossing the road have to watch out for the mini taxi buses that pass by at a furious pace and often with a lot of noise.

If you move up into Upper Woodstock, the streets are noticeably wider, the houses are bigger and it is less noisy. This part has always been inhabited by mostly Whites (Garside 1993). If you move south from Victoria Road, you enter Lower Woodstock, which is located between Victoria Road and Albert Road. The urban landscape of Lower Woodstock looks different from the upper part. The streets are

²⁶ As I did research about Woodstock, I read websites on which the safety of Woodstock was discussed, an example is <https://www.quora.com/Is-Woodstock-Cape-Town-safe> assessed last on 14 August 2018

²⁷ <http://www.getaway.co.za/travel-ideas/things-to-do/things-to-do-in-woodstock-cape-town/> assessed last on 14 August 2018

²⁸ Based on field notes I made throughout my stay, not on one specific day, but a combination of several field notes

smaller and are characterized by many semi-detached houses with a Victorian architectural style.

During my walks through Woodstock, I often noticed that in Lower Woodstock people knew each other well—they knew each other's names, they showed involvement with each other's family and gave an overall impression of being familiar with each other. In Upper Woodstock, I saw fewer interactions like this.

After a five-minute walk downwards, you reach Albert Road, which is the main road of lower Woodstock. Here, the impact of gentrification is clear. Along the road, most of the buildings suit the description of a typical gentrified place—a combination of 'hipster' coffee shops, clothing stores, a brewery, etc. These are interspersed with a number of local mini supermarkets, where people mainly buy snacks and cigarettes. There are also a number of wood shops, which sell all kinds of products, such as furniture and frames. Also not to be missed are the high cranes that protrude above the still predominant low-rise buildings in Woodstock. These cranes are the promise for a new Woodstock, that is currently being built.

It is this street where you clearly see most tourists. When I walk through Albert Road, as I notice quite soon, I feel safer and more at home than when I walk through the narrow streets of Woodstock. Not only because I see more people walking here who clearly do not live in Woodstock either, but also because it feels strangely familiar. The coffee shops and vintage stores are similar to those in Utrecht and I know how to interact with people here.

What is different compared to my hometown, however, is the visible differences in wealth between people on the street. A good example is the number of parking assistants, mostly homeless people, who try to earn money by matching rich people's cars. At almost every street corner you find them. Also, between the gentrified places, you see shabby houses occasionally.

This chapter discusses the context of today's Woodstock by analyzing the broader history of both Cape Town and Woodstock. The story of Fabian illustrated the impact of apartheid in Woodstock and more generally, on human kind. By scrutinizing the post-apartheid governmental turn, is demonstrated how the reign of apartheid has shaped

both the social relations and the urban space. The neoliberal policies have further deepened social inequalities. The impact of gentrification in Woodstock has been studied in terms of its physical impact. The following chapter explores this topic further by discussing the actors whose power is reproduced in the urban space of Woodstock.

Chapter 2: “Welcome to the middle of everywhere”²⁹

“Let’s be honest, it has been twenty-five years, we have moved on now.” I do not know how to react to this resolute answer Brent just gave me. It is warm in the office of the project developer. I’m sitting around the table with Denzel and Brent as I proposed an interview to understand their point of view on gentrification in Woodstock. Denzel is in his fifties and the CEO of the company. Brent is thirty-five and works as an agent. Both are White and born and raised in Cape Town.

The question I asked Brent was to what extent the apartheid past still informs the current design of the city. Since it remains quiet, Brent continues by saying: “I must admit I am a bit tired of the whole apartheid thing being brought up because the generation that is living now, my generation, was raised without apartheid. You know, we are not the only country who has been going through this. Gentrification does happen, as we progress with technology, as we progress with anything, areas have to be renewed. You don’t want to have slums.”

This thought fits the broader context of the urban development agenda of Cape Town, as illustrated by the explanation given by Denzel. “The council is giving us the call. They want the city gentrified and they want affordable housing,” he explains. As the price of real estate increases, Brent and Denzel try to offer apartments at an entry level. “We are not interested in high and expensive apartments, but rather places that are affordable just ‘for the guy and the girl on the street’,” Denzel continues. Their company is currently building a new apartment complex on Albert Road. Brent explains: “So, we will be moving from block to block to block to block. What we won’t be doing is displacing people who has homes there. One has to be very sensitive about that.” Denzel adds: “You should not just flatten houses and build apartments there because where will these people go to? So, if you go to the place we are developing now, that has never been a residential place, next to it there has been a fire. And it has been drug places, we don’t want that. We have no sympathy for gangsters and all that kind of things.”

When I share my experiences of people struggling with the rental increase, Brent answers. “We are tired of hearing everyone saying we want a house, but we cannot afford it. We [their company] have small apartments, but we provide them at a low price, an entry

²⁹ The titel is derived from the frontpage of Woodstock Quarter, as they promote Woodstock as “The middle of everywhere” See also: <http://woodstockquarter.co.za/index.php/> last assessed on 12 August 2018

level market. None of those [people with low incomes] we have offered to stay in a place like ours was interested. We find it often that they prefer to stay in a shack and to ride a BMW,” Brent says with an ironic tone in his voice. “Or having a Louis Vuitton bag,” Denzel adds while slightly chuckling. Brent concludes: “These things rather than staying at our place. So, their mindset is different³⁰.”

Brent and Denzel are part of the so called ‘gentrifiers’ that are central to this chapter, in which I seek to unravel the power dynamics that operate within the urban space of Woodstock. The most important motive of gentrifiers is, as Smith (1979, 540) concludes, ‘the preference for profit, or, more accurately, a sound financial investment.’ As described earlier, there is a great number and variety of actors and organizations involved with the production of urban space in Woodstock. To show the power dynamics, I use the theory of Lefebvre (1991) to analyze five categories of gentrifiers that were the most present for me in the urban space of Woodstock. First, I continue analyzing how the future Woodstock is established by concentrating on developers’ strategies. Then the focus shifts to the street artists. Thereafter, I examine the impact of tourism in Woodstock, scrutinizing both the role of tourists and the tourist industry. Finally, I illustrate how the City plays an ambiguous role in the process of gentrification.

The production of space

To decipher the urban space, as briefly explained in the introduction, I use the theory of Lefebvre (1991). It should be noted that his theory is not easy to apply, or as stated by Merrifield (1995, 295), Lefebvre sometimes uses a “tantalizingly vague writing style.” Nevertheless, it is the analytical framework through which he deciphers space that gave me ‘new eyes’ to the understanding of space. Fundamental to his theory is breaking with the idea that space is an independent material reality ‘in itself’ (Sayre 2009, 28). Lefebvre, in principle, analyzed space as an entity that may have tangible materiality, and at the same time may be relatively immaterial, yet qualitatively distinct: a concrete abstraction (Stanek 2008).

In his masterpiece, ‘The Production of Space’ (1991), he explains the layers

³⁰ semi-structured interview with Brent and Denzel, City Bowl, 2 May 2018

through which space is produced.³¹ As will follow during the analyses in this thesis, I engage with his theory on several levels as it proved to be helpful to understand my data. In some paragraphs in this thesis, Lefebvre's theory is applied detailed, in other parts it is used more as a general framework through which space is studied.³²

As explained by Healey (2007, 204), Lefebvre "argues that 'space' is continually being produced by human processes of routine engagement, of intellectual conception and of cultural expression." These three elements refer to three types of space, respectively the 'perceived', 'conceived' and 'lived' space. As will follow during the analyses in this thesis,

According to Lefebvre, these aspects are most powerful when applied in a multidimensional analysis. He warns not to treat its theory as 'an abstract model' (1991, 40). I heed his warning in the analysis of the gentrifiers. However, to prevent his theory from becoming vague, I briefly explain his three spaces. The 'perceived' space refers to "the material dimension of social activity and interaction" (Schmid 2008, 36). This can be found in materiality of the city, daily routines and underlying socio-economic processes. The 'conceived' space refers to spatial concepts and abstractions applied by scientists, planners, and urbanists, among others. This is the space in which images are created and accordingly define how a space is conceived (Schmid 2008). Lastly, the 'lived' space refers to the space of "inhabitants" and "users", and of artists, anthropologists, writers, philosophers, ethnologists, and psychoanalysts, who seek 'to do no more than describe' (Lefebvre 1991, 39).

