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CONFIGURATIONS OF A SOUTHERN PLACE: A POSTCOLONIAL, SOUTHERN URBAN INQUIRY INTO PLACE-MAKING IN NORWOOD, JOHANNESBURG.

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CONFIGURATIONS OF A SOUTHERN PLACE: A POSTCOLONIAL, SOUTHERN URBAN INQUIRY INTO PLACE-MAKING IN NORWOOD, JOHANNESBURG.

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
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BY THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments iv

Dedications vi

Table of Contents vii

Table of Figures xii

Abstract xiv

Acronyms xv

Chapter 1. Concepts and configurations of a southern place as I study place-making in Johannesburg. 1

1.1 Introduction 1

1.2 Terms and concepts 3

1.3 Ruminations on this doctoral research 9

1.4 Conceptual framing of my research 10

1.5 Initial theoretical framing of my research 11

1.6 Making my methodology and theoretical framework more concrete 15

1.7 Further personal, professional, and scholarly reflections 16

1.7.1 Differences in control mechanisms and how these manifests as power in place. 16

1.7.2 Might the southern city pertain to all that is hidden from dominant urban scholarship? 17

1.8 Structure of the dissertation 18

Chapter 2. Postcolonial, southern urban and place theories that frame my research into the configurations that make a southern place. 20

2.1 Introduction 20

2.1.1 Mind mapping my theoretical framing and research process 21

2.2 Postcolonial theory 25

2.2.1 Postcolonialism 25

2.2.1.1 Postcolonial theory in social sciences 28

2.2.2 Postcolonial theory in geography 30

2.2.2.1 Situating colonialism 31

2.2.2.2 Theoretical implications 32

2.2.2.3 Representation 33

2.3 Southern urbanism and the postcolonial influence 34

2.3.1 Southern urban theory 34

2.3.2 The postcolonial southern urban critique 36
2.4 Place in urban research 38
2.4.1 Key ways of thinking about place 39
2.4.2 Conceptualizing power and justice in place 41
2.4.3 Relational place and place-making 43
2.5 The making of a southern place 44
2.5.1 Southern scholarship that align with northern place theory discourse. 45
2.5.2 Might place theory usefully travel (south, across the Equator)? 48
2.5.3 Grounded theory as a praxis for researching the making of a southern place. 51
2.5.3.1. The guidance from postcolonial southern urban scholars 52
2.5.3.2. Grounded theory as a praxis for a postcolonial approach to southern urban research 53
2.6 Research questions 57
2.6.1 Preliminary research questions 57
2.6.2 Revised research questions 58
2.7 Configurations of a southern place 60
2.7.1 Shifts in understanding power relations in place 60
2.7.1.1 The insertion of power as a key dimension of place theory: a review 61
2.7.1.2 Querying power as it is understood in relational place theory and how it might manifest differently in other contexts. 63
2.7.2 Conceptual shifts for a southern place 66
2.7.2.1 Public space 67
What is public space? 67
Public space and the irony of its exclusivity: a case of spatial justice. 69
Poststructural perspectives on the politics of public space. 71
The complex dynamics of public space and how it manifests in southern cities. 74
2.7.2.2 Permissions and agonistic transgression: Critiquing spatial justice debates like urban appropriation through a southern city. 75
2.8 Conclusion 79
Chapter 3. Norwood in context 81
3.1 Introduction 81
3.2 Putting Norwood on the map 81
3.2.1 The gendered, racialized and cultural geographies of Norwood 89

3.3 Situating Norwood in a broader developmental context 93
3.3.1 The National Development Plan (Vision 2030) 94
3.3.2 Municipal and regional spatial development frameworks 95
3.3.3 Built Environment Performance Plan (BEPP) 98
3.3.4 Local area studies, plans and frameworks 100
3.4 Significance of historical, political, and global economic factors that impact place-making in Norwood 106
3.5 Concluding remarks: choosing Norwood 109
Chapter 4. My feminist methodology to an ethnographic study in postcolonial southern urban research. 112
4.1 A geographic approach to addressing “wicked problems” in a planner’s world. 113
4.2 Postcolonial theories that aid feminist research practices in the Global South 114
4.3 My critical reflexive processes 117
4.3.1 Positionality 117
4.3.1.1 Choosing Norwood from a positionality standpoint. 121
4.3.2 Power relations 123
4.3.2.1 My relationship with participants 127
Concluding remarks 134
4.4 My methods of inquiry for studying a particular place 134
4.4.1 My ethnographic approach 135
4.4.1.1 Limitations that constrained my study 137
4.4.1.2 My methods for ethnographic inquiry 139
Participatory observations 139
Walking tours as a useful strategy for participatory observations 140
Interviews to augment my participatory observations 141
- With planners and the neighborhood watch 141
- With people living and working in Norwood’s public spaces 142
4.4.2 Framing my study through desktop research 143
4.4.3 My ethical practices 146
4.4.3.1 Confidentiality 147
4.4.3.2 Informed consent 147
4.4.3.3 Photographs 148
Concluding Remarks 148
4.5 My Strategies of Data Analysis 149

4.5.1 How I analyzed my data collected 150
4.5.5.1 Ethnographic data 150
Observational data 151
- Visual data: photographs that I took and sourced from Facebook and newspaper articles 153
Conversational data 154
- Audio and textual data 154
4.6 Conclusion 156
Chapter 5. Permissions as enactments of power: How we might understand power anew from a southern place. 160
Anecdote 160
5.1 Introduction: Grounding 'theory unbundling' through empirical research on power in place. 162
5.2 Uncovering the logics of place-making practices and expanding the concept permissions to better understand power in a southern place. 164
5.3 Findings and analysis of place-scenarios 165
5.3.1 Place-scenario 1: Operating from headquarters 168
5.3.2 Place-scenario 2: The street ambassadors of Norwood 175
5.3.3 Place-scenario 3: Rough-sleepers and the parks of Norwood 180
5.4 Conclusion 190
Chapter 6. Claiming public space: From permissions to the exclusive use of space. 194
Anecdote 194
6.1 Introduction: A conceptual shift in public space from understanding how a southern place is made. 195
6.2 Findings and analysis of place-scenarios 197
6.2.1 Place-scenario 4: Car guards and the street politics to claiming public space 198
6.2.2 Place-scenario 5: Securing public space 203
6.2.3 Place Scenario 6: Private street security claiming sidewalks 207
6.3 Conclusion 209
Chapter 7. The making of a southern place: A critical review of my research project. 213
7.1 Contributions and associated challenges 214
7.1.1 Provincializing northern place theory but missing southern African thought. 214

7.1.2 Major conclusions and academic reach 216
7.1.3 Other limitations of the work 219
7.3 Future Directions 220
References 222

Table of Figures

Page No.

Figure 2.1: The sketch of the theoretical framework.....39

Table 3.1: Census 2011 population per area scaled from South Africa down to Norwood……82

Table 3.2: Census 2011 population distribution by racial composition in Norwood……84

Figure 3.1: Map of Norwood adjacent to Orange Grove.....98

Figure 3.2: Map of the administrative regions of the City of Johannesburg.....99

Figure 3.3: Map showing the suburban low density grain of Norwood.....103

Figure 3.4: Google map showing the socio-economic and commercial activity in Norwood.....104

Figure 3.5: Norwood's population composition by race, Census 2011…….105

Figure 3.6: Post on Facebook on the Love Norwood page.....108

Figure 3.7: Hierarchy of development plans and frameworks.....110

Figure 3.8: Spatial framework for the City of Johannesburg.....113

Figure 3.9: Provides a sketch map of Louis Botha Corridor.....116

Figure 3.10: A diagram showing the stakeholders involved in the "public engagement strategy".....121

Table 4.1: List of secondary data sources found through desktop research and used for my research……...143

Figure 5.1-3: Public toilets in Norwood Park showing the palisade to prevent rough sleepers from occupying it at night.....177

Figure 5.4: The formally built trading stands where Isaac works.....185

Figure 5.5: No hawking sign to the left of the road place by the traffic department making informal trading illegal..... ..186
Figure 5.6: A typical wendy house on pavements along streets or on street corners for public space private security.....192
Figure 5.7: Steel bars of railing for the foot bridge crossing a small river.....202
Figure 5.8: Off-cut water pipes discarded and unutilized after construction..203
Figure 6.1: Traffic policeman ticketing illegal parked cars on Grant Ave.....217
Figure 6.2: Typical suburban street in Norwood.....219
Figure 6.3: Security cameras on poles on street corners installed.....222

Abstract

Place theory in geography has largely been a northern scholarly endeavor. Yet there is much to learn about place-making in global south cities. Southern urban scholars argue that understanding cities of and from the vantage point of global south, significantly expands urban scholarship in a way that northern-derived theory cannot do. My research experiments with two growing bodies of literature to study the making of a southern place. Drawing from postcolonial and southern urban theory, I use a process of theory unbundling (Lawhon and Le Roux, 2020) to provincialize relational place-making (Pierce, Martin and Murray, 2011). My empirical case studies the spatial practices and logics of place-making by people who live and work in the streets and public spaces in Johannesburg, South Africa. In experimenting with theory unbundling as a tool to dislocate northern-derived theory, I find that relational place-making cannot travel south as is, because, how power and democracy is conceptualized in northern literature is empirically different in a southern place. The negotiatory tactics of how public space is shared but also claimed for private gain, and how marginalized people's behaviors are monitored and controlled, foregrounds what I call the *staying power* from being in place, and that place-making depends far more on what is permissible than what is lawful. I use and expand on an existing southern urban concept, 'permissions' (Lawhon, Pierce and Makina, 2017), to understand place-making when it falls in the liminal space between state law and order and unlawful, unregulated spatial practices. Through these findings I make room in urban scholarship to further research spatial practices and logics that occur outside of the operating systems of the modern state - underpinned by democratic values attached to private property and a rights-based approach to accessing the city.

Keywords: Place-making, southern urban theory, geography, Johannesburg.

Acronyms

AFD	Agence Française de Développment
ANC	African National Congress
BEPP	Built Environment Performance Plan
BRT	Bus Rapid Transit
CBD	Central Business District
COJ	City of Johannesburg
CPF	Community Police Forum
CUBES	Centre for Urban and Built Environment Study
DORA	Division of Revenue Act
GCRR	Global Critical Race and Racism
GIS	Geographic Information System
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
JCPZ	Johannesburg City Parks and Zoos
JDA	Johannesburg Development Agency
JMPD	Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department
JPC	Johannesburg Property Company
JRA	Johannesburg Roads Agency
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NORA	Norwood/Orchards Residents' Association
NPC	National Planning Commission
NRF	National Research Foundation
OGRA	Orange Grove Residence Association
PAR	Participatory Action Research

RttC Right to the City

SAF Strategic Area Framework

SAPS South African Police Service

SARCSACP South African Research Chair in Spatial Analysis and City Planning

SDF Spatial Development Framework

SDGs Sustainable Development Goals

TOD Transit-Oriented Development

UN United Nations

Chapter 1. Concepts and configurations of a southern place as I study place-making in Johannesburg.

1.1 Introduction

‘Place’ is a longstanding concept in the geography discipline that has had a theoretical life of its own since its early use in the discipline (Pred, 1984). First, place has been used to name specific locations and later as a descriptive term to explain sensory, imaginative and affective experiences of a place (Agnew, 1987; Tuan, 1977). This humanistic approach to understand place evolved as structural Marxists, interested in the political economy of the city and poststructural theorists, invested in the plural and ongoing ways of a city becoming, found that place is both abstract and tangible (Harvey, 1990; Lefebvre, 1991[1974]; Merrifield, 1993a). Scholars in urban geography found that with place, as an abstract but tangible spatial construct, they could make arguments of scalar magnitude. They argued that it is more effective to perceive places (i.e., neighborhoods, cities, regions, countries etc.) as interconnected locales, part of a network of smaller and bigger places that affect each other. Furthermore, scholars show that places and how they are made is relational to an ever-changing socio-political environment (Massey, 1991a, 2005; Martin, 2003). That is, actants and entities form a network and then relate to each other on an ongoing basis, but intermittently, as they assert their interests and contribute to how a place is shaped (i.e. relational place-making).