Thinking about space less as concrete and more as expression of power relations (Lefebvre, 1991), directs the focus to questions around agency. Therefore, this chapter aims to answer whose power is reproduced in the urban space, for whom and by who?³³

The developers

As illustrated in the interview with developers Denzel and Brent, they have a certain idea about the people they develop their apartments for ("just the boy and the girl on

³²It must be noted that his theory is very extensive as Lefebvre dissects the production of space at a very deep level. Given my scientific experience and the limits associated with this thesis, his theory is applied in a less profound way. Nevertheless, it offered me a fruitful analytical framework through which I analyzed the urban space.

³³ Since space is always produced in interaction, this chapter will also show at some points what the effect of this power is on non-gentrifiers, but the focus remains at the role of the gentrifiers.

the street”). Also, it is noticeable that they are aware that the production of new space in Woodstock is a sensitive topic, yet they are annoyed by ‘the apartheid thing being brought up’ and they seem to judge low income residents who complain about rental increases, by saying that they would “rather live in a shack and drive a BWM.” These statements give a first insight into how they perceive and conceive the urban space in Woodstock.

Developers are an important actor in the gentrification process, in the sense that they are the agents through which capital is invested in the refurbishment and development of residential properties (Smith 1991). The space developers create covers what Lefebvre calls ‘the conceived’, which are shaped in ‘the representation of space’ (1991, 33). Those spaces occur at the level of discourse, of speech as such, and consist of verbalized forms, such as descriptions, definitions and theories of space. Therefore, the space developers create plays ‘a substantial role and a specific influence in the production of space’ (Lefebvre (1993, 43).

Interesting questions, following Lefebvre, are: how do the developers represent the urban space and “whose interests are served when it becomes 'operational'?” (1991, 44). I took a closer look at these practices by analyzing three new developments that are currently build in Woodstock: WEX1³⁴, Urban Artisan³⁵ and Woodstock Quarter.³⁶ The first two projects are developed by South African agencies and the Woodstock Quarter was initiated by a Swiss company. I analyzed their websites to see how they promote their apartments and the neighborhood. This shows how the urban space is contextualized in their representations of space.

All three the websites emphasize the positive influence of the urban renewal by focusing on the benefits of combining the local with the modern. On the website of Woodstock quarter, the following is written: “While adopting the original and preserved heritage designs of Woodstock, staying true to the culture of the area, the development also brings to life modern accents.” On the website of the Urban Artisan, the impact of new developments is described as follows: “By injecting a positive and fresh energy into the neighborhood, Woodstock is attracting both established and new businesses, as well as providing urban living spaces.” The website of WEX1 does something similar, claiming that the renewal stimulates the community as “local and like-

³⁴ <http://wexliving.co.za> assessed last on 3 August 2018

³⁵ <https://www.urbanartisan.capetown/> assessed last on 3 August 2018

³⁶ <http://woodstockquarter.co.za/index.php/> assessed last on 3 August 2018

mindful people join forces.” Moreover, in their promotion video, the architect of WEX1 claims that they want to bring a positive contribution to neighborhood by inviting locals to work with them.³⁷ These examples illustrate how the developers represent the urban space they create, as a positive contribution to the neighborhood.

Second, the developers present their projects as creators of a community. The Urban Artisan describes Woodstock as a place where “like-minded individuals meet.” The developers of WEX1 explain in their commercial that they like to design places that inspire community.³⁸ A legitimate question, however, is: who can afford to reside in those apartments? The prices start around 1 million rand and goes up to 5 million rand.³⁹ According to the 2011 census, 42% of households earned R6,400 per month or less. With this average income, local people cannot afford a new apartment in one of the developments.⁴⁰

The perceived target market has a strong influence on the nature of residential space created. The question ‘for whom?’ is not only answered by the prices they ask, it is also clearly answered on the website of the Urban Artisan, as the text describes: “Here Urban Artisans, Entrepreneurs, Artists, Smart Investors and Young Professionals come together to meet, stay and play with like-minded individuals.” Both the textual descriptions and the images used on all three websites speak volumes. The visual material used at all three websites consists only of young, handsome people in the prime of their lives. They are either cycling on their hip bikes, drinking coffee with their friends, enjoying the good vibes with some beers or working on their laptop (see Appendix I for a selection of the visual material used on the websites). This shows how the developers produce a clear profile of the desired future inhabitants of Woodstock.

According to Lefebvre (1991, 42) representation of spaces sometimes ‘set in train ‘aesthetic’ trends and, after a while, having provoked a series of manifestations.’ These aesthetic trends are visible throughout their marketing strategy, by the pictures they use and the lifestyle they promote. This manifests a new image of Woodstock—of a gentrified neighborhood. This line is continued in promoting a particular lifestyle, one that is young, refreshing, and modern. “So, whether lounging by the pool, working out in

³⁷ This movie is placed in the front page on the website, it is the first one. <http://wexliving.co.za> assessed on

³⁸ <http://wexliving.co.za>

³⁹ According to the exchange rate in August 2018, 1 euro is worth 16,0626 rand which means the apartments are priced between 62256 euro and 311282 euro. This is calculated via <https://www.valuta.nl>

⁴⁰ Census 2011 of South Africa https://www.westerncape.gov.za/assets/departments/treasury/Documents/Socio-economic-profiles/2016/City-of-Cape-Town/city_of_cape_town_2016_socio-economic_profile_sep-lg.pdf

the gym, relaxing in the nearby park or watching the sunset with friends on the rooftop, Woodstock Quarter promises an aspirational lifestyle,” is used to attract a certain target group.⁴¹

The website of Urban Artisan states: “Life at Urban Artisan Apartments will place you right at the center of what’s happening in Woodstock. Here you’ll find freshly ground coffee, artisanal breweries, cafes, restaurants, antique stores, bakeries, gin distilleries, furniture workshops and so much more.”⁴² WEX1 is also committed to promoting a certain lifestyle, describing the neighborhood as follows: “Travel to where you want, how you want. Be yourself. Woodstock’s culture celebrates freedom of expression. Live in Woodstock, and you’re automatically part of the inner-circle.”

Such statements suggest that whenever you can afford to live the life constructed by the advertisements, you will automatically become part of the inner circle of Woodstock. Thus, their apartments are not solely a place to live, but a whole lifestyle. This illustrates how the conceived space of the developers overpowers the social space of lived experience by dancing ‘to the tune of the homogenizing forces of money, commodities, capital and the phallus (Merrifield 1993, 524).

Developers’ marketing statements contribute to Woodstock’s image as young, hip and artistic which automatically means a more homogenized Woodstock. The production of space by developers goes beyond the physical design of the city. They not only manufacture homes, but also construct an image of Woodstock based on a set of ideas, desires and values. Through persuasive commercial strategies, the developers spread ideas widely that become a dominant source for the social understanding of who belongs to the new Woodstock and who does not. In other words, these advertisements create a new social imagination through which the urban space is conceived (Zhang 2010). They sell an image of Woodstock, which consists of cultural understandings (such a lifestyle) and symbolic meanings. Developers strongly try to influence how people perceive the lived space in Woodstock as they contextualize how they conceive the urban space. Therefore, the renewal of the area, which results from influxes of capital due to the neoliberal character, intensifies socio-spatial inequality.

⁴¹ <http://woodstockquarter.co.za/index.php/the-area/>

⁴² <https://www.property24.com/new-developments/woodstock/cape-town/western-cape/urban-artisan-apartments/10164/1854>

The street artists

“I want to beautify, I don’t want to gentrify,” explains Sebastian to me. It had been a hot day and as the sun set, I walked back to my house when I coincidentally stumbled upon him. Sebastian just finished his mural next to a woodshop on Albert Road: a big, impressive and colorful lion on a black painted wall. “I travelled for one month through Namibia, it was such a beautiful journey and the lions.. oh.. the lions were incredible.” Full of enthusiasm about his journey, Sebastian tells me how he ended up in Woodstock: “My flight back is from Cape Town, so I have a couple of days to spend here. When I saw the lions, I immediately knew I wanted to paint them. Then I read on the internet about Woodstock as being the place for street art and so I came here.”