Yet place theory, as a body of literature of which relational place-making is a part of, has grown significantly more in the Global North than in the Global South. My review of the literature in Chapter 2 shows that, in contemporary scholarly work of the Global South, place is used as a concept rather than an analytical framework. The

themes that underpin Marxist and poststructural theorizations of place actually show up in spatial justice debates in the Global South (Desai, 2019; Huchzermeyer, 2014; Parnell and Pieterse, 2010; Robinson, 2005; Roy, 2009). My research project broadly shows that there is a gap in existing place theory as it does not a) effectively account for differences found in southern cities; and b) place in the Global South has had limited theoretical development. That is, if one were to make place a significant theoretical project in urban geography in South Africa (and I suggest southern cities in general) what aspects of place theory would need revising? Moreover, if how a place is made or comes together is different in a southern city, are there new concepts and configurations of a place to consider? As I make use of more critical urban scholarship, like postcolonial, southern urban theory and relational place-making, I also demonstrate that 'southern place' offers a more critical lens of spatial justice debates.

To explore what a southern place might look like, for the greater purpose of suggesting there is a need for southern place theory, I study place-making strategies of marginalized individuals in Johannesburg, South Africa. I chose Norwood, which is a historically whites-only, middle class, inner city suburban neighborhood, as my case. When relevant, I incorporate neighborhoods adjacent to Norwood in my study area. Using relational place-making as an analytical tool to study how places are made I find that it speaks to the plurality and politics that exist in a place. However, I employ a method of unbundling[1] theory, as explained by Lawhon and Truelove (2020, p. 13) in their article 'Disambiguating the southern urban critique: Propositions, pathways and possibilities for a more global urban studies', to delineate what aspects of relational

[1] Unbundling, here, means more carefully considering 'theory' as made up of many interwoven components, many of which are often implicit in written works. Lawhon with Le Roux (2020) delve into questions around gentrification theory in an effort to clarify which components of theory are the subject of postcolonial critique. Following this line of thinking, I explore what it might look like to unbundle place theory and consider which aspects might need rethinking as it travels.

place-making might need revising before it travels south. My research findings show that there are some structural and empirical differences in Norwood, as a southern place, that require epistemological and conceptual revisions of relational place-making. The sketch of my theoretical framework (Figure 2.1) is a visual representation of what my research project aims to do.

In studying the everyday practices and the logics behind those practices, I began to understand the place-making strategies of marginalized people that live and/or work in public spaces in Norwood. Yet, in learning about the place-making strategies of marginalized people, I not only realize that they have agency to claim space (and place) but that I also need to account for the space- and place-claiming of privileged people in Norwood. The reason for this is because power is a key aspect of relational place and place-making theory which I discuss in detail in the theory chapter. I observe how differential and dispersed power manifests in the claiming of place and the ways in which public space is taken for exclusive use and private gain. By recognizing that more elusive power dynamics are presented in southern places, I challenge a) the weighting or amount of power that is placed on influential entities and systems; and b) the narrow exploration of what democracy looks like in different places. My findings suggest that I use alternative concepts such as ‘permissions’ as it was introduced in Lawhon, Pierce and Makina (2018) and that the normative conceptualization of public space be revisited. Though I introduce my major findings here and unpack them throughout my dissertation.

1.2 Terms and concepts

Throughout my dissertation I make use of terms that may be more commonly used in South Africa and that I may use interchangeably with other words to mean the same

thing. I also use theoretical concepts with specific connotations in the scholarship I apply to my research. Below I explain them and I may introduce scholarship to aid this explanation, which I expand on later in the dissertation.

Provincialize: Within postcolonial scholarship, provincializing theory is the practice of locating ideas, concepts and theories within their European intellectual traditions. The text by the social scientist, Dipesh Chakrabarty, called Provincialising Europe (2000), has influenced many scholars challenging the notion that ideas of Western modernity, developed during the age of European Enlightenment, are universally applicable throughout the world today. Chakrabarty (2000, p. 6) calls on scholars to historicize knowledge by tracing where intellectual ideas physically come from and what social, political, economic and cultural paradigm they were created in. In geography and urban studies, scholars like Lawhon, Silver, Ernston and Pierce (2016) [see also Lawhon, Ernston and Silver (2014)], Robinson (2003) and Sheppard, Leitner and Maringanti (2013) have pursued this project by demonstrating through research the parochial or narrow scope of northern-derived theories. They do this by showing how universal Western ideas of urban systems and city life inaccurately and problematically represent non-Western urban realities.

Marginalized: My research participants consisted of the group of individuals that live and or work outside in public I refer to as marginalized. In the next section I explain the aspects of their identity that I suggest marginalize them in the context of the place-make. I acknowledge this word has been problematized by Third world feminist and postcolonial scholars. I take note of Spivak's (1988) objection for the Western intellectual elite to refer to the oppressed colonial subject as 'marginal'. The root term 'margin' suggests that the colonized subject in the 'Third world' is placed in relation

and in opposition to the colonial subject in the ‘First world’ who is at ‘the center’. This not only perpetuates the othering of the colonial subject but it represents them as monolithic. Spivak (1988) instead uses the term ‘Subaltern’ to represent the colonial subject as heterogeneous in socio-political identity and positionality and to shift them away from the elite Western intellectual gaze. As explained in an interview by Walter Adamson with Spivak (1986) her critique is focused on the fault of the Western intellectual to think they can speak for the Subaltern after conducting their research. She states ‘What can the intellectual do toward the texts of the oppressed? Represent them and analyze them, disclosing one’s own positionality for other communities in power’ (Adamson, 1986, p. 96). In my research I heed this criticism by wrestling with my identity and positionality in my methods chapter. In my dissertation, I use marginalized as a general term to refer to my research participants who I consider, from my research, to be in precarious situations while place-making in Norwood. Yet this does not disregard any agency they possess simultaneously.

Rough sleeper: Rough sleeping is similar to being homeless, however it typically refers to the act of sleeping outside and in places not suitable for living (Mendip District Council, 2022). This can include sleeping in parks, on the streets, on pavements or in abandoned buildings and in cars. According to the Cambridge Dictionary (2022) rough sleepers may build temporary shelter and wait several months before they can access adequate housing. However, in the case of South Africa and many other countries this is a permanent living situation for many people. While rough sleeping is often associated with no having a home, recent research in Johannesburg reveals that rough sleepers sometimes have homes outside the central part of the city, in rural areas of South Africa or in other African countries but they are too far to travel to regularly (Perlman and Charlton, 2021). I use the term rough sleeper to refer to anyone

who sleeps outside in public spaces in and around Norwood during the time I conducted my research, whether they have adequate shelter elsewhere or not.

Desktop research: This is a term often used in South Africa to mean information that is collected from secondary data sources and not through fieldwork (Bekker, Eigelaar-Meets, Eva and Poole 2008, p. 4). It is typically seen as the initial point of entry when trying to gain knowledge about a particular topic and researchers will use the internet to source the information. Once this avenue of gathering information is exhausted a researcher will enter the next phase, such as empirical data collection through fieldwork, to continue their research. This is the approach I used for my research project.

Global South: This a phrase that broadly includes Asia, Africa, Latin America and Oceania and forms part of the group of terms that mark the regions outside Europe and North America (Dados and Connell, 2012). These terms include the “Periphery”, the “Third World” or “developing countries”. Changes in industrial growth in countries like Brazil, Russia, India and China; while finance capital is still centered in the old imperial centers, namely London, New Work, Tokyo and Frankfurt, has shifted the meaning of the Global South to focus on geopolitical power relations rather than development and cultural differences (*ibid.*). As explained by Dados and Connell, 2012, p. 13)

> The term Global South functions as more than a metaphor for underdevelopment. It references an entire history of colonialism, neo-imperialism, and differential economic and social change through which large inequalities in living standards, life expectancy, and access to resources are maintained.

The phrase, the Global North, is used in direct relation to the Global South to denote the regions of the world (i.e. Europe and North America) that still benefit from European colonization by being, not universally but generally, more wealthy, privileged and developed today. In this dissertation, when I use Global South or cities of the Global South, I refer to both the physical location of the cities being in the geographic regions listed above and the part of the world that was colonized by Europe and still faces inequality and less access to resources as a result.

Southern cities: I use the phrase southern cities to mean cities seen and analyzed through a southern theory lens. As explained by Comaroff and Comaroff (2012) southern theory calls to 'provincialize Europe' (Chakrabarty, 2000) and for theory-making to move to outside the Global North (Homi Bhabha, 1994) so as to displace the dominant central position of Western capitalist modernity. Southern cities, therefore become locations from which to make urban theory, but they can also help to develop theory that can travel to northern cities (Lawhon et al, 2016).

Bundles/unbundling: In this dissertation I make use of 'bundles' as defined by Doreen Massey (2005) and I make use of the term 'unbundling' as used by Lawhon and Truelove (2020) and Lawhon and Le Roux (2020). The terms are used differently in the scholarly texts I cite and therefore me using them is coincidental. Massey (2005) explains place as "loose bundles" of human and non-human creations, each with their own trajectories determined by both space *and* time. Or put in another way, Massey (2005) encourages her readers to think of place as "bundles" of objects in space that are assembled. Alternatively, "unbundling" is used by Lawhon and Truelove (2020, p. 13) and Lawhon and Le Roux (2020, p. 76) to mean a more careful consideration of theory-making, whereby the components that make a theory are examined. For

Lawhon and Truelove (2020, p. 13), these components are the empirics, the causal relations and the normative judgements that determine how theory is developed from research. These scholars suggest that if a theory is unbundled, we might see that the evidence that affirms the components of that theory no longer holds true elsewhere. In a new context, the empirical evidence; the reasons why the evidence is what it is (causality); and the assumptions (normative judgements) we make to prove our theory, is likely to differ in one aspect or another. This investigative process is called unbundling.

Permissions: Permissions is a word used by Lawhon et al (2018, p. 125) that I consider to be part of the language of southern urban theory to name what is seen empirically in Global South cities and has not been explored elsewhere. In my research I advance this language by expanding on what permissions could be. Though I detail this out in my theory chapter, at the onset I understand permissions to refer to claims to urban space that is allowed or permitted, whether this is through legal systems or socio-spatial processes. In conversation with Lawhon (personal communication, March 20, 2021), permissions speak to the agreements made by society through cultural norms and relational coexistence, as to what is allowed in urban spaces. This makes room for what is permitted that is *not only* enshrined in institutionalized, legal, formal rights-based systems. Permissions may be urban practices, activities, behaviors and systems in operation in the city that exist in the liminal space between formal and informal, legal and illegal, acceptable and unacceptable. Finding the gap to be allowed, permissions depend on power dynamics, political interests, and the everyday claim to place asserted through a range of negotiatory tactics.

Personal communication: I use ‘personal communication’ when I cite any verbal engagement I had with participants and locals of Norwood when conducting my research. By verbal engagements I mean semi-structured formal interviews with planners and the neighborhood watch member; semi-structured formal and informal interviews I had with participants living and/or working in public space; and casual conversations I had with the locals. Locals included friends I had made and acquaintances I met during my stay in Norwood. I use this mode of citation in-text and in my reference list.

1.3 Ruminations on this doctoral research

My passion in urban research and planning has always circled around the notion of just, equitable cities for the attainment of individual and collective self-actualization. My interests in practice and higher education gravitate toward the challenges that marginalized urban dwellers face because of their inability to ‘purchase’ or ‘work their way’ into the urban systems that can deliver on the most basic of human needs. Marginalized people, to me, are those people that are unable to tap into the job market, the housing supply, efficient transportation, food security, safe infrastructure and creative social amenities. Even where and when there is access, it is under precarious conditions.

I have consistently been drawn to understand how the marginalized navigate the precariousness of the city and negotiate their socio-political position in relation to their environment. I find myself more attuned to and interested in a) how people are notoriously shaped by their environment; and that b) how people find ways to survive and/or thrive is dependent on both personal and societal skills to accommodate (one’s own) difference and diversion from the norm. Postcolonial and southern urban

scholars have challenged the notion that cities in the Global South are exceptions to 'the norm' which in dominant urban studies refer to Global North cities, and that all cities should aspire to a modernist urban form and functionality (Lawhon et al, 2014; Lawhon and Le Roux, 2019). I consider myself an urban practitioner driven to find ways to include complex nuances that exist in cities alongside and in spite of dominant, normative urban systems. My intention entering this PhD program was to learn what scholars have found theoretically that speak to the reality I was working with for twelve years in South Africa. Later in this chapter I reflect on my personal and professional growth as a result of my doctoral journey.

1.4 Conceptual framing of my research

In South Africa we are faced with exceedingly high levels of urban precarity that will challenge any town planner's vision for creating a livable-, let alone a so-called ideal city as they are often designed "on paper". Long-range comprehensive urban plans are difficult to achieve the world over, and in countries with limited state and capital capacity, even more so. Instead, multiple urban systems outside of formalized systems are commonly found in southern cities like Johannesburg. These informal systems can be precarious, but they are also innovative, resilient and are in some ways integrated into the institutionalized systems. The differences and diversions that exist in southern cities are in many ways the norm because *most* urban dwellers in Johannesburg are marginalized and largely live and work within the liminal space of formality/informality and legality/illegality. Many alternate urban systems remain unknown and poorly understood in dominant urban scholarship; and are often ignored or villainized by institutionalized urban planning (i.e., municipalities) because they create so-called disorder in what ought to be planned urban spaces (Myers, 1994;

Sorkin, 1992). In the instances where alternate urban systems are acknowledged, planners struggle to incorporate them into existing laws, regulations and management systems (Smith, 2011). In her article Smith (2011) documents the work of an exhibition program, “Design for the other 90%: CITIES”, where architects, designers, planners, government officials and non-governmental organization exchange knowledge on how to design cities for the marginalized, which are considered to make up the majority of the world’s urban population. It is this acknowledgement that alternate urban systems exist in southern cities, and the notion of meaning-making in place through personal and collective interrelated action, to conceptualize my research project around place-making. My theory chapter delves into existing literature to provide the scholarly scaffolding for the conceptual and theoretical framework of my research.

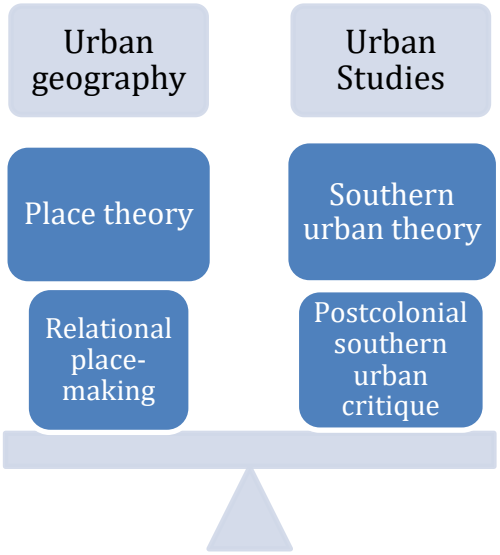
1.5 Initial theoretical framing of my research

It is with the above conceptual framing in mind that I developed my doctoral research project. During my studies I was exposed to bodies of literature in geography that inspired me to study a planning problem I experienced repeatedly while in practice. This problem was, how do we get the full story or the true tale of what is happening in any given urban space that we as planners choose to intervene in? How do we really know *what* all the parts are of a place, *who* all it holds in the space and how do we make a plan for a place that is constantly changing? Furthermore, as planners in a postcolonial world, how do we achieve equity and justice when our training is often still embedded in coloniality. By coloniality I mean that ambitions to develop new, expand on or revitalize existing cities are premised on the ideals of modernity. Through settler colonialism European urban systems were adopted, indigenous systems were trumped new measures to control indigenous people were

implemented (Radcliffe, 2017). Many design tools and management apparatus of cities still use and promote colonial methods of city planning. Building cities in the ‘developing world’ (Global South) can still arguably be seen as building an empire if they continue to be an extension of colonial rule. This may be seen through the promotion of normative urban design and practices over alternate systems, or in the support of practices and behaviors of people favored by colonial powers (i.e. white, middle-class or affluent, citizens, men).

I deliberately chose a project that would help uncover more actually existing urban practices and systems in an already developed inner city suburb of an old southern city (Johannesburg). Rather than make city and neighborhood plans and projects the center of research, as a planner might typically do, I chose to spend more time learning about a place with the aim of seeing past the colonial façade of the master plan blueprint. Learning from geography, as a discipline at doctoral level, gave me the room to expand my social, political and philosophical knowledge of urban spaces. This helped me develop a critical perspective on the teachings and practices of planning, which may in turn strengthen my position as a planner. Furthermore, by studying extant theory in urban geography and urban studies, I was able to identify gaps in the scholarship to contribute new knowledge to.

Through a combination of studying certain areas of geography and urban studies scholarship, as well as keeping my core interests in the back of my mind, I developed a theoretical framework at the onset of my research when I wrote my proposal. This is shown broadly below:



Under the training of Dr. Mary Lawhon I was introduced to southern urban theory as a body of scholarship that advocates for more urban research to be conducted in the Global South, not only providing empirical evidence but making theory that is more applicable to 'southern urbanism'. More recently, some southern scholars like Mary Lawhon and Yaffa Truelove (2020) have drawn a distinction between southern urban theory that is postcolonial and that which isn't. Coined the 'postcolonial southern urban critique' (Lawhon and Truelove, 2020) they explain some urban scholars of the Global South do not consider the deep-seated coloniality that is embedded in knowledge production. While the genuine sentiment of many southern scholars is to produce knowledge that speaks to actually existing urban reality, they are concerned that new literature is not always rigorous when applying existing theory to new research cases. Whether this theory is from the Global North and travels south or it is from the Global South, they call for a process of unlearning coloniality. Using postcolonial theory as the cornerstone of their work they emphasize the need to unbundle theory, to honor non-Western intellectual traditions, and to pay attention to the research methodology. I highlight it here but discuss this in detail in the theoretical framework.

My interest in undertaking a qualitative study - to uncover the practices, logics and urban systems that marginalized people tap into and use to navigate the politics of working and/or living on the streets of Johannesburg - led me to scholarship on place, as a concept and place theory as a whole, in urban geography. Not only did early humanist thinkers of place speak to the cognitive and affective experience of being in place, but contemporary place scholars draw from critical thought on power and politics in place (Buttimer, 1976; de Certeau, 1984; Jonas, 1998; Martin, 2003; Massey, 1991b; Relph, 1976; Pred, 1984; Purcell, 2003; Tuan, 1977). Drawing on spatial justice debates they explore the complexity of belonging and exclusion, and the making of place that is as much a local process as it is global (Lefebvre, 1991[1974]; Harvey, 1990; Merrifield, 1993b; Massey, 2005; Soja, 1980). The work of Henri Lefebvre, Doreen Massey, David Harvey and Mark Purcell have helped to shape a small but resonant body of literature on relational place and place-making. From my research I've found that place theory is minimally or loosely developed in South African geography scholarship. In the process of articulating my doctoral research intervention I was drawn to relational place-making, which was conceptualized by Pierce, Martin and Murphy (2011). I used relational place-making, as an analytical tool of place, to aid me in my exploration of how place theory, as a subdiscipline of geography, can be expanded in South Africa. Aware that I would be walking a tightrope between critically and cautiously expanding on extant by limited geographic thought in South Africa and superimposing northern-derived literature, I employ the postcolonial southern urban critique to guide me through a process of what I hope is responsible, robust research.

The above discussion is of my initial theoretical framing. I now turn to explain how my research evolved from using a grounded theory approach to shape my methodology and expand my theoretical framework.

1.6 Making my methodology and theoretical framework more concrete

What I discuss above is the initial theoretical framework I began with to conceptualize my doctoral research and prior to entering the field for my empirical research. As explained, I used the postcolonial southern urban critique as a guide to doing empirical research in the Global South for the purpose of contributing to southern urban scholarship. In the process of conducting fieldwork and writing up my dissertation it became clear that I was using a grounded theory approach, within a postcolonial feminist framing. This meant that while I was using extant theory to guide my research I let my findings from the field deduce my results and determine what aspects of my initial theoretical framework needed revising. First, I found that relational place-making needed to be provincialized, which was the initial intent of theory unbundling as explained in Lawhon and Le Roux (2020, p. 76). Second, in using the work of Lawhon and Truelove (2020) and what they term the postcolonial southern urban critique to guide me methodological approach, I had to delve deeper into feminist and postcolonial theory. These extensive bodies of scholarly work helped me a) shape my methodological approach; b) see how they have contributed to the human geography discipline; and c) locate postcolonial southern urban theory in relation to some of its theoretical roots. In turn, doing research in a postcolonial southern urban context demanded that I revise my grounded theory approach and that I revisit existing concepts. My theory and methodology chapters that follow detail out the evolution of my research.

1.7 Further personal, professional, and scholarly reflections

Having spent several years in the United States since 2017 undertaking my doctoral degree, I have learned that many northern scholars and practitioners are as critical of positivist planning ideals and exclusionary urban systems; as much as there are southern urban scholars that are not critical nor postcolonial in their thinking. This is evident in the literature I've read for my doctoral studies as well as the scholars, the professors and the planners I've encountered. It is because this cross-pollination of the international doctoral process, my lived experience and the research itself that I give the following commentary. While it is beyond the scope of my research to provide literary and empirical evidence for all of this commentary, they remain in my view important contributions to southern urban theory to be considered for future research.

1.7.1 Differences in control mechanisms and how these manifests as power in place.

From the knowledge and city experience I've gained in the United States, local governments struggle with ghost cities, food deserts, inefficient transportation, poor infrastructure, environmental hazards, homelessness and displacement (e.g., gentrification). Furthermore, informality, illegality and alternate urban systems exist in the United States. I mention this to acknowledge that despite the United States being in the Global North and a so-called developed country, its cities also face serious problems. The difference I've observed anecdotally and interpreted from scholarly papers, is that the magnitude and complexity of these alternate systems are seemingly not as pervasive as in South Africa, and by and large in Global South cities. My deduction for this phenomenon is that the state and big capital monitor, manage and discourage working outside of institutionalized systems more in the United States than in South Africa. By "the state" I mean the government and by "big capital" I mean

companies in the private sector with a lot of capital to their disposal. While their capacity is not equal, the government and the private sector in the United States have extensive resources to invest in the urban environment, enabling them to create and manage more universal and unified systems. With this the state and big capital are also able to control more how a city functions and develops. This is distinctly different from many Global South cities that have multiple urban systems running simultaneously. In my first data chapter I demonstrate the relevance of this difference when it pertains to how power is manifested in place.

1.7.2 Might the southern city pertain to all that is hidden from dominant urban scholarship?

Most southern urban scholars call for more research to be done in the Global South to better understand cities that have, for many years, been disregarded in dominant urban scholarship as distinct from Global North cities and as important places to know (Robinson, 2002; Roy, 2009). Yet, as explained in (Lawhon et al, 2016) the concept 'southern city' need not and does not necessarily only refer to a Global South city. Some scholars have called for southern urban theory to denote a body of scholarship that works to uncover urban systems or the logics of everyday urban practices that fall outside of 'the (northern) norm' or outside of mainstream explanations about how a city works. Therefore, when using the concept "southern city" I refer to a certain perspective of a city that recognizes differences in everyday practices and diversions from institutionalized, formalized or commonly known urban systems. Southern urban theory celebrates the multiple ways of knowing a city and advocates for a radical shift away from thinking a city ought to be a certain way (in discussion with Dr. Mary Lawhon during my doctoral studies).

Using the concept southern city in the way I explain above, speaks to my passion to contribute to a) the making of more equitable and just cities; b) supporting knowledge production of under-researched cities, many in the Global South; and c) uncovering and theorizing about what is hidden in cities in general. In this way, research works to understand alternate urban systems and differences in the logics of everyday urban practices. Incorporating this knowledge in city planning may make cities more just and raise the equity of marginalized communities. I unpack this further in the conclusion.