Street art is often seen as one of the first marks of gentrification as artists are attracted by ‘edgy’, ‘experimental’ and ‘run-down’ places in the urban life (Ley 2003, 1996). Sebastian, 35 years old and originally from Spain, is clearly very aware of the impact of his art. “I feel responsible and I know this might cause a rise in the prices of the buildings. But I do it for free and for this shop it is gonna look nicer, so it is hard what to do.”, he tells me⁴³. The shop owner is a fifty-year-old Colored man who works and lives in the building that is now partly painted by Sebastian. He tells me he likes the artwork “because it looks nicer and it will attract tourists to come and take pictures.”⁴⁴

As Sebastian described, Woodstock is known as the artsy neighborhood in Cape Town. When searching the internet about Woodstock, one of the first results shown is the street art. A mixture of travel magazines, travel blogs and tour agencies write about the street art⁴⁵. Websites of travel agencies and digital magazines refer to Woodstock as ‘the hotspot for street art’ and ‘open air gallery for giant, colorful murals’.⁴⁶ It is indeed true that you encounter decorated walls throughout the neighborhood, an impression of the street art I encountered is attached in appendix II.

⁴³ Informal conversation with Sebastian, Woodstock, 10 April 2018

⁴⁴ Informal conversation with shop owner, Woodstock, 10 April 2018

⁴⁵ I found two official agencies that organize street art tours in Woodstock, one is Juma’s Tours (for more information see the website: <http://townshiparttours.co.za> last assessed on the 14 July 2018) and Animatours (for more information see the website: <https://www.animatours.co.za/activities/woodstock-street-art-tour/> last assessed on 14 July 2018. For various reasons it was not possible to participate on a tour with them, but I did interview the founders of both agencies. Since I was not able to fully study the street art tourism and because, as I observed, I was just a small part of the tourism in woodstock, I decided not to elaborate on this practices in the next section of this chapter ‘Tourist industry’

⁴⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2017/oct/21/street-art-boho-woodstock-cape-town-south-africa> last assessed on 16t July 2018

An extensive amount of literature has been written about the role of street art in gentrification, some examples are Ley (2003), Brighenti (2017) and Sieber (2012). With a long history of being perceived as riotry and disruption, street art nowadays gets more and more celebrated and is perceived as a powerful tool in reflecting the experience of the urban (Tunnacliffe 2016). This is in line with Lefebvre, he understands street art as symbolic works that are produced in 'representational spaces' (1991, 33). These are linked to what Lefebvre calls 'lived spaces', as it is these spaces in which the possibility to think differently about space is created (Tunnacliffe 2016). Furthermore, Sieber (2012) argues that the visual culture of cities contains characteristics of the lives and identities of contemporary citizens, therefore it creates a fruitful source for urban anthropologists to analyze. It was this observation of Sieber (2012) that inspired me to use street art as a lens through which I could better understand the lives of people in Woodstock.

To find out what the street art represents, I took a street art tour with Jack, a Colored, born and raised resident of Woodstock who used to work for an art gallery. Since he lost his jobs two years ago, he tries to earn money by guiding tourists around Woodstock. By listening to his descriptions about the art, I soon I discovered that little of the artwork is by people from Woodstock. Some were created by South African artists and the majority by international artists like Sebastian. Thus, street art was not a direct translation of the lives and identities of the residents of Woodstock.

Still excited about the art and the possible meaning it could have for the residents, I asked people I met in Woodstock their opinion about the street art. Most of the time it was quite hard to have an in-depth conversation about the street art, because people did not care much. People reacted like: "It looks fine, I like it" or "My children like the street art," but whenever I tried to ask them what it represented, they had no specific idea⁴⁷. A few people told me they did not see the purpose of the art. I got the impression that most of the people just did not care much about the street art. Instead, people often started to talk about the rising prices in the neighborhood. A Colored woman with two young kids told me: "it is good that the streets look nicer with the art, but in fact, the houses are not affordable anymore. That is what I am worried about, the prices are rising so fast!"⁴⁸ An old man I met at a cafeteria, told me he disliked the street

⁴⁷ Informal conversation with two residents, Woodstock, 15 March 2018

⁴⁸ Informal conversation with a woman, Woodstock, 15 March 2018

art simply for its gentrifying effect on the neighborhood. “Do you think we as Colored people know how to paint? No off course not! It is all international people coming to our neighborhood, painting on our walls. And you know what happens? It is international people again who buy all the properties now.⁴⁹”

For residents, street art is often directly linked to gentrification, as shown in the conversations described above. This made me curious about the perspective of the street artists. It turned out to be difficult to talk to artists who created work in Woodstock, as most of them were international. But I was lucky, during my stay in Cape Town, the International Public Art Festival (IPAF) was organized in Salt River, an adjacent neighborhood of Woodstock.⁵⁰ It was a great opportunity to talk to many artists from all over the globe.

Often, I noticed that the art was about transforming, making a change in space through art. “I want people to stop and look at the art and to rethink life,” as a Mexican street artist told me⁵¹. Some artists chose to paint about political topics and I found some examples of such artwork in Woodstock. For example, one mural referred to the war in Palestina (see appendix II). One artist from Belgian centered his art around nature “to bring nature back to the urban space”⁵². In Woodstock, street art often revolves around nature and animals as well (see appendix II). On other occasions, artists expressed to me their desire to have a personal connection with the city. “Street art is a way to express *myself*. I don’t have any other platform, the street is *my stage*.” as an artist from Zimbabwe explained.⁵³ I also met artists from Israel who told me they just liked to paint on big surfaces and the streets are “just the easiest and cheapest places to create big murals”⁵⁴.

The common denominator among these artists is that they try to visibly produce a new space by making their art Furthermore, most of the art was produced with the intention to change the way urban space is experienced. This is in line with the idea that such spaces create the possibility to rethink life (lefeb xx). They consist of spatial meanings that relate to cultural expressions of place qualities (Healey 2007). Place qualities can refer to any characteristic of place, including history, events and objects.

⁴⁹ Informal conversation with two residents, Woodstock, 17 March 2018

⁵⁰ For more information about the festival, their website can be visit via <http://ipafest.co.za>, assessed last 10oAugust 2018

⁵¹ Semi-structured interview with Mexican artist, Salt River, 15 February 2018

⁵² Informal conversation with Belgian artist, Salt River, 15 February 2018

⁵³ Semi-structured interview with Zimbabwean artist, Salt River, 14 February 2018

⁵⁴ Informal conversation with Israeli artist, Salt River, 15 February 2018

Lived space relates to individual histories, memory, events and the creation of individual meanings.

Interestingly, compared to the other categories of gentrifiers, the street artist showed the most consciousness about the possible impact of their work. “It is a tough thing, we want to make places look better. Should we then stop making street art?”, the Zimbabwean artist asked me⁵⁵. Of course, this question remained unanswered.

Street art, as I have experienced and seen it, plays several roles in the urban space of Woodstock. The visible presence contributes to upgrading the image of the neighborhood. For artists, it offers the possibility to communicate with the outside world, street art becomes a platform. For some residents, street art often represents gentrification: the global, the individualistic (disconnected) and the commercial character is reflected in their perception of street art.

The tourist industry

The tourist industry in Woodstock is connected to various gentrifiers; shops, restaurants, coffee shops, galleries as well as tour agencies and the tourists their selves. Except from the tour agencies and the tourists, the other gentrifiers have a broader target group. The restaurants and shops for example, are also visited by locals. However, because Woodstock has gained popularity as a tourist attraction in recent years, the focus in this analysis lies on the tourism industry⁵⁶. All the above mentioned gentrifiers are inextricably linked to consumerism and therefore linked to the understanding of neoliberal Woodstock.

Before I came to Woodstock, the Old Biscuit Mill was one of the places I was the most curious about since it was so often mentioned as the instigator for gentrification in Woodstock⁵⁷. It is a Tuesday morning in February when I make my first visit to this place. The Old Biscuit Mill is located on Albert Road, the white letters that announce the name of the market stand out against the brown facade of the building, clearly legible from a distance. The Old Biscuit Mill opened its doors in 2006 as a mixed-use creative

⁵⁵ Informal conversation with Zimbabwean artist, Observatory, 13 February 2018

⁵⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2014/aug/12/gentrification-woodstock-cape-town-suburb-hipster-heaven> assessed last on 13 August 2018

⁵⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2014/aug/12/gentrification-woodstock-cape-town-suburb-hipster-heaven> assessed last on 10 August 2018 and <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2017/may/25/spatial-apartheid-housing-activists-occupy-cape-town-gentrification> assessed last on 10 August 2018

center with studios, offices and retail spaces.

As I pass the security, whom are residing in a small house at the entrance of the complex, I see a square with shops and boutiques around it. I see a souvenir shop, there is a photo shop and children's clothing store. When I walk a little further, I see two boutiques that both sell women's clothes, I can immediately tell that they belong to the more expensive segment. The clothes I see through the shop window look pretty chic, they are made of beautiful fabrics. When I pass these shops, I arrive at a small, round square surrounded by a couple of restaurants. One of these is the Test Kitchen, this restaurant was voted the best in Africa in June.⁵⁸ Next to this place is an art studio where all kinds of articles (pillows, prints, key rings) are made and sold.

It is quite on this morning, I decide to take a seat at the terrace of a small lunchroom. There are a few people with their laptops, a French speaking couple and an older man. I see some tourists strolling past the shops. The atmosphere is pleasant. The buildings and the square look clean and well maintained⁵⁹. When I finish my tea, I visit some shops and have chats with the people working there. I notice that the staff in the stores is very mixed. In the boutiques, I see white women working, in the children's clothing store there is a black woman and the souvenir shops is managed by a Colored woman.

When I enter the photo shop, I see a White woman behind the desk. As I greet her, we start a small conversation. The woman, originally from California, now in her fifties, came to Cape Town twenty years ago. When I ask her about the Old Biscuit Mill as I explain my research, I immediately notice that the word 'gentrification' offends her. "You know, that is how the world turns around right?", is her first reaction. When I mention that I hear annoyance in her voice, she says quite resolutely: "Well, it is just always the same thing. I mean... People should realize as well that Woodstock has become much safer since we opened our doors."⁶⁰

During conversations, I held with shop and restaurant owners in the Old Biscuit Mill, as well as along Albert Road and the Woodstock Exchange⁶¹, I often noticed that they mentioned the increase of safety in Woodstock as a positive effect of the urban

⁵⁸ <https://www.iol.co.za/lifestyle/food-drink/restaurants/its-official-the-test-kitchen-is-the-best-restaurant-in-africa-15569144> assessed last 13 August 2018

⁵⁹ Fieldnotes Woodstock 27 February 2018

⁶⁰ Informal conversation with shop owner, Woodstock, 27 February 2018

⁶¹ Woodstock Exchange is similar to the Old Biscuit Mill in terms of its size and gentrified character, it is as creative 'hub' with shops, restaurants, art galleries and offices, it is located along Albert Road.

renewal. When I asked residents, the reactions were often very mixed. Overall, I would say that most residents recognize that Woodstock has become safer in recent years. Some, however, indicated that the increase in tourists, also causes a rise in crime rates.

According to the crime statistics I could find, the criminality in the neighborhood is decreasing since the last ten years⁶². Interestingly, the image of a former 'run-down' neighborhood is used as a marketing strategy. "Woodstock is undergoing an urban renewal with many new buildings and businesses, making it a hip and happening neighborhood."⁶³ And "the urban renaissance that has seen the once dilapidated neighborhood of Woodstock become the thriving heart of the city's creative industries."⁶⁴ These are just two examples of texts used to promote Woodstock as a tourist attraction. Both texts refer to the former decrepit character of the neighborhood and present the urban renewal as an attractive feature of the neighborhood, this is similar to the texts of the developers. In the promotional texts, urban space is transformed into consumable sites to describe the urban space of Woodstock as an attractive touristic place.

The Old Biscuit Mill gained popularity through hosting a very successful 'local' food and design market on Saturdays, which has become an attraction for affluent locals and tourists alike. Two weeks after my first visit, I came back to see this event happening. Once I entered the market, I immediately understood why people in Woodstock ironically emphasized the 'local' character of the market. It was obvious not meant for locals, instead, I saw a crowd of tourist strolling past the food stalls and mini shops that sell vintage clothes and all kinds of accessories.

As I made my way through the market, I talked to tourists about their experience of this event. "It looks nice here, they sell great clothes and so on. But *it could have been anywhere* around the world, Paris, New York, Berlin, whatever" as a German tourist described to me.⁶⁵ Another lady I spoke to, told me that she could not really see why this is a local market "since it looks like there are only tourists here"⁶⁶. Zukin (2011) describes this phenomenon in her work, showing how the search for 'authentic' urban

⁶² <https://www.westerncape.gov.za/assets/departments/community-safety/woodstock.pdf> assessed last on 13 August 2018

⁶³ <http://www.getaway.co.za/travel-ideas/things-to-do/things-to-do-in-woodstock-cape-town/> assessed last 10 August 2018

⁶⁴ <http://www.neighbourgoodsmarket.co.za/the-market/>

⁶⁵ Informal conversation with German tourist, Woodstock, 17 March 2018

⁶⁶ Informal conversation with tourist, Woodstock, 17 March 2018

places often involves the commodification of urban culture. These experiences show how cultural dynamics change under the influence of neoliberalism.

The urban renewal in Woodstock and the arrival of attractive places such as the Old Biscuit Mill cause an increase of high-income visitors, both in the form of residents and tourists. A frequently researched aspect within the neoliberal city is how consumption patterns shape the urban space. The politics of consumption, as often concluded, disconnects the urban space from immediate surroundings while at the same time linking it to urban identical spaces across the globe (Sorkin 1992; Eisenger 2000; Urry 2002). As tourists and wealthy residents become overrepresented in gentrified spaces as the Old Biscuit Mill, the urban space gets homogenized.

The City

In this chapter so far, is shown how the practices of gentrifiers shape urban space. Following Lefebvre, it would be incomplete to argue that these representations completely dominate the urban space in Woodstock. As demonstrated, the capitalist representations promote homogeneity, however, this can only exist by accentuating difference. As McCann states: “the image of homogeneity and unity that is a central feature of abstract space can, according to Lefebvre, only be achieved and maintained through a continued state-sponsored process of fragmentation and marginalization that elides difference and thus attempts to prevent conflict” (McCann, 171). In chapter 2 has already been explained how the spatial planning of Cape Town reinforces social inequality. To understand the circumstances specifically to Woodstock, the last part of this chapter is centered around the ambiguous role of the City of Cape Town in the urban process of Woodstock

As described by Brent in the opening of this chapter, “the council is giving us the call. They want the city gentrified and they want affordable housing”, the City of Cape Town represents conflicting interests. The city represents itself as an aspiring worldcity in which growth is a main factor. Growth means intensification of the urban land according to the demand of the market.

At the same time, the City is confronted with a huge lack of affordable housing for low-income residents in the inner-city (Bulkeley, Luque and Silver 2014). Any society, according to Lefebvre, continues to be subjected to political power. Currently, an objection against the City, is the belief that the government, out of financial reasons, is

supporting development 'at all costs' (Todeschini 2017, 14). What follows is an analysis of parts of the policy of the City. This will shed light on the process in which the urban space of Woodstock is subjected to the power of the state.

During my last week of fieldwork, I was invited to the office of the council of Woodstock as a proposed an interview about gentrification in Woodstock. "We certainly don't have a Woodstock that is gentrified as quickly as a lot of people like to believe", with this statement the council wants to make a clear point. The council, born and raised in Cape Town, somewhere in his late thirties and White, has been in this position for over two years. He continues: "it is certain corridors where it is, along Albert Road and Victoria Road, areas where we really have a high amount of economic activity and transport activity. But most of Woodstock is not being overdeveloped at the moment. We have something like ninety-five problem buildings, in bad conditions filled with gangsters."