1.8 Structure of the dissertation

My dissertation is structured as a monograph with a total of seven chapters. This includes an introduction, a conclusion, a theory chapter, a contextual chapter, a methods chapter and data chapters. I divide my data into two chapters, each covering a different theme that came from my empirical research. Each data chapter reveals my findings which I then analyze in accordance with my theoretical deductions. I use the **introduction and conclusion** to explain the broader and more specific intentions of my research project. This includes the theoretical interventions and empirical contributions; as well as the major findings and conclusions I draw from them. I also reflect on my personal and professional growth having embarked on a doctoral degree, and some key reflections from the process, particularly with an international perspective. Finally, I discuss the limitations of my research and possible future avenues for research. Following the introduction is my **theory chapter.** I begin with a handwritten mind map of my theoretical framework and the epistemological and conceptual shifts that stem from the research. The rest of the chapter provides an overview of the broad bodies of literature and the specific theories I work with for my

research. I also include a discussion on postcolonial and grounded theory because they are foundational to my research approach. Toward the end of this chapter, I give my preliminary and my revised research questions. I then have a **contextual chapter** of Norwood, the study area of my research. I physically locate Norwood in relation to Johannesburg and provide the demographic and socio-economic background of it. I discuss the gendered, racialized and cultural geographies of Norwood, as well as the historical, political and global economic factors that influence it. An important aspect of contextualizing Norwood is situating it the broader developmental agenda of the city using existing plans and policy documents from the South African national government, the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality and other vested entities. Thereafter I have a **methods chapter** in which I explain the feminist methodology I use to conduct an ethnographic study for my research. I explain why this methodology is applicable to postcolonial southern urban research and why the select methods I use were the best suited for conducting ethnographic research in a particular place, namely Norwood. Essential components of the chapter include detailing out my critical reflexive process, the methods and ethical practices I use in the field, and I explain my strategies for data analysis. Finally, I offer two data chapters for the research I conducted. My data meets two thematic areas of inquiry that are fleshed out in my theory chapter. The first analyses how power relations are shaped and how power manifests in place and the second analyses how public space is occupied and claimed by individuals and different groups of people. In both chapters I use the concept permissions to frame relational place-making in a southern urban context and to critique existing debates or applications of spatial justice in a southern city.

Chapter 2. Postcolonial, southern urban and place theories that frame my research into the configurations that make a southern place.

2.1 Introduction

My doctoral research project is situated within the Urban Geography subfield in Geography and draws from Urban Studies and Urban Planning. My scholarly intervention is in place theory, where I query what epistemological differences may arise from studying place-making in a southern city. As with many other doctoral theses, I have a theoretical and empirical research component. Before embarking on my empirical research which I share and analyze in the data chapters, I position my inquiry within critical urban thought using postcolonial, southern urban theory and poststructural place theory. These can also be regarded as broad philosophical foundations for my research.

The intention of this research, academically, is to contribute to the body of scholarship that studies 'place' in the Global South. I first work my way through dominant place theory which is from the Global North, and then investigate what has been written about place in the Global South. Here I focus on literature that writes from a Global South perspective, rather find individual cases from the different regions of the Global South. As my empirical research is in South Africa, I particularly focus on Africa and South Africa urban scholarship. The initial question I asked was: What contributions could we make to place theory in Geography, if we found gaps and differences in the literature about how places are made, when we study place-making in a southern city? The general hypothesis or claim from postcolonial and southern urban theory, is that there are differences and that these are important missing pieces if we are to create a more global and just urban scholarship.

The title of this work “configurations of a southern place” suggests that there are epistemological, conceptual and empirical differences to how the pieces that make place come together (configure) in a southern city. By southern city, I mean a city in the Global South that is studied from a postcolonial and southern urban theoretical perspective. I draw from this body of literature to attempt a process of breaking apart or unbundling existing theory strategically, and applying what is useful critically and responsibly, even if it is from elsewhere. The concern for southern urban scholars is not that theory travels, but rather the way it’s applied in the Global South, perpetuating colonial power relations in knowledge production.

I also add to this debate by researching how urban planning draws from dominant northern ideas of what a city is. Going unchecked, theory and practice continues to exclude people who are marginalized by colonialism because of the colonial-thinking still embedded in the making of a city. The core aim of this research project is to investigate what needs to happen with theory from elsewhere if we, as knowledge producers, let it travel with us.

2.1.1 Mind mapping my theoretical framing and research process

Figure 2.1 below is a handwritten, sketched-out mind map of my doctoral research project. It shows the niche theories and the wider bodies of scholarship in Urban Geography and Urban Studies I used to frame my theoretical intervention. In the center of the sketch I highlight my research case, namely “place-making in Johannesburg” and right below I pose the core question of my research. As indicated in the sketch, I use grounded theory as a praxis to research a particular place in the Global South, which I term ‘a southern place’. This approach made sense when developing my

research methodology and aligns adequately to the teachings of the postcolonial southern critique.

An important part of unbundling and making theory, as argued by postcolonial southern urban scholars, is to undertake an empirical case and allow the southern city to reveal itself to you, slowly and authentically. During this process, I as the researcher, remains aware of the colonial lens that frames my normative judgements on how a city ought to be and I work to unlearn this mentality. My research project was therefore a somewhat fluid and unbounded study, with a loose agenda around studying how marginalized navigate power relations and negotiate their positions as they 'make place' in Norwood.

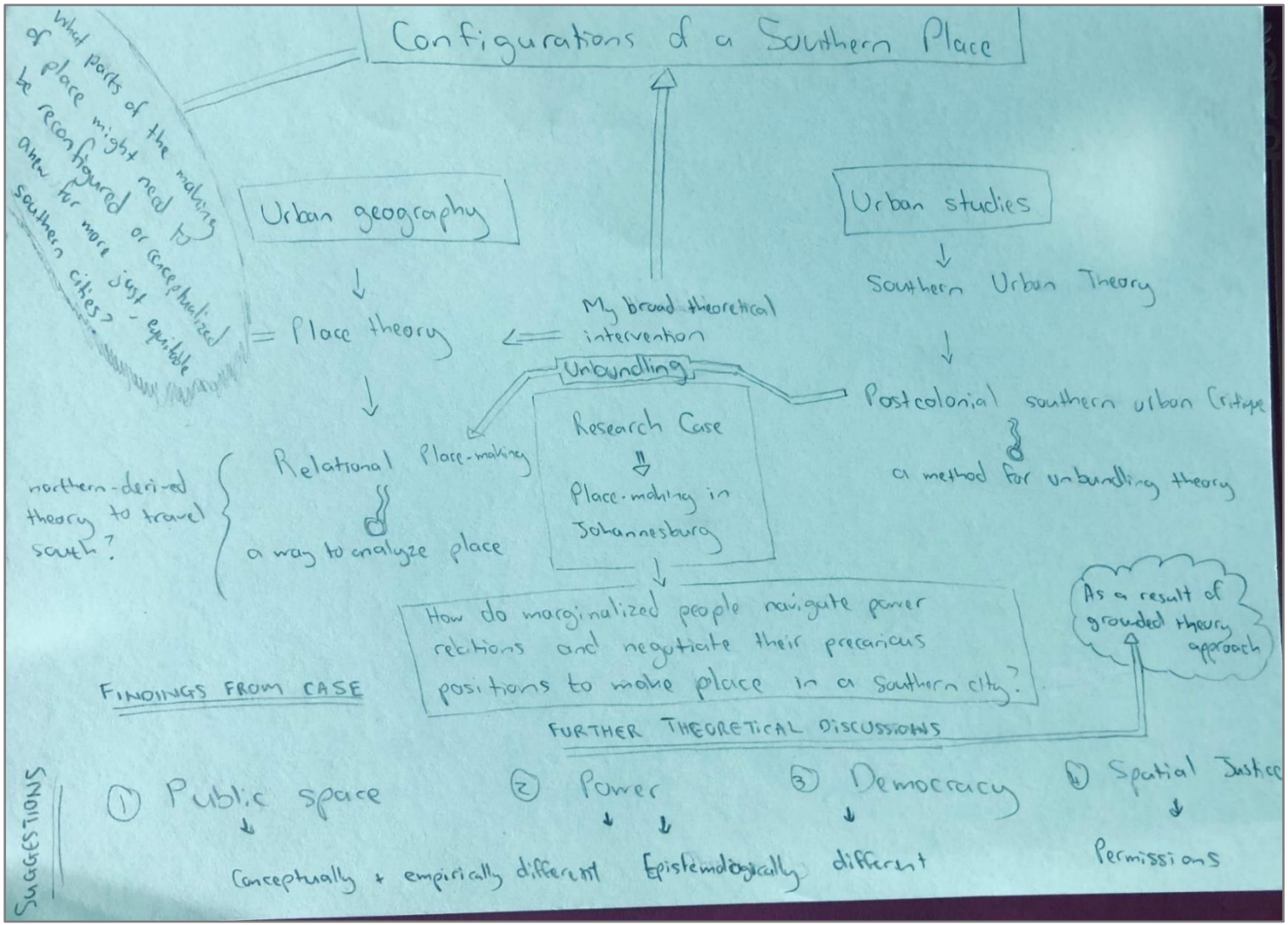
It was during the fieldwork phase of my research that I uncovered epistemic, conceptual and empirical differences that needed to be revised and included. These are part of my mind map in Figure 2.1. First, from unbundling place and relational place-making theory it became apparent that power and democracy, as key elements of place theory, are understood differently in the literature to what I observed in my empirical case. Here I argue place theory is epistemologically different. Secondly, my empirical case study also demanded that I delve into public space as an urban concept relevant to the research because I focused on place-making of participants that live and/or work in public space. I argue that public space is conceptually and empirically different in Norwood and suggest how it could be conceived differently and more effectively for a southern city.

Finally, I make use of a southern urban concept permissions to help explain why and how empirical differences exist in my case study area. The overarching research question I ask is: What components in the making of a place might need to be reconfigured or conceptualized anew for southern cities (with the aim of making cities

in general more just and equitable)? Permissions was conceptualized by Lawhon et al (2018) as an intervention to argue that spatial justice takes on a different dynamic in a southern city. The theory around permissions argues that the rights of most urban dwellers cannot only be enshrined in a legal, formal rights-based system and assumed to be upheld to the extent that it considers or benefits most. Permissions speaks to the rights or perhaps rather the allowances given in urban spaces by society through cultural norms, relationality, and ongoing political struggle (Lawhon et al, 2018, p. 125). My research contributes to this call to provincialize spatial justice and I use my unbundling of relational place-making to this end.

Given the above theoretical framing, this chapter provides the literature review for the overarching bodies of scholarship and the niche theory that are used in this research project. I begin with a discussion on postcolonial theory because it is foundational to the postcolonial southern urban critique and my feminist research methodology. This is followed by a literature review of southern urban theory, with a focus on the postcolonial southern urban critique; and place theory, with a focus on relational place and place-making. I then frame my inquiry around what I call “a southern place” and explore the (dis)connections between grounded theory and southern urban theory that helped shape the research questions of my study. As a result, I give both my preliminary and revised research questions. Finally, I examine relevant academic debates and urban concepts that became important for my research through the grounded theory methodological approach I used. These discussions are not exhaustive literature reviews but are necessary for framing the analyses and conclusions drawn from the empirical results. Here I use the phrase ‘configurations of a southern place’ to denote the parts (that make a place) that need to come together, be readjusted and conceptualized anew.

Figure 2.1. Sketched mind map of the theoretical framing of my research project, including notes, key questions and major conceptual findings.



2.2 Postcolonial theory

Postcolonial theory is one of the foundational bodies of scholarship for critical geographic thought. In my research it premises my philosophical inquiry of place-making in a southern city. This is evident not only in the postcolonial southern urban critique which I use to critically evaluate the applicability of place theory in the Global South; but it also strongly informs my research methodology. In this section I first define postcolonialism, how it came about as philosophical perspective and by whom, and why I see my research as postcolonial. Secondly, I examine how postcolonial theory is present in Geography and how scholars have used it in different ways. Such as to historically, physically and geopolitically locate where and when colonization occurred; what theoretical implications postcolonial framing has on geographic knowledge production; and how scholars have used the aspect of representation in postcolonial theory to develop more critical geographic scholarship.

2.2.1 Postcolonialism

Using the term “postcolonial” is debated by many scholars in postcolonial, decolonial and colonial studies in social sciences and the humanities. The prefix ‘post’ before any word suggests something that is occurring after, later or subsequent to a previous situation, era or way of being (e.g., postgraduate, postpartum, postmodern etc.). Postcolonial could refer to a reality after any colonial period in human history, but it usually refers to the period after European colonization of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Bhambra, 2014). Many scholars query and outright reject that the world has ever moved

past colonialism. For instance, McClintock (1992) argues that using 'post'- suggests, incorrectly, the idea that the world's history is linear and singular; and that the contemporary balance of economic, social and political power has progressed beyond gender, racial and Western domination at a global scale.

Loomba's (1998, p. 20) definition of colonialism as the 'conquest and control of other people's land and goods' proposes that it is a practice that has been present throughout human existence, and still is. Prominent scholars like McClintock (1992), Loomba (1998) and Sidaway (2000) provide a myriad of examples of colonization, from the creation of the Roman and Aztec Empires between the second and sixteenth centuries, to the European colonial project that continues to expand through globalization today. Scholars have categorized colonialism into various kinds, such as quasi-colonialism, neocolonialism, settler colonialism etc., to demonstrate present day colonization and how far we are from it being an "era of the past" (Loomba, 1998; Sidaway, 2000). We might consider the recent occupation of Ukraine by Russia, Chinese land purchases and infrastructure investments in numerous African countries or the ongoing, worldwide, cultural imperialism of the United States all as forms of conquest and control.

Considering the many ways that colonialism presents itself today, I align with de Alva (1995) who argues that postcolonialism is different from the post-colonial era. The latter refers to the period of decolonization when anti-colonial political movements in the 20th Century forced European countries to relinquish their formal, administrative government rule from the colonies. Similarly, McClintock (1992) altogether challenges the notion of a singular theoretical term like "post-colonialism" to encompass the multiplicity of histories and power relations. For these scholars, postcolonialism is not a new, progressive,

developmental era in a singular narration of human history after European colonization. Rather de Alva (1995, p. 245) calls for a poststructural lens that expands postcolonial studies to include a 'multiplicity of histories' where representing 'the other' becomes central. He adopts Spivak's notion of "strategic essentialism" as a way for the different identities within the subaltern collective to unite in the battle against domination, but never to forget their individual identities and the different ways in which they were colonized (de Alva, 1995, p. 246). Spivak has been critical of viewing postcolonialism through a poststructural lens as it too easily excuses the ongoing domination of the subaltern and evades the responsibility of Western scholars wrestle with how they represent the other. In other words, it might be too early to have multiple others when Western scholars are yet to acknowledge and address their power over the collective other.

While I understand the point Spivak is making and I use the term "marginalized' in my study to refer to a group of individuals who are all subjected to the legacy of European colonialism, my methodological approach and research focus is invested in understanding the different trajectories and identities of these individuals (my participants). I use this definition by de Alva (1995, p. 245) to situate my research within a particular understanding of postcoloniality:

> …postcoloniality can best be thought of as a form of contestatory/oppositional consciousness, emerging from either preexisting imperial, colonial, or ongoing subaltern conditions, which fosters processes aimed at revising the norms and practices of antecedent or still vital forms of domination.

In my research I identify the logics and everyday practices of place-making by marginalized people in Norwood and analyze them against existing systems of control and interpersonal power relations. I situate place-making strategies within local and global

forms of domination through urban planning and design. At the same time, foregrounding the alternate ways that the marginalized access and use the city through claiming place, I argue forms part of the oppositional consciousness to revise dominant (northern) ways of knowing the city and understanding place-making.

2.2.1.1 Postcolonial theory in social sciences

As explained by Bhambra (2014) postcolonialism forms part of the social sciences and the humanities. In social sciences, the tradition of postcolonial theory is rooted in decolonial political struggles and the work of key activist scholars, Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak inspired by political struggles for decolonization (Bhambra, 2014, p. 118; Young, 1995).

Edward Said initiated the critical queries around knowledge production and representation that are central to postcolonial theory (Bhambra, 2014). To Said universalizing theory, of which the stronghold was and is the West, excluded other regions and peoples to contribute to the history of modernity. This created the perception that modernity only developed in the West and simultaneously erased ‘the other’ from modern history. This perceived superiority in human progress justified the oppression of non-Western cultures and the acquisition of their material resources. Bhambra (2014) understands Said’s work to, not only debunk the assumption that ‘the other’ was complacent with the invasion and domination of Western powers, but also that the (Western-biased) history of the world was entangled with the other. At this juncture of his theoretical endeavor, Said challenges what it means to represent an-other culture if it is no longer separate but intertwined with all other cultures and especially dominant Western culture (Bhambra, 2014). A luminating argument he makes is that universalizing theory

and misrepresentation robs the other of their human experience and in turn their humanity. Said explains that coloniality in knowledge production is the dominance of provincial theory that is disseminated globally and considered to give universal meaning to all cultures, societies and human history.

Homi Bhabha challenges the ascendant narrative on the passage to modernity by muddying the waters of colonized/colonizer; East/West and traditional/modern (Bhambra, 2014; Shumar, 2010). He has a poststructural ontological approach to postcolonial theory by bringing attention to hybridity from multiculturalism and plurality in human society (Shumar, 2010). This resolutely undermines the categories used by colonizers to distinguish European society more superior than others. Silverblatt (1992) and Stoler (1989) theorize the notion of mestizaje which refers to the sexual relations between the colonialists and colonizers and the children that are born from them that challenge the purity of the white race and loyalty to the European metropole that tried to regulate sexual relations in the colonies (de Alva, 1995). Furthermore, to Bhabha (Bhambra, 2014) modernity was not ushered into the world by the West, it should instead be seen as a violent negotiatory process that the West merely lay claim to.

Of the three key thinkers of postcolonialism Gayatri Spivak addresses the issue of representation with a Third World feminist approach. Amongst other scholars, Spivak is critical of the poststructural ontological lens in postcolonial studies (Loomba, 2005; Shumar, 2010). She argues that perceiving the world as a myriad of different and self-contained social and cultural trajectories, ignores the implications of imperialism, the influence of global capital and the power of epistemic violence (Bhambra, 2014; Dirlik, 1994; Loomba, 2005; Spivak, 1988). Spivak (1988) challenges Western intellectuals to

consider this imbalance of power when they study the Third World out of interest or claim to produce work as researchers who present themselves transparently. Explaining that the subaltern is not homogenous nor always inherently marginal (in relation to the First World), she queries whether the subaltern subject is even able to represent themselves authentically. For Spivak there is profound difference in making the subaltern voice heard and making visible the systems and mechanisms of oppression. That is researchers cannot claim to give agency to subaltern subjects without going through a process of 'unlearning' that brings to light the ideologies that renders the subject an object of study in the first place (Bhambra, 2014; Spivak, 1988, p. 296). Representation in feminist postcolonial research is then as much about how the researcher perceives themselves and presents themselves as it is about querying the ideologies that render the Global South (the Third world) a place of study and the subaltern a subject to study.

In geography and the southern urban critique, several scholars have used the key contributions by Said, Bhabha and Spivak to develop theories and do research this is rooted in postcolonial and feminist thought. I discuss this next.

2.2.2 Postcolonial theory in geography

Geography is firmly implicated in postcolonial scholarship in social sciences. Jennifer Robinson (2003, p. 275) argues that geography, in particular, is subject to the postcolonial critique because much work in the discipline has depended on 'exploration and understanding of different places and cultures', often free of scrutiny around universalizing concepts, perpetuating modernist ideologies, and representing other people and places. Postcolonial discussions in geography range from querying different colonialisms; understanding theoretical and actually existing implications of knowledge

production; and doing feminist postcolonial research. I unpack these discussions in greater detail below.

2.2.2.1 Situating colonialism

Geographers have echoed the work of prominent postcolonial scholars who draw attention to the ambiguity that lie in terms stemming from the word ‘colony’, such as colonial or postcolonialism, if they are not adequately qualified. As presented by Loomba (1998, p. 25), this ambiguity hides the differences in types of colonialisms and continuity of coloniality or colonial conquest still active today. This ambiguity in language evades responsibility of existing forms of colonialism and how they may transmute as different kinds of control is administered; making it all the more difficult to prevent conquest from being perpetuated. Sidaway (2000) suggests that categories such as ‘colonialisms, quasi-colonialisms, neocolonialisms, internal colonialisms and break-away settler colonialisms’ allow for more nuanced geographical understandings that take account of the ways that some former colonies can become imperial powers such as the United States, Russia and Japan. In other words, more specific language that situates the type or stage of coloniality helps to identify what is actually taking place. This is important not only for geopolitical comprehension but Sidaway’s (2000) argument demonstrates how the Anglo-American discipline of geography cannot be separated from an ongoing colonial project of knowledge production and dissemination. This not only has an impact on theory development but the representation of the Global South as the region subject to European colonization. Both are these factors are central to the work of postcolonial southern urban theorists, which I address at the end of this subsection on postcolonialism.

2.2.2.2 Theoretical implications

Postcolonial geographers concerned with traveling theory have drawn from the work of Gayatri Spivak [(1998) 2010] to pinpoint the dangers of displacing the epistemic roots of knowledge production. As explained by Robinson (2003; see also and Jazeel, 2013) theories developed in the geography discipline since the 1960s have been based on parochial ideas from the West and then universalized without discretion as they have traveled. Geographers have drawn from a limited number of scholars with sustained ongoing debate, from a postcolonial perspective, about the impact of universalizing Western theoretical and analytical concepts for international scholarship (Robinson, 2003, p. 274). These include Chakrabarty (2000), Slater (1992) and Spivak [(1998) 2010]. Their critique is focused on the dangers of dislocating the identities of scholars, evading their responsibility to acknowledge their limitations in making theory [Spivak (1998) 2010] which is discussed further under representation below. It also includes the danger of dislocating the very theory they make to the detriment of real world problem solving with policies, plans and decision-making that are informed by parochial theories (Robinson, 2003, p. 275-6). And finally they critique the disregard for and loss of other knowledge from elsewhere outside of the West, especially indigenous knowledge that merge spiritual and scientific epistemologies [Chakrabarty, 2000; Connell, 2007]. As Robinson (2003) and other scholars explain, the purpose for postcolonial geographers to shine a sobering light on the issue of universalizing parochial Western theory is to create the conditions to engage on a more equal, more inclusive platform for an already existing diverse and discordant intellectual community.

2.2.2.3 Representation

Within Geography some feminist geographers have heeded the call from postcolonial feminist scholars, like Spivak [(1998) 2010], to interrogate the power that knowledge production and its stewardship (scholars) hold to uproot or further embed the colonial ways in which the subaltern is represented. Feminist geography research practice has been pivotal in establishing a standard critical reflexivity in qualitative research methods. The ethos and values that underpin this practice have influenced sub-disciplines like postcolonial geography (Johnson and Madge, 2016, p. 80). For contemporary feminist and postcolonial geographers, a basis for research is to try empower the people, communities and societies they research. There are a few ways in which scholars use representation to this end. For instance, Sharp (2005) discusses the ways researchers can perpetuate colonizing power relations that by misrepresenting participants and silencing their voices with dominant discourse. This becomes pertinent when researchers are faced with complex situations in which their position of power is challenged in the field. Sharp (2005, p. 306) references the work of Chacko (2004) who experienced 'othering' from participants being an outsider and Hapke and Ayyankeril (2001) whose status as an unmarried couple complicated their position as researchers in the communities they researched. Once normative power relations do not hold in the field, researchers from Western universities, may struggle to honestly convey their experience because the feminist notion of empowering the so-called marginalized people and communities they research no longer hold. Sharp (2005, p. 307) goes on to reference the work of Mandel (2003) and Mountz et al (2003) who write about the fatigue experienced from entering a foreign field site where people speak a different language and practice

different customs. It can be exhausting to navigate a new environment while trying to ensure adequate collection of data, or the researcher may find it hard to accept other ways of doing fieldwork they were not expecting to have to change. The time it takes to integrate new dynamics of fieldwork experience which challenge existing representation frames and even research hypothesis, is what postcolonial, feminist geography scholars have tried to prepare students for (Hyndman, 2001; Rose, 1993).

2.3 Southern urbanism and the postcolonial influence

Having explained what postcolonialism is and its relevance in Geography, I am now able to connect it to southern urban theory. Specifically, for this research project and work with the postcolonial southern urban critique to frame my inquiry into place theory. This section, therefore, explains the postcolonial southern urban critique and I discuss which postcolonial scholars have shaped this critique. My first point of entry, however, is to delve into southern urban theory as the broad body of literature that focuses on knowledge production of Global South cities within a particular philosophical frame. I unpack this below.