One of the challenges of post-apartheid Cape Town is the rental control, which was abolished by the post-apartheid government⁶⁷. The lack of protection for tenants refers to one of the socio-economical structures that are not directly visible, yet of a big impact in the production of the urban space in Woodstock. The amount of house evictions and homelessness is a direct consequence of the lack of some form of rent control⁶⁸. Since the government stimulates the growth of the city with attractive regulations for investors, the tensions around social housing are enforced. Du Plessis (2011) highlights the fact that the lack of legislation to increase equal access to housing, are increasingly justified by the government under the guises of 'public interest' and 'development'.

"The idea that we should not develop in Woodstock and Salt River, is ridiculous", as the Council explains. "Nowadays, most of the people on this earth live in cities. We are becoming more and more urbanized and if we don't densify we are going to end up with people living on the outskirts. Our strategy is to densify along economical corridors, so you won't see it when you move away from those corridors. That is best international practiced," he takes a moment to think. He continues: "We have to do this, but we have

⁶⁷ The *Rental Housing Act* of 1999 repealed the *Rent Control Act* of 1976 and on 31 July 2003 all protection in terms of the previous rent control legislation ended. For more information, see http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1727-37812012000400000 assessed last 18 July 2018

⁶⁸ I will elaborate on this in chapter 3, but for understanding the context of the conversation with the council, I mention it already here.

to develop appropriately, we have to densify appropriate. We are doing it this along the transport corridors and economical corridors, we are not going to knock down other people's houses. That is not happening.”

The City is adapting strategies ‘that are internationally best practiced’ as the council explained. This refers to global orientated policies which becomes central to the development of gentrifying urban space as in Woodstock. The City has introduced a stimulus, the so-called The Urban Development Zone (UDZ) with which they want to make it more attractive for private individuals and commercial initiatives to get feet on the ground.⁶⁹ However, it is not difficult to understand that this urban planning scheme reinforces the tendency of powerful groups dominating space, since it is the people with money whose access to the housing market is being increased. And so, this neoliberal urban planning increases the inability of the low-income residents to participate in the urban space (Lelandais 2014). This clearly demonstrates how the neoliberal policy of the City manifests, produces and reproduces manifested relations of domination and oppression (Lefebvre, 1991).

The ambiguous position of the City, is revealed when the topic of social housing comes to the table. Providing houses is, according to the council, a priority as well. He narrates: “We have built a lot of housing across the city, but the problem is, we don't have houses for everyone. We want to help but the only thing we have available now, is temporary location areas,” as the council explains. He continues: “If we would put these settlements within Woodstock for example, it would have a massive negative impact on the economical environment.” and so, the neoliberal character of the City's policy comes to the fore again.

An interesting question, following the dissecting of Lefebvre (1991) between ‘conceived’ and ‘perceived’ space, is how the City understands the urban space and more specifically, its residents. As illustrated above, the neoliberal approach attracts people and companies that are prosperous and willing to invest money. Interestingly, when talking about the impact of gentrification in Woodstock, the council remarks, “the vast majority of Woodstock residents are still Black and Colored and most of them is still living lower class to poor class, so the neighborhood is not taken over by newcomers”. This demonstrates the conflict between the Woodstock as it is perceived, namely with

⁶⁹ <http://www.capetown.gov.za/work%20and%20business/doing-business-in-the-city/business-support-and-guidance/urban-development-zones> assessed last on 27th of July 2018

the majority of low-income households and the Woodstock as it is conceived according to the neoliberal understanding of the urban space. In other words, the neoliberal agenda is not aimed at improving lives of residents, but at improving growth.

This chapter examined the ways in which gentrifiers shape the urban space, both physically and culturally and therefore socially. To understand how space is produced, it is crucial to scrutinize who is empowered by any change in urban space: who creates new spaces, for who are these spaces meant and at whose expense? In this chapter is demonstrated how marketing statements of gentrifiers contribute to a Woodstock which is heavily shaped by consuming patterns. This contributes to an urban space which is homogenized by the power of neoliberalism. Street artists have a multifaceted role in the production of space, as they change the space with their art. The City has an ambiguous role as its entire policy is based on neoliberalism, while it also aims to protect its citizens. The next chapter will show how gentrification is experienced by non-gentrifiers. The experiences of every day life yield important insights into the structures that socially shape the urban space in Woodstock (Certeau 1984).

Chapter 3: “Always pulling on the shortest part of the stick”

“How can you ask me whether there is something good about gentrification as long as people got evicted?” I can see the anger in Rick’s face. Five minutes ago, I walked into his store on Albert Road, just opposite of the Old Biscuit Mill, where I find him working on one of his wooden frames. Rick, fifty-something, has been living in Woodstock for the last forty-six years, running a well-established business in wood production. While I try to find out if he was angered by my question, Rick continues. “Do you know that street behind the Biscuit Mill?” pointing in the direction of the street; “Bromwell street I mean. There are families being evicted because some rich investor wants to have ground.”

The Bromwell case has been often and extensively covered in the news because it concerns a whole row of houses that were bought by an investor and as a result, several families are threatened with forced removals.⁷⁰ “You know, Woodstock community is always pulling on the shortest part of the stick. This is how it is and how it always will be,” Rick says. “And you know” he continues in one breath, “my brother was evicted eleven years ago and since then, he lives in a shack, 30 kilometers outside of town. Now you tell me, who has the right to send people to places like that?” The anger in his voice is clear. As we go along in our conversation, Rick shares his history and narratives about the lack of stability due to governmental policies. “My mom was a Khosan, the original tribe that lived in Cape Town, and my dad is Irish. So during apartheid, we could not live together as a family. Do you have any idea how fucked-up that was?”⁷¹

Rick is an example of a non-gentrifier, someone who unwillingly faces the consequences of gentrification. His body language and the words he chooses strongly indicate his perspective on gentrification. According to Lefebvre, people’s perceptions on urban space determine how the space is experienced and used (Merrifield 1995). To understand the perspectives on urban space, the practices and routines of people are a fruitful source since they demonstrate how space is used. Therefore, ‘perceived’ space’, the third layer Lefebvre dissects, refers to ‘spatial practices’. Lefebvre also refers to material objects through which the city is shaped. Here, it should be noted that it is not the materiality of the city itself, but the way people use objects in the urban space, that

⁷⁰ <https://www.news24.com/Video/SouthAfrica/News/gentrification-is-destroying-lives-woodstock-residents-fighting-eviction-20160909>, assessed on the 16th of June 2018

⁷¹ Informal conversation with Rick, Woodstock, 24 April 2018

shape the social space (Healey 2007).

As de Certeau (1984, 58) states: “on a daily basis, the ways we understand material landscapes and ourselves affect how we travel and use space, sometimes reifying and sometimes defying intended meanings” (Certeau, 1984). Spatial practices, hence, is connected to the individuals’ perceptions of space (Lashua and Kelly, 2010). Furthermore, spatial practices of residents constitute social networks that shape the neighborhood as a social space (Merrifield 1993).

Social relations have no reality outside the spaces where they are lived, experienced and practiced (Hickey and Mohan, 2004). Social relations, thus, function as mechanisms that produce the urban space, in a dialectical relation to the power structures described in the previous chapter. Studying those relations, yield insight into inequalities that are produced in the underlying structure created by gentrification.

And so, inspired by Lefebvre’s theory, this chapter focuses on the daily routines of people: doing groceries, drinking coffee, going out for dinner, as patterns through which the reproduction of social relations can be read. First, I discuss the relationship between gentrified places and the sense of ‘belonging’. Second, I demonstrate how space is converted into a source for resistance. Lastly, I will show the devastating impact of the reproduction of unequal power through the urban space.