2.3.1 Southern urban theory

Southern urban theory is a widely accepted transdisciplinary subfield of Urban Geography; Urban and Regional Planning; Urban Studies and other urban-related academic fields. Europe and Postcolonial and southern urban scholars argue against the dominance and universalization of northern-based, western-centric research and theory (Ferguson, 1999; Jacobs, 1996; Leitner and Sheppard, 2003; Mabogunje, 1990; Myers,

1994; Robinson, 2003; Roy, 2005). Their analyses have revealed the ways in which knowledge production and urban practice are rooted in colonial rationalities (Kooy and Bakker, 2008; Lawhon and Truelove, 2020; Njoh, 2008; Porter, 2010). They have also gone to great lengths to show empirical and epistemological differences between cities in the Global North and South (Lawhon et al, 2014; Leitner and Sheppard, 2003; Pieterse, 2013; Robinson, 2005; Roy, 2009; Watson, 2009).

Comaroff and Comaroff (2012) and Robinson (2006) and argue that theory in social sciences and urban studies were produced in EuroAmerican “First World” countries while raw data sourcing, project experimentation and development studies dominated the non-Western “Third World”. Mainstream knowledge production invoked aspirational rhetoric toward modern technology in order for the Global South to catch-up to the Global North. Mabogunje (1990) and Njoh (2008) show the discriminatory, oppressive and unequal systems that were woven into colonial infrastructure projects. These are sustained by spatial designs that are repeatedly imprinted in expanding African cities through town plans and zoning schemes with colonial roots. Southern urban scholars have denounced the application of inaccurate analyses, incomparable concepts and totalizing theory over the last three decades, in part because of how they translate into practice (Connell, 2007; Myers, 1994; Robinson, 2002; Roy, 2009).

Despite the impressive strides made in academia to have a coherent anti-colonial voice, there is a need to disambiguate this work. That is, many southern urban scholars do not always ground their work in postcolonial thought, few postcolonial scholars situate their empirical work in a southern frame, and many northern-based scholars do not provincialize their theories. While vast differences exist in what is being studied and for

what reasons, urban scholars rarely articulate and clarify what these distinctions are (Lawhon and Truelove, 2020). As a result, students, scholars and other urban experts (i.e. planners, architects and engineers) in the Global South struggle to discern which ideological motivations, rationalities and provincial narratives in academia that circulate globally, are appropriate for their context.

2.3.2 The postcolonial southern urban critique

Postcolonial southern urban scholars like Lawhon and Truelove (2020) call for more careful and rigorous research in what they recently named the 'postcolonial southern urban critique'. They operationalize this phrase *to 'describe studies that use 'the south' as a basis from which to examine urban research and theory-making'* (Lawhon and Truelove, 2020, p. 3). In their article they demonstrate how urban concepts can obscure empirical and epistemic differences in actually existing urbanisms and why disambiguating theory is imperative for postcolonial urban scholarship. Alongside others, they also argue for a practice of unlearning in research methods and theory-making in order to produce knowledge that is more critical, accurate and just (Lawhon et al. 2016; Porter, 2010; Sharp, 2009; Spivak, 1994). I locate my work squarely within the postcolonial southern urban critique. I begin the process of disambiguation by probing into what has been written about place by southern theorists in the following section.

Scholars of the southern urban critique have asserted that we need to understand cities of the Global South from their own vantage point (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2012; Mbembe and Nuttall, 2004; Myers, 2014). That is, the Global South is a vast and highly differentiated region where cities should be studied independently (situated and connected, while not perceived as essentially unique) from the cities of the Global North

(Lawhon et al, 2014). Early southern scholars like Connell (2007) and Robinson (2002) asserted the need to study cities that are often left ‘off the map’ and to include them in northern-dominant urban scholarship. More critical radical scholars challenged us to consider what it might look like if the urban canon relocated to the south (Roy, 2009). Not discarding valuable northern theory but honoring the call to make visible what Chakrabarty (2000) calls the ‘second history’ of the world, free from the ‘epistemic violence’ that is embedded and perpetuated through dominant knowledge production still rooted in the north (Spivak, 1988).

More recent postcolonial southern scholars have begun to do the work of unbundling theory so as to acknowledge the coloniality embedded in urban theory (Lawhon et al, 2016; Lawhon and Truelove, 2020). This constitutes a methodology of theory-making, unmaking or remaking depending on the particular research being undertaken. The initial step is to disambiguate scholarship under the banner of southern urban theory which celebrates the different political, ontological and epistemological viewpoints that helped frame research trajectories undertaken in the Global South. The next step is to unbundle extant urban theory to make sense of the empirical phenomena (the everyday urban reality of the south), the causal relationships that inform the how and why of the empirics, and the normative judgements made when scholars look through a given philosophical lens. This process is largely understood as provincializing theory, however southern scholars (Sheppard et al, 2013; Lawhon et al, 2016; Lawhon and Truelove, 2020) have taken the time to explain how theory can be universal (generally works from an ontological perspective) without being totalizing (assumed to have application across the globe without deep critical analysis).

Southern urban scholars have had to defend their work by explaining the importance of theory travelling responsibly, so as not to wholly discard valuable contributions to the urban field at a global level, but also to prevent unintended colonial perpetuation of hegemonic knowledge production (Connell, 2007; Lawhon and Truelove, 2020; Robinson and Roy, 2016). Time and again, urban practitioners have tried to implement 'best practice' urban projects from northern cities with aspirations to mirror the development trajectory of the north. Given the colonial history of the world with hegemonic Western power and the wealthiest cities located in the north, it is difficult to turn away from relative material success and continued influence (Ferguson, 1999; Myers, 1994). Southern scholars do not wish to dismantle supportive and constructive north-south relationships, but rather to break the cycle of dependency and exploitation embedded in various global systems. In the urban sector, this is situated in knowledge production and urban development (Robinson, 2005).

2.4 Place in urban research

In this section, I trace the roots of place theory from its early use as a concept for descriptive purposes, to more intricate theoretical developments that address politics and justice in place. I begin with an overview of how place has been theorized about in humanistic geography, to how it is used by structural Marxists writing on the political economy of cities. I consider Allen Pred and Massey's work that urges the consideration of systematic power dynamics that influence social, cultural and political formations in place. This is followed by the reworking of place through a poststructural lens with a focus on theorizations by Pierce et al (2011) on relational place-making. This section positions

place theory, more generally and relational place-making specifically, as a northern-derived theory with the potential to travel and be applied elsewhere.

2.4.1 Key ways of thinking about place

In early formulations, human geographers in area and regional studies studied ‘place’ as a visible site with measurable attributes over a fixed period (Pred, 1984). Geographers and planners had the job of naming locations and the connections between them as structures that exist in societies and economies of scale. As the scholarly field grew, humanist geographers increasingly emphasized the analytical value of understanding the affective everyday practices of living in a location (Buttimer, 1976; de Certeau, 1984; Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1977). This included Buttimer’s (1976) phenomenological approach to measure life rhythms by studying human behavior in relation to the environment. Agnew’s (1987) conceptualization of place as ‘location; locale and sense of place’ made significant the emotional attachment people had to locations through their lived experiences, memory-building and cognitive expressions of the place (also see Cresswell, 2014).

Writing largely in parallel at that time, Marxist spatial theorists emphasized a very different set of urban practices and processes, demonstrating the impact of unequal and powerful structures of capitalism and globalization on cities (Harvey, 1990; Lefebvre, 1991[1974]; Smith, 1984). Cities were marked as places of uneven development in the production of space (Harvey, 1990). Place was brought into Marxian analyses as theorists drew on Henri Lefebvre’s ‘conceptual triad’ of space in which powerful global spatial practices are either reproduced or can be changed vis-a-vis political action in the everyday ‘life’ of a local place (Lefebvre, 1991[1974]; Merrifield, 1993a; Soja, 1980).

Merrifield (1993a, p. 519) critiques Entrikin's thesis on place for being founded on 'a dualistic Cartesian conception' of subject/object or place/space polarity. He instead uses Lefebvre's theory to argue that there is a dialectical relationship between these conceptions with space as the abstract whole, rather than to see place as being a unit of or unity between subject and object. Key to this ontological shift is seeing place as a *process* and the material production of the political economy (Merrifield, 1993a).

A well-known reworking and theorization of place is the work of Doreen Massey. Advancing earlier thinking and developing a poststructuralist approach, she argues for thinking of 'place' (2005) as bundles of objects in space that are assembled at multiple scales through political negotiations between people. Massey (2005) conceived of place as open, related to and dependent on the "outside world" as a way to argue that places are not made (by the locals) in a vacuum, but rather are dependent on external influences (and anyone entering a place, even for only a few minutes as they walk through it). Her notion of 'a global sense of place' was a deliberate play on words to move geographic thought beyond the work of humanist scholars that privileged local meanings of place.

Although, to structural Marxists and postmodernists, place was generally agreed to be shaped by an assemblage of components that are part of a network of systems at different scales, observing the *simultaneity* at which loosely connected assemblages and systems (i.e. bundling) move across time and space, was novel and introduced by Massey. To Massey, places were never essential nor complete, they were a constant state of becoming through interconnected *bundles*. Massey (2005, p. 140) explains that bundles are the 'throwntogetherness' of the human and nonhuman with their own time-space trajectories, having to negotiate the politics of co-constituting a place (Pierce et al, 2011).

2.4.2 Conceptualizing power and justice in place

Questions of power and justice were largely peripheral to early humanistic scholarship on place. For example, the work of well-known scholars Buttimer (1976) and Tuan (1977) were centered around everyday experiences of places; and the distinction of places as physical and affective landscapes (Agnew, 1987). There is, however, some long standing consideration. Pred (1984), for example, theorized that the creation and transformation of places are historically contingent on power relations between institutions and actors that enact the tasks of placemaking. That is, the creation of events or material outcomes of tasks for placemaking is an ongoing process for social, cultural and political formation. However, this interweaving occurs in time-space parameters that can never be repeated but in the given moment. Doreen Massey also saw place as a bundle of objects and systems, however for her it was like a performative stage where people continuously negotiated their political interests (Massey, 2005). Seeing place in this transitional and open way allowed Massey (2005) to argue for the reimagining of places as *inherently* inclusive and accessible to all.

The analytical boundaries separating research on the political economy of the city and that of interpersonal and socio-political relations in place has been troubled, showing the importance of working across culture, economies, and power. For example, Soja (1996; 1980) theorized the dialectical relationship between social, political, and economic processes in space. Place was not only practiced and performed, but it was also made by scalar structural forces. Scholars studied social movements and local community politics in relation to broader urban development, capital investment and global social,

economic and political issues to understand collective framing of place and negotiations of place-making (Jonas, 1998; Martin, 2003; Massey, 1991b).

While Pred (1984) and Massey (2005) show the anti-essentialist nature of place (i.e. no claim can be made on something that is never complete and always becoming) they note the oppressiveness of powerful structures that sediment multiple time-space realities into a homogenous narrative for bounded space. In other words, there are forces that can control places to the point where it seems they are stuck in time. For them this is done through mass communication, language and knowledge production where places are named, described and told as (his)stories through the lens of dominant societies and ideologies (Pred, 1984).

Building on this conception of place, scholars have sought to provide analytical frameworks and methodological steppingstones for further research and particularly emphasizing questions of power and justice (Baldwin, 2012; Martin, 2003; Pierce et al, 2011). For instance, place-framing is the analytical tool for understanding the politics of competing entities that are loosely connected through assemblages of human and non-human networks to enact differing interests (Martin, 2003). Place-framing enables relational place-making because place in this frame is no longer perceived 'as a coherent, unitary whole, but a variety of only roughly congruent place bundles or components: necessary fragments that cohere into (temporary, always incomplete but also relatively stable) places' (Pierce and Martin, 2015, p. 1293).

2.4.3 Relational place and place-making

While largely humanistic in its early roots (Ley, 1981; Tuan, 1977), more recent place scholarship has pushed to reframe place through poststructuralist understandings of power and difference. This scholarship draws from relational place theorists such as Doreen Massey and Deborah Martin to invoke debates in urban geography around spatial justice. One such analytical framework is relational place-making which repositions place as 'flexible, multi-scalar and always developing...produced via socially, politically, and economically interconnected interactions among people, institutions and systems' (Pierce et al, 2011, p. 59). Explained differently, this means that while individuals experience a place, it is being produced through socio-political processes (Pierce and Martin, 2015). Place-making should therefore be understood as an affective experience that is a separate but parallel process to what is socially and materially produced in place.