Meaning making in a gentrified Woodstock

As I became better known in Woodstock, approximately after the first month, I discovered certain patterns in the use of public space in Woodstock. If I wanted to talk to the original residents, I usually walked through the narrow streets with semi-detached houses, it never took me long before someone would start talking to me. Other places where original inhabitants would collect, were the small city parks and local cafeterias and shops. When I visited places like Old Biscuit Mill and Woodstock Exchange⁷², I barely saw any of the original residents apart from some that worked at those places as sellers, guards or cleaners.

Many residents I talked to in Woodstock confirmed my observations. Alex, a Colored man I met on the streets, living close to Woodstock Exchange, told me he “felt out of place there⁷³”. “In the beginning, it was nice to have new shops opening here,” as

⁷² Woodstock exchange is a shopping center on Albert Road.

⁷³ Informal conversation with Alex, Woodstock, 25 April 2018

Maria, living opposite of The Old Biscuit Mill, tells me. “But these new buildings are not for the community, it is not places I would go to. We are Coloreds, and just as the Whites and the Blacks, we all have different taste of places we like to go to. We are not against it either, but we cannot afford it, so it is not something that the community is benefitting from.”⁷⁴ Also, other residents, when I asked them whether they would visit places as Old Biscuit Mill or Woodstock Exchange, gave reactions as “no, that is not for us”⁷⁵ and “we Colored people don’t go there.”⁷⁶

The above descriptions indicate that a part of the residents in Woodstock feel like they do not belong to the gentrified places. The notion of ‘belonging’, however, is hard to describe as it often feels naturally to our sense of being. “Belonging is about emotional attachment, about feeling ‘at home.’” (Yuval-Davies 2011: 10). People can ‘belong’ in in a family, group of friends, a sports team or geographical area etcetera. Logically, whether someone feels at home at a place, can be influenced by many aspects (Hage 1997) According to Lefebvre, it is not so much the physical space itself, but rather what the space represents, that determines whether residents feel that they belong there. As most low-income residents cannot spend money at gentrified places, they “feel out of place”.

Interestingly, as I described in chapter one, for me typical gentrified places felt more comfortable. It were those places where I felt comfortable and like I belonged there. This contrast illustrates how the neoliberal city creates urban space which is experienced in different ways. As Harvey (2005) argues, gentrified places become a commodity for those who can consume it, yet, they exclude people who cannot afford them. With gentrification, urban participation increasingly becomes dictated by one’s economic capacity and spending power. This means that gentrified spaces are increasingly becoming solely accessible for higher classes. In the context of South Africa, this dynamic explains why several researchers even refer to neoliberalism as “a new racial project under conditions of democracy” (Hetzler, Medina and Overfelt 2006, 638).

Gentrified places in Woodstock often create exclusion by their regulation. Vic, a Colored man and owner of a bike shop on Albert Road, told me how he was denied access to Woodstock Exchange. “The security people did not believe I just wanted to

⁷⁴ Informal conversation with Maria, Woodstock, 30 April 2018

⁷⁵ Informal conversation with resident, Woodstock, 30 April 2018

⁷⁶ Informal conversation with resident, Woodstock, 27 April 2018

enter to buy something, they looked at me like a was a criminal.”⁷⁷ Also, other people – mostly Colored men- told me about same practices. According to them, it is their racial background that made them unwanted at those places. These well-organized spaces then, become places where the inequality that exists is reproduced. The creating of spaces directly tied to the interest of the private owners, does not only appear to contribute to an increase of social segregation within the neighborhood, it also contributes to the reinforcement of racial divisions by regulating who can and who cannot visit those places. This is in line with what Wenz describes as “socio-spatial polarization that separates ‘insiders (those with access to desirable spaces) from outsiders (on the margin, looking in)’ and essentially perpetuates the social divisions that were inherent during the apartheid” (Wenz 2012, 25).

The core assumption at the base of Lefebvre’s theory is the idea that social structure, personal experience and the physical space together shape the urban space in a constant interaction (Erdreich and Rapoport). When gentrified places take over urban landscape, personal experiences changes and so the social relations changes. The high-rise buildings in the mainly low-built Woodstock are a good example of this. “Flipping over big spaces and so from inside out Woodstock is changing.”, as the nephew of Fabian describe to me.⁷⁸ “These huge new buildings create more individualism, that’s for sure. People live in a block of apartments and nobody knows their neighbor anymore”, as an older man shared with me.⁷⁹ This shows how the new buildings influence how some residents use the city and how they understand social relationships. It is not the material itself that shapes the urban space, it is how people interact with it (Lefebvre XX). Semi-detached houses are reminiscent of the old Woodstock, the high-rise buildings represent the new Woodstock, the Woodstock with no connections with the past. With new residents moving in, different types of social relationships start to move in: social relations that are more loose, more individualistic. In this way, the changing materiality of the neighborhood contributes to a loss of communal experiences (McAuliffe 2012).

The abovementioned experiences illustrate the socio-spatial impact of gentrification. For many reasons, non-gentrifiers feel that they do not belong to the gentrified Woodstock. The dynamics described within the experiences, demonstrate

⁷⁷ Informal conversation with Vic, Woodstock, 8 April 2018

⁷⁸ Informal conversation with nephew, Woodstock, 23 February 2018

⁷⁹ Informal conversation with old man, Woodstock, 8 March 2018

how, in the process of gentrification, spatial representations get new meanings. Residents who have lived in Woodstock for years must now deal with new services and spaces that are not designed for them. This represents the profound social tensions that Woodstock residents experience as gentrifiers gradually “reinvent” their community.

Reclaiming Woodstock

During my fieldwork in Woodstock, I got involved with Reclaim the City, a Cape Town-based campaign who fight for desegregation and affordable housing development in the inner-city.”⁸⁰ As described in previous chapters, access to housing in the inner-city of Cape Town is problematic. Since the current social housing market in Cape Town is privatized, the low-income residents of Woodstock, are gradually more threatened by evictions. Reclaim the City organizes two community meetings a week in Woodstock, every Tuesday and Thursday. These meetings are organized with the aim of uniting residents in the fight against evictions and for affordable social housing. The majority of the community members is Colored, a small part is Black and an even smaller part is Indian. Most of the community members belong to the lower social class in terms of education and income. For ten weeks I attended those meetings, which gave me a great insight in the processes that precede house evictions and the problems that arise in the lives of these people.

One of the stories I will never forget, is the story of Lele, a thirty-five years old, Black, single mother of two children. On a Thursday evening, she shared her story with the community. “I have been living in my house for the last seventeen years. First with my parents and since they died, I live there with my two children.”, she starts. “Everything was fine until last year. I received a letter from my landlord in which he increased the rent from 550R to 6000R⁸¹”, her voice is soft, her eyes look sad. “Can you believe that? That is more than ten times the rent!”, one of the leaders, a black man, exclaims. The group is clearly affected, there is disbelief and shrieking. “Ever since the letter, the landlord is putting a lot of pressure on me.” Lele continues. “And then, last week..”, Lele burst into tears. She takes a deep breath and continues. “last week, I found all my furniture at the streets. I came back from school with my boys and I had no idea what to tell them.” Since this accident, Lele stays at a friend’s place in a neighborhood

⁸⁰ See for more information their website: <http://reclaimthecity.org.za>, last assessed on 2 August 2018

⁸¹ That is 35 euro up to 371 euro

ten kilometers outside of Woodstock. “I cannot sleep anymore, I have no idea what to do.”, as she finishes her story. “As long as Lele cannot sleep, we cannot sleep”, the leader of the meeting takes the lead in the conversation. “If there would have been affordable social housing, then Lele would not have been in this situation. Do you see what happens?” he asks with fierce in his voice. “It is the same thing that happened in District Six, only the bulldozers are replaced by money. Things have never really changed”. “But”, as he continues, “we need to standup as a group, they won’t listen to the individual. We need to stop this together, comrades.”⁸²

The story of Lele exposes how desperate people are when they are evicted from their houses. Regrettably, every week at least one such a sad story was shared. Often people were threatened to move or were already evicted and in most of the cases they had nowhere to go.

The production of space, as emphasized by Lefebvre, has on major influence on how people can think and act. And so, the design of cities becomes a broader issue, namely that of the right to reinvent one’s own life. This struggle is famously captured by Lefebvre as *the right to the city*. “It is not about housing, it is about opportunities.” as I often heard during gatherings with Reclaim the City.⁸³ The right to the city, then, stresses “the right to appropriate the city, to inhabit and creatively shape the urban environments in which we live.” (Mitchell 2003, 17–20).

Regarding the history of Cape Town, belonging to the city and rights are not, like in many cities around the world, based on citizenship, they are often based on identities such as class (Samara 2011). On the surface, exclusion might be interrelated as based on class, but class is in the context of South Africa —as have been demonstrated — is of course another way of perceiving race (Lashua and Kelly, 2010).

Reclaim the City literally fought for the right to inhabit the city by occupying a former hospital in Upper Woodstock. For one year, over twenty families are residing there. In 21 March this year, they organized a march with the slogan ‘land for people, not for profit’. They also often fought for equal right in court, where they legally assist people who are forced to move out their houses.

As I have noticed in informal conversations, the ‘right’ to live in Woodstock, as expressed by the community members, was often produced in a direct connection to

⁸² Fieldnotes Community meeting, Woodstock, 15 March 2018

⁸³ Fieldnotes Community meeting, Woodstock, 22 March 2018

their sense of belonging. One common view they expressed: they could not imagine a life outside of Woodstock. “I would rather sleep in the streets than leaving Woodstock”, as an older woman told me.⁸⁴ They could not believe why they would not have the right to live there. Their identity was also mentioned often, as an important aspect of belonging to the neighborhood. “You can take me out of Woodstock, but you can never take Woodstock out of me”, as formulated by one of the community members.⁸⁵ Most of the residents has strong sentimental ties since they have been living in Woodstock for a longer period. The meaning people create, becomes a way to enlarge their mental connection with a place, as the physical connection is continued to be limited because of the invasion of commercial usage of the neighborhood. As Yuval-Davis (2011) explains, we feel our sense of belonging most strongly, when it is being threatened or lost. The urban space, then, becomes a source for resistance.

“Here is my everything, my history, my heritage, my tomorrow.”, as a Black woman from the community said expressed during a meeting⁸⁶. This shows how people have specific memories that are constructed in relation to a space. Mills (2005, 443), for example, explains that ‘landscapes are powerful materializations of collective memory, because particular forms in the landscape both come from and reproduce this memory by serving as symbols that remind us of the past’. As most of the community members have a long past connected to Woodstock, this becomes a powerful aspect that connects the community in Woodstock. It is why they perceive the neighborhood as ‘their neighborhood’ and it contributes to their sense of belonging. Moreover, it strengthens them to resist against the City who, in their eyes, is forgetting about them.

When talking about evictions, people often showed their fear of losing their social structures and their jobs and schools. Woodstock is a space that connects and facilitates different aspects of their lives. The neighborhood space is thus produced by local actors as well involving both discourses and practices.

⁸⁴ Informal conversation with community member, Woodstock, 12 April 2018

⁸⁵ Informal conversation with community, Woodstock, 12 April 2018

⁸⁶ Informal conversation with community, Woodstock, 19 April 2018

“It is history repeating itself”

The lack of control in the urban space is a sensitive and fraught issue since it is inextricably linked to the recent history of apartheid (Napier 2007). Often when the topic of gentrification was brought up, people immediately referred to the apartheid: “it is history repeating itself”⁸⁷ and “it is the same thing happening again”⁸⁸. This demonstrates how the experiences of gentrification is shaped by traces of the past.

Merrifield elaborates on this: “In relation to cities, ‘race’ thinking exerts an influence on all three levels of determination identified by Lefebvre (1991). We may prefer to imagine that cities are post-‘race’ or post-racist, but this cannot change how *they are or have been* perceived, conceived and lived. However much we would like the case to be otherwise, we cannot change this fact merely by wishing it away. The critical point is that it is not possible to reorganize social or urban structures without engaging either explicitly or implicitly in ‘racial’ signification (Merrifield 2014, 14).” This explains why gentrification cannot be understood as a universal principle since that denies how a gentrified space is or have been perceived, conceived and lived. It also neglects the fact that one’s class and race are all fundamental to inhabiting a city or neighborhood. Every space is always, now and formerly, a present space, given as an immediate whole, complete with its associations and connections in their actuality (Lefebvre 1991).

As illustrated in the description of the community meeting with Reclaim the City, comparing current neoliberal policies with the regime during apartheid, produces a strong narrative for campaigning against the current government. “The enemy is the government and the white property owners. If you are black or Colored, you should stay in Khayelitsha. If you are white, you can live in convenient places in the inner-city.”⁸⁹, as was spoken during one of the meetings I attended⁹⁰. And this was not an exception. The more time I spend there, the more I noticed they often simplified reality by stating for example: “The City can build new houses everywhere, why don’t they build houses for us in the inner-city? Do you think they actually care about us?”. With these practices, Reclaim the City tries to influence the mental understanding of the residents of the urban space in Woodstock, the narrative constantly reinforces the feeling of inequality

⁸⁷ Informal conversation with resident, Woodstock, 29 March 2018

⁸⁸ Informal conversation with resident, Woodstock, 19 February 2018

⁸⁹ Khayelitsha is one of the largest township in Cape Town

⁹⁰ Fieldnotes Community meeting, Woodstock, 17 April 2018

and thus tries to motivate people to take action. This demonstrates how resistance shapes the discourse around gentrification in Woodstock.

“A modern concentration camp”

“They call it a modern concentration camp.” We are standing in front of the house of Lesley, which she calls herself ‘een hokje’ which means ‘small box’ in Afrikaans. Even though today is not a hot day, the sun is burning on the corrugated houses, no surprise that they call this place ‘Blikkiesdorp’, which means ‘can village’ in Afrikaans.

When Lesley invites me to see her living room, which simultaneously functions as a kitchen and bedroom, I feel the heat inside. There is no tree to be seen here, no place for shade. The road that runs through the houses is not paved, the dust wanders in the air. The first sight of these village is more than desolate. It was not easy to visit to Blikkiesdorp. In fact, when I inquired about visiting this place, many times I was declared insane. “The police does not even come there.”, one of the leaders of Reclaim the City reacted. Luckily Fabian knew the brother of Lesley and so, by entering the camp in his car with his family, things are safe.

Lesley is fifty-eight years old and used to live in the infamous Gympee street in Woodstock. “I have been living in Gympee street for over thirty years, both my daughters were born there. I loved it there, it was my home.”, Lesley tells. “Then, it was 2010, just before the Worldcup. We were renting from someone and the sold it to

someone else. So we went to court, we wanted to see the real owner. The new owner asked us a higher price and we didn’t want to pay that because it was not a fair price, the house was not in a good condition and therefore we didn’t want to pay it.”⁹¹

The new landlord tried to get rid of them in any possible way, as



An impression of Blikkiesdorp ©own archive

⁹¹ The worldcup in South Africa in 2010 could be an important event in the process of gentrification for Cape Town. In Woodstock, the only stories I heard connected to the Worldcup are the evictions of Gympeestreet, but according to The Gaurdian, throughout Cape Town, is was an important event, for more information, see <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/apr/01/south-africa-world-cup-blikkiesdorp> assessed last on 17 July 2018

Lesley tells me. He stopped the water supply, later he stopped the electricity. She explains: “We went to court but it was not successful. Then I decided for myself that I didn’t want to be in this struggle anymore, so I left with my family.” Lesley had no choice other than moving to the suburbs of Cape Town: “There were no affordable places to stay in or around Woodstock. The government provided social housing in Blikkiesdorp, so we decided to go there. Back then it was my daughters and I.”