Affect is a necessary dimension of relational place-making as it considers conflict that arises from numerous diverse positionalities all making place while having overlapping and sometimes competing political perspectives on how that place ought to be (Martin, 2003; Pierce et al, 2011; Pierce, Williams and Martin, 2016; Purcell, 2003; Young, 1989). Ultimately place is left open to multiple ways of being known, through place-frames that are positioned in relation to the salience of different political struggles and varying socio-technical materiality.

2.5 The making of a southern place

Until this point in my theory chapter I have provided a literary overview of postcolonial theory, southern urban theory and place theory. Using the postcolonial southern urban critique as a basis for my critique of place theory, I provide a discussion specifically on postcolonial theory to more clearly frame the kind of southern urban theory I employ and align my work with. The postcolonial southern urban critique is therefore the scholarship I use to guide my process of unbundling of relational place-making. Relational place-making is located within place theory, which I argue below, is primarily a northern-derived body of scholarship in the Geography discipline. I provide a brief review of the evolution place theory in Geography but focus on power, political and relationality as key epistemological dimensions of place. I do this as a way to triangulate my research between postcolonial, southern urban theory and relational place-making, as I think through how place theory, broadly, can travel south critically and responsibly. Put differently, what would constitute the making of a southern place?

In the first part of this section I explore what of southern urban scholarship currently exists that might lean into a provocation for place theory in the Global South. In other words, what might southern place theory envelop that is already being written about and discussed in intellectual spaces? Secondly I query what of northern-derived place theory can travel south and be integrated usefully and responsibly for the benefit of expanding southern urban scholarship. I focus my attention on southern urban theory as a body of literature, and southern scholars that have worked intently on African urban theories. The third part of this section includes a section on grounded theory, which I use as a praxis to mobilize the postcolonial southern urban critique in a research project. My grounded

theory approach, as I show, becomes a critical element to shape my research questions and pragmatically conduct my empirical study.

2.5.1 Southern scholarship that align with northern place theory discourse.

Place theory has been primarily produced by scholars in, and about cases in, the Global North. While the term ‘place’ can be found in southern scholarship, the term is often used in ways that are either not intrinsically geographical or consider place as primarily a Cartesian construct (Desai, 2019; Mbembe and Nuttal, 2004; Roy, 2009; Robinson, 2002; Simone, 2004). See page 40 for a more in-depth discussion on the evolution of place theory in geography. There is some writing that *applies* place theory (Baldwin, 2012; Poppe and Young, 2015), but the examples found use the terms without explicit consideration of its northern roots. Scholarship about southern cities has, however, considered many topics of relevance to *place thinking* (without necessarily using the word ‘place’ itself) including the politics of place, the right to the city, spatial justice, plural identities, assemblages, and urban systems in the city (Bénit-Gbaffou and Oldfield, 2014; Huchzermeyer, 2014; Quayson, 2014; Parnell and Pieterse, 2010; Pieterse, 2013). In other words, similar ideas that have been explored in mostly northern place theory can broadly be found in urban research in the Global South.

Southern urban scholars have used a wide range of analytical concepts to explore cities and the processes, practices and politics that shape them. While there is limited direct engagement on place as a theoretical body of work in southern urban scholarship as there is in northern urban geography scholarship, there are crosscutting themes of discourse. The intention behind this section is to demonstrate overlapping interests between key threads of urban scholarship in the Global South and place theory. I highlight

a few key literatures in African and South African urban scholarship that show a widespread interest in urban social justice and the politics of plurality. These are both primary areas of poststructural discourse in relational place theory.

Southern urban scholars and rights activists have made considerable use of Lefebvre's conceptualization of the 'Right to the City' (Abahlali baseMjondolo, accessed 08/19/2021; Huchzermeyer, 2014; Ndifuna Ukwazi, accessed 08/19/2021; Parnell and Pieterse, 2010). Lefebvre's analysis of the socio-spatial dialectical triad asserts that all *city-zens* have a right to appropriate urban space, as they too produce the city (Lefebvre, 1996[1968]). For instance, Huchzermeyer (2014) draws from it to portray informal settlements and their residents as integral to the making of the city. Huchzermeyer (2014) legitimizes shack dwellers' access to, occupation and use of urban land by affirming informal settlements in South Africa as creative places of the city, central to everyday lived experiences where urban strategies are devised from below. Parnell and Pieterse (2010) argue for an anti-neoliberal development agenda for southern cities, which pursues the acquisition of universal rights as prescribed through the 'right to the city' debates and UN-Habitat.

Scholars have also worked to develop and draw on pluralistic understandings of power and justice. In Robinson's (2005, p. 763) rebuttal against globalization as a hierarchical system of competitive and interconnected world cities, she uses place identity and belonging, bound to a location or territory, to emphasize the value of socio-political relations between cities. In using Spivak's 'strategic essentialism' Roy (2009, p. 829) calls for the dislocation of epistemologies that develop around ''process' rather than 'trait' geographies' so as to be more situated and analytically dynamic. In other words, if we

dislocate or remove a theory from where it was created to apply to elsewhere, can the context in which it was developed be held separate or at least in conscious view, when trying to understand or learn about another place? This point deeply resonates with a Massian approach to place. In this vein, Simone (2004) adds that socio-economic connectivity in and between places happens whether the process is quick and easy, secure or slow, insecure and difficult. Synchronicity between these debates establishes that all places are unique but related and they develop rhizomatically.

Repeatedly African urban scholars have highlighted the impact of agonistic and oppositional pluralism and the spatial tensions that unfold from inevitable interactions in urban space (Pieterse, 2008). Mbembe and Nuttall (2004) and Myers (2011) highlight the stark contradictions present in African cities because of multiple different rationalities with opposing actions or activities that still interact and depend on one another. Myers (2011, p. 42) unpacks 'intersections between colonial and postcolonial urban design visions, formal and informal settlements, collaborative and contestatory governance, violent and non-violent urban imaginaries, and local and transnational conceptualizations of urban culture'. Roy (2009, p. 826) also states that research on African cities demonstrates some of the 'most complex articulations of agency and subaltern subjecthood'. Simone (2004, p. 2) observes that the proximity of similar types of dichotomies in urban space produce 'a highly ambiguous sense of place' which creates 'intense struggles over which identities have legitimate access to rights over specific places and resources'. This overview suggests that southern urban scholars are making sense of increasingly complex sets of politics in African urban places.

2.5.2 Might place theory usefully travel (south, across the Equator)?

Might place theorization provide a framework through which to analytically advance the southern urban literature that is discussed above? For those interested in spatial justice, relational place and place-making provides a language that advances Lefebvre's theorizations of the 'right to the city' and the concept 'spatial triad' to help understand what produces space, but in a more pluralistic way. For those *already* writing about the politics of pluralism, it provides an analytic and vocabulary that humanizes the political process of making a city.

Yet it is important to be cautious here, for southern urban scholars have also widely and vociferously demonstrated the limits of uncritically applying theory elsewhere (Jacobs, 1996; Leitner and Sheppard, 2003; Mabogunje, 1990; Myers, 1994; Robinson, 2003; Roy, 2005). Again, this is not to suggest that theories from elsewhere ought not to travel. Robinson's (2006) foundational work pushes for the greater incorporation of southern cities *into* urban studies and uses ideas generated in the north to advance this argument. And while much of this literature focuses on a broad framing of North/South, the question of whether theory rooted in a particular region or part of the world has been discussed before (Chakrabarty, 2000; Clifford, 1997; Roy, 2009). Scholarship on southern cities has prompted a discussion on the need for critical postcolonial inquiry over the past twenty years or so, but as clarified by Lawhon and Truelove (2020), this does not necessarily mean theory cannot or should not travel. Without dismissing the efforts and ongoing attention to this call, it continues to be a difficult task and important to work through the process of unbundling theory, identifying what might require adjustment, rejection and/or reformulation (Lawhon and Truelove, 2020).

Empirically, it is difficult to contest the idea that places exist everywhere: in this sense, place is universal. However, what constitutes place is not universal: what constitutes place bundles (i.e., the assemblages of human and non-human, the socio-technical materiality, the scalar networks between them that are continuously shifting according to individual and collective politics) varies across places. Further, causal relationships vary as urban processes are shaped by different pressures, histories, contexts and power relations. It is here that I anticipated seeing differences in the materiality of the city, the positionalities and identity politics of individuals, the spatial, structural and institutional forms that exist, and how these elements configure in relation to each other. In this sense, the selection of what to study when examining places is crucial: if southern scholars study the same actors, sites and processes as in northern cases, they may well miss key dynamics of a southern place. Scholars must also examine urban processes, carefully inquiring about logics, motivations, intentions and outcomes of place-making strategies.

Writing on relational place-making is, at this stage, more ambiguous when it comes to its underlying norms. While interested in justice, it is thus far primarily an analytic through which to attend to competing and changing politics through place-frames without assigning judgment. Instead, it offers a platform of ideas that we might consider when thinking about spatial justice (Pierce et al, 2011). Recent northern place theory calls to uncover actually existing politics in place from conflicting rights, in an effort to achieve urban democracy (Pierce et al, 2016). Scholars of this school of thought argue that these politics exist because of differences associated with plurality, which are irrefutably antagonistic and agonistic (Mouffe, 1999). Place-framing and relational place-making are recognized to form part of an ongoing, agonizing process of conflict and consensus

(Pierce et al, 2011). Pierce, Williams and Martin (2016) consider it a more democratic and just approach to identify and work with relational power that temporarily activates strategic essentialisms in place. Often referred to as the 'politics of place,' it is a way for people to temporarily essentialize a political position in relation to the place of interest and strategically align with allies to claim a set of rights or permissions (Lawhon et al, 2018; Pierce et al, 2016). Permissions is a concept that has been mobilized by Lawhon et al (2018) in their spatial justice debates around agonistic transgression as a mode of urban appropriation in Global South cities. Which I explain in 1.2 Terms and concepts and expand on in this research.

Building on these ideas, I suggest there is sufficient common overlapping interests between place theory and southern urban scholarship to ask: *how are places made and contested in southern cities*? This includes considering everyday practices, forms of power and imaginaries of place that create and perpetuate different normative judgements of what cities are and how they ought to be. In this research I work to root these arguments by drawing on insights from Johannesburg. I suggest that thinking through southern places helps to shift our thinking away from naming abstract rights and towards understanding what permissions urban residents seek. Permissions may be more or less durable depending on power but can be considered an ongoing claim to place for as long as people need to feel a sense of belonging and security in and ownership of a place. Understanding permissions in places is first about seeing what *actually is* in cities that is often understudied and then opens intellectual space for more critical inquiry into urban possibility for how cities function in non-normative ways. From

this vantage point of knowing southern cities, I suggest we might begin to have a conversation about more spatially just, equitable cities.

2.5.3 Grounded theory as a praxis for researching the making of a southern place.

Some southern urban scholars, while they do not reject all extant theory, concentrate their efforts on producing new concepts and theories (Roy, 2009). Others focus their attention on scrutinizing northern-derived and global urban theory before or as it travels south so that it can be used more cautiously and effectively (Lawhon and Le Roux, 2020; Robinson, 2002). More recently some scholars have advocated for the philosophical lessons and findings of southern urban theory to travel north (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2012; Pierce and Lawhon, 2018). Depending on the research goals of the scholars, they will choose different methodologies and methods to prove their hypothesis. Lawhon and Truelove (2020) have suggested a process for unbundling theory and have offered some guidelines for doing empirical research. While these guidelines have informed my entry into the field to conduct research, my research methodology is more concretely framed by feminist and postcolonial theory.

It is through a grounded theory approach that I was able to shape my research incrementally as new knowledge and understanding came to light. In this section I begin by explaining the process of unbundling theory and motivate why a grounded theory approach works for a research project of this kind. This is followed by a brief overview of grounded theory and how it aligns with the philosophies that underpin postcolonial southern urban theory.