Lesley had no clue of what place she moved to. “In the beginning, they [the government] made all kinds of promises, that they would make better facilities and so on. But they never did.” Life in Blikkiesdorp is nothing like life in Woodstock, as Lesley described. “In Woodstock we could walk to everything, to the shops, to school, to find a new job. But here you have to take a taxi and pay.” I hear anger in her voice. “And you know what? They forgot about us. We do not see anyone here, no council, nobody. The only moment they are here, is when they beg us to vote for them because they need votes. I’m sick and tired of that.”⁹²

Shanna is the neighbor of Lesley, she is also a former resident of Gympee street, she is a sixty-two years Colored woman. As she shows me her shack, she shares her worries about the future. “What can I do now? I am old and soon I need a better house than this place”, in her eyes I see sadness and disparity. I asked her whether she has a job to sustain herself. “No, it is too hard here. There are no jobs here, if I travel to town, I lose half of my income of that day on public transport. Besides that, it is very unsafe.”⁹³

The story of Lesley and Shanna painfully yet clearly shows what the direct consequences of gentrification are in a country where social inequality shapes the urban space. Blikkiesdorp was built in 2008 to relocate people who had problems with finding houses. On the website of the City, a statement was placed in May 2016 which says “the City of Cape Town remains committed to working together and building trust for the betterment of the lives of the people of Blikkiesdorp.”⁹⁴ Here the City recognizes that the circumstances for residents of Blikkiesdorp are miserable. However, according to the people I talked with, nothing has happened ever since. Perhaps even more shocking is the fact that three years ago the government set up a new temporary relocation camp, Wolvevrievier it is called. This camp is also located approximately thirty

⁹² Semi-structured interview with Lesley, Blikkiesdorp, 30 April 2018

⁹³ Semi-structured interview with Shanna, Blikkiesdorp, 30 April 2018

⁹⁴The statement can be found via

<http://resource.capetown.gov.za/documentcentre/Documents/Speeches%20and%20statements/19%20may%2016%20Blikkiesdorp%20Joint%20Committee.pdf> assessed last on 12 August 2018

kilometers outside the city and with the deplorable conditions.⁹⁵

The reason why I want to conclude this chapter with the stories of Lesley and Shanna, is because the theoretical framework that is used in this thesis, retains an important insight which brings us further than solely the conclusion that Cape Town is still organized along racial lines. Spatial injustice is often understood as the unequal distribution of activities and wealth (Lelandais 2014). However, to understand the spatial dimensions of injustice in a neighborhood or any other space, we cannot simply describe how space is unequally divided. Following Lefebvre's framework (1991), the production of space is a conflictual process which manifests, produces and reproduces forms of injustice (Dikec 2001). The unequal access to space (whether that is to gentrified places, or to housing in the inner-city) is not based on unequal distribution in space, but of spatialization itself. "It is the very structural dynamics of the spatial organization process in the city—and not simply some 'distributive force' external to space, distributing each to his or her 'proper' place." (Dikec 2001, 1797). This then leads us to the conclusion that the society as a whole, creates the structures that cause people to live in places like Blikkiesdorp (Ross, 1988). Or as formulated by Soja (1996, 1): "We are, and always have been, intrinsically spatial beings, active participants in the social construction of our embracing spatialities"

This chapter demonstrates how space is socially produced in gentrified Woodstock. As illustrated by the stories of the non-gentrifiers, it is the experience of society, 'the thinking, feeling and doing of subjects' that inextricably connects the spatial with the social and simultaneously realizes them (Keith and Pile 1993, 6). As the urban space changes under the influence of gentrification, social relations in the urban space change.

This then influences the use of the urban space, as exemplified to the production of resistance in Woodstock. Since space is produced in constant interaction, gentrification reproduces social divisions already present in society.

⁹⁵ I visited Wolverivier on 9 April 2018 and talked to several families that live there.

Conclusion

“You as an anthropologist, you should not confuse the discussion about gentrification with the one about the legacy of apartheid. These are two different discussions.”⁹⁶ It is my last day in Cape Town as I am talking to Peter, an urban planner who works for the City. With this remark, I immediately understood what he was talking about. Gentrification is a generic phenomenon that should not be confused with the apartheid, which is a specific part of the history of South Africa. However, as I know by now, he could not be farther from the truth. This thesis shows that, as Lefebvre (1991) argues, space is produced in relation to social relations. It is impossible to separate gentrification from the apartheid history, since they both heavily inform the urban space in Woodstock.

The social space, how people experience a society, is produced by a constant interaction with structures of which gentrification is an important one. By engaging with Lefebvre (1991), this research shows both tangible and intangible impacts of gentrification on social space in Woodstock. The anthropological eye has proved to be very helpful to dissect and analyze the multiple layers within the production of space. By closely studying the experience of everyday life in Woodstock, the underlying structures that shape space socially, have been revealed.

The power that is exercised by gentrifiers in the urban landscape is often intangible, yet very impactful. The politics of consumption, as often concluded, disconnects the urban space from immediate surroundings while at the same time linking it to urban identical spaces across the globe (Sorkin 1992; Eisenger 2000; Urry 2002). As tourists and wealthy residents become overrepresented in gentrified spaces, the urban space gets homogenized.

As illustrated in this research, one's class and race are all fundamental to inhabiting Woodstock. The struggles of inhabitants against exclusion are battles against a bundle of social and spatial dynamics. In this, neoliberalism has proved to be much more than just a strategy of government, it builds upon and extends the social exclusions and divisions that many hoped would disappear with the collapse of apartheid, but whose reality remains stridently present. Gentrification is then the visible outcome of the neoliberal policy, which manifests itself by an powerful regime of inclusion and

⁹⁶ Semi-structured interview with Peter, City Bowl, 2 May 2018

exclusion. Residents who have lived in Woodstock for years must now deal with new services and spaces that are not designed for them. This represents the profound social tensions that Woodstock residents experience as gentrifiers gradually “reinvent” their community.

The apartheid history of South Africa is inexorably linked to the fight over spatial equality which shaped the urban space both physically and socially. The recent apartheid past has proven to be an important aspect that determines how urban space in Woodstock is experienced. As demonstrated throughout this thesis, urban space is shared between all kinds of users and the appropriate uses and meanings associated with space are constantly reshaped and negotiated. The outcome of this analysis, then, shows that gentrification is not a spatially or culturally uniform process (Rofe, 2003). The social space in Woodstock, as in any other space, is produced in a constant interaction with context-based aspects and actors.

Limits and future research

While doing ethnographic research, the anthropologist automatically becomes its own research 'instrument'. Even though I consciously tried to open my eyes without any assumptions or judgements, I noticed, it is inevitable to experience and interpret the world within your own framework (Jordan 2010). Therefore, it is crucial to note that this thesis is not the unmediated world of the participants, rather it represents the dialogue established through engagement with the research participants and myself (DeWalt and DeWalt 2002, 81; Jordan 2001, 42).

In terms of limitations, the most important in this research is the time component. Three months is a short time which makes it quite a challenge to get familiar with the research field, as well having a thorough understanding of the complex history of a country like South Africa. Besides, a more extensive research population could have provided more in-depth knowledge about different experiences with gentrification, as well as a broader understanding of its impact. The people I have spoken and observed are the people who have come my way. It is difficult to determine to what extent they have been representative of the groups that I analyze. Moreover, as indicated in the introduction, my research is based on a dichotomy, that of gentrifiers and non-gentrifiers, which provides a simplified representation of reality.

What is needed is a more in- depth understanding of the mechanisms that drive gentrification as land gets more urbanized. An urgent question, therefore, is how we can ensure that everyone can survive in the city? To enrich the understanding of gentrification, it would be very interesting to study the group 'that lives through' more. This might provide a more nuanced comprehension of gentrification.

This thesis is based on a case study that shows that gentrification is not a uniform process. However, given the global nature of the political agenda that shapes the urban space, this case study does as well contribute to the understanding of the neoliberal city concept as a model that has been applied worldwide. Furthermore, by integrating anthropological literature on race, the neoliberal city and space, the theoretical insights that emerge from this case study can be used more to inspire the understanding of the urban space of South Africa, rather than to provide clear-cut general models. Working from this approach, it allows us to discuss the development direction of our cities and to offer solutions to address growing inequalities.

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APPENDIX I

Visual material used on the website of the developments

WEX1



Urban Artisan



Woodstock Quarter



Appendix II

Impression of the street art in Woodstock

Murals with nature/animals theme



Murals about Palestina



Random selected examples of other murals in Lower Woodstock