2.5.3.1. The guidance from postcolonial southern urban scholars

A key component of postcolonial southern urban research is to unbundle urban theory to understand its ontological roots and epistemological make-up. In her book "*Southern theory: Social science and the global dynamics of knowledge*", Connell (2007) traces theories from indigenous groups in Australia, Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle-east and other postcolonial societies that offer valuable insights into the social sciences, demonstrating that non-Western societies have their own philosophies that explain the world. Tuck and McKenzie (2015, p. 76) show that our approach to research and how we view, for instance epistemology which is how we procure knowledge and come to know something or ontology which is our understanding of what reality is, differs according to indigenous, critical or postmodern paradigms of thought. Therefore, if scholars study southern urban places (or any place for that matter), they ought to be aware of epistemological and ontological differences that influence how knowledge producers lean on for learning and understanding place. Postcolonial southern urban scholars have suggested ways to unbundle existing southern urban theory and break-apart the constituent parts of all theory before applying it elsewhere, as I explain in section 2.3.2. Postcolonial scholars argue that the process of provincializing theory is critical to unearth the coloniality that is often still embedded in all theory-making. It is particularly important for the Global South to address the epistemic violence of knowledge production (Chakrabarty, 2000; Connell, 2007; Robinson, 2002; Spivak, 1988). By breaking apart theory in this way we can uncover where Western thought and ways of understanding the city influence southern urban theory. While Lawhon and Truelove (2020) focus their attention on disambiguating southern urban theory and what I call 'a method' for

unbundling the constituent parts of all theory, they also suggest approaches to undertaking empirical research in southern cities that honor the intent of postcolonial scholarship. I discuss these below and how they resemble and differ from approaches that use grounded theory.

2.5.3.2. Grounded theory as a praxis for a postcolonial approach to southern urban research

In their provocation into effectiveness of the southern urban critique, Lawhon and Truelove (2020) argue that more robust scholarship will need to engage postcolonial theory. They suggest a process of unbundling theory, as described in section 2.3.2. They furthermore draw on feminist, postcolonial scholarship of unlearning (Mohanty, 1988; Nagar, 2014; Spivak, 1999) to encourage a reflexive mode of questioning the learned 'pre-existing categories' that perpetually places the city in relation to a modernist rationale for how it ought to look and function (Lawhon and Truelove, 2020, p. 10). They reiterate that 'scholars advocating deep postcolonial theory continue to remind us that we are all fundamentally shaped by the colonial encounter' (Lawhon and Truelove, 2020, p. 9) and that the North-South binary is predicated on this encounter. Alongside other scholars, they argue that only collecting more data about the Global South will not address the underlying worldview of the researcher (McFarlane and Jazeel, 2010; Spivak, 1999). Instead, by querying every urban concept or urban theory learned about in dominant (Western) urban studies, the researcher may see beyond what they have learned and begin to uncover hidden phenomena and urban practices (Lawhon and Truelove, 2020 refers to Chattopadhyay's "Unlearning the City", 2012). In his study of the Lunuganga landscape in southern Sri Lanka, Jazeel (2013, p. 65) takes issue with projecting concept-

metaphors “nature”, “religion” and “subjectivity” onto this particular non-Euro-American landscape because these are implicit in northern-derived landscape studies. He argues (2013, p. 65):

> This is not to say that at Lunuganga there is no ‘nature’, that ‘religion’ is insignificant, or even that ‘subjectivities’ do not emerge with landscape experience. Rather, it is to suggest that these words also hold at arm’s length particular kinds of landscape politics that emerge from differently textualized human relationships with the environment. Thinking through these concept-metaphors precludes an engagement with other worldings, other ontologies, and their politics.

Postcolonial, and postcolonial southern urban scholars are methodical in how they provincialize theory (Bhan, 2019; Friess and Jazeel, 2017; Tuck and McKenzie, 2015) and have broken this process down into steps along the way while doing research. Namely, a) to query the very theory and underlying assumptions that formulated them in the first place; b) to question what parts of theory are influenced by the colonial gaze and c) to examine how my personal and professional positionality shapes the paradigm though which I observe and produce knowledge about a particular place. I draw from grounded theory to help me develop a pragmatic approach to conduct my research.

Grounded theory is one of the most used qualitative methods in social sciences, often also used for international research. Though not the first practitioners of grounded theory, Glaser and Strauss (1967) are considered the developers of grounded theory after they first published about it in the widely read and cited book “Discovery of Grounded Theory”. Since then, grounded theory has been experimented with in many disciplines that rely on qualitative research to produce knowledge, such as the medical field, health and gender studies, urban studies and human geography. At the time of its development, social scientists found that grounded theory helped them conduct research with rich qualitative results, where using quantitative approaches alone could simply not uncover the nuances

they found in social phenomena (Clarke, 2007). For example, Knigge and Cope (2006), demonstrate through a study that integrates ethnography and GIS, the value of iteratively and reflexively analyzing the case study area, the Lower West Side of Buffalo, NY. What they call ‘grounded visualization’ is a ‘particularly geographical set of analyses’ that was sensitive to scale, flows, context and everyday practices when studying place, in ways that a less exploratory and rigorous approach would miss. The grounded theory approach is an inductive way of doing research as it relies on the data to support or contest existing theory or create new theory (Cope, 2016). This was particularly pertinent from the 1950s as feminist research took flight, representing marginalized groups in society where little existing quantitative data was available and research on men was no longer enough to represent everyone (Gilbert, 1994). As explained by Geiselhart et al (2012), in the early stages of its conception, grounded theory was heavily critiqued for being scientifically unsound because it did not posit a pre-established hypothesis that could be proven or disproven after data collection and analysis. Clarke (2009) recalls finding rich anecdotal evidence of underrepresented groups from studies conducted by her professors that remained unpublished because this evidence did not meet the statistical sample size criteria. Instead, research questions and methods are developed along the way while fieldwork is being conducted and ways to best analyze the data is decided through trial and error (Geiselhart et al*,* 2012).

Grounded theory is useful as a praxis for identifying methods to conduct postcolonial research on southern cities that is underpinned by feminist methodologies. As with grounded theory, postcolonial southern urban scholars argue that no knowledge or theory is essentially or universally true (Geiselhart et al, 2012, p. 6; Lawhon and Truelove, 2020,

p. 11). While some scholars place emphasis on grounded theory being derived inductively (Cope, 2016, p. 337; Strauss and Corbin, 1990), others argue that researchers should be critical and even skeptical of existing theory but should remain valid unless the data disproves it (Geiselhart et al, 2012). Postcolonial and postcolonial southern urban scholars, however, are weary of deductive modes of analysis of existing theories because these theories may obscure or overshadow results that are derived from an inductive mode (Parnell and Robinson, 2012; Schindler, 2017). For instance, Parnell and Robinson (2012) who argue that neoliberalism, though it is a global phenomenon that exists everywhere to some degree, cannot explain the causes of certain manifestations in cities everywhere. They argue that the lack of basic services and social exclusion experienced in postapartheid South Africa, and the need to restructure the state and civil society to adjust to anti-poverty national policies, is a more dominant cause of a fiscal squeeze than industry collapse and regulatory fixing for capital accumulation (Parnell and Robinson, 2012, p. 599). Parnell and Robinson (2012) call for more empirical research that can reveal evidence inductively, rather than to assume findings from the Global North will hold for a Global South economic climate.

My research takes a two-pronged approach: the first is assessing if parts of existing, northern-derived theory can responsibly travel south, across the Equator, and be applied responsibly. The second is leaving room for new knowledge to be developed through inductive, empirical research. This kind of research aligns with postcolonial and southern scholars who do not wish to discard or disregard northern-derived theory, but rather aim to dismantle its dominance on the world stage of knowledge production. I wrestle with the predicament of using, while at the same time critically evaluating, northern-derived theory.

I disagree with grounded theory scholars who argue that existing theory should remain valid unless proven otherwise, Rather I concur with postcolonial scholars who have shown that implicit in existing theory are assumptions that exclude other epistemologies or dimensions of how we understand something, to be revealed and explored. This occludes southern ontologies about place from surfacing and entering the global arena for urban studies. Being mindful of this, having a grounded theory approach still allowed my research project to develop incrementally. This can be seen in how I formulated and revised my research questions, developed my methodology and introduced new theories to support my empirical findings. I discuss the challenges of my research project and this grounded theory approach in my Conclusion.

2.6 Research questions

In parallel to developing my theoretical framework I ruminated over a research project and case study area that would allow me to test my critique and the use of existing theories. Below are the preliminary research questions I developed for my proposal:

2.6.1 Preliminary research questions

My research question was:

How is the bundling process in relational place-making different in a southern case?

I proposed a study that would investigates four central questions:

1. What everyday practices and permissions form part of the bundling process for relational place-making?

2. What are the tensions, conflicts and resolutions that arise from place-making?
3. What are the rationalities (i.e., socio-spatial orders, logics, ideals, motivations, and subsequent claims) that underpin practices, permissions, tensions, conflicts, and resolutions?
4. How do the above shape the urban condition and our understanding of relational place-making?

With a grounded theory approach I was entered the field with the understanding that my research questions may change. Though I unbundled relational place-making as intended from the onset of the project, this process and my early empirical research suggested epistemological shifts in place theory and conceptual shifts we might use to formulate our understanding of place-making. My theory unbundling process instigated a reassessment of our understanding of democracy and power, which are two key aspects of relational place-making. Furthermore, concepts that I had not considered beforehand became central to my research and needed a discursive analysis. This included public space and permissions. After my process of unbundling relational place-making and spending some time in the field, I revised my research questions which I give below.

2.6.2 Revised research questions

This methodological approach required that I revise my research questions during the findings and analysis phase of my project. They are as follows:

My revised research question:

How do marginalized people navigate power relations and negotiate their position in the ‘making of their place’ in a southern city?

I investigate this question by posing the following sub-questions of my empirical case with place theory and specifically relational place-making as a backdrop to the research:

1. What everyday practices form part of the participants' place-making strategies?
2. What logics are behind everyday practices and how might these speak to navigating power relations and negotiating participants position in place?
3. What is public space in a southern city and how is it used as an arena for place-making?
4. What epistemological, conceptual, and empirical differences might there be when making a southern place?
5. How might provincializing place-making and developing place theory in the Global South authenticate spatial justice debates for southern cities?

I now turn to the epistemological and conceptual shifts that presented themselves during the course of my fieldwork journey. I term this "configurations" to signify that, how a place is made, is determined not only by the human and non-human elements that exist in a place, but how they coexist or relate to one another. It also signifies that there are structural forces at play that shape a place and ways of being in place are determined by these forces. Governance and political aspects, such as democracy and power, form part of our theoretical understanding of place. Whereas public space and permissions are concepts that help to explain our analysis of a particular place; for instance, the parks in Norwood. As argued alongside other place theorists, although place around the world is generally accepted as the same thing and what we might find in various places could be similar. What becomes distinct is how the elements that make up a place are arranged,

why they coexist in a place and how they relate to each other. It is this assemblage (i.e. the elements and their arrangement) that I call “configurations” and I show how this might differ for a southern city.

2.7 Configurations of a southern place

As I argue above, it is useful to have northern-derived place theory travel to help understand southern cities better. However, the process of unbundling has identified what epistemological and conceptual shifts of place theory need to be made to move it critically, usefully and responsibly. Using a postcolonial grounded theory approach as methodology, my time in the field revealed differences that were not evident before. However, these differences stem from both empirical and literary evidence, as I had to revisit the literature after the empirics revealed hidden urban practices and systems. I identify this step in the research as suggesting the ‘configurations of southern urban place’ which refers to the parts that need to be arranged or conceptualized anew, if I am to contribute to and expand place theory in the Global South broadly, and more specifically in South Africa and Africa.

2.7.1 Shifts in understanding power relations in place

Power has become a key dimension of urban geography, urban studies and more specifically place theory since the spatial turn in the social sciences in the 1980s. For many critical place scholars, it forms part of the epistemological backbone that frames how we understand place and place-making. Yet how power is understood in northern-derived theory is framed by the parameters set by the Western context in which research

on power in place is done. From my review of the literature on power and politics in place, and from my empirical research I find that how power is analyzed is determined by a set of parameters that do not coincide with a southern urban context. That is, the constituent parts of power (i.e. who or what has power, how much and within what governance system that may/may not be devolved differently) need to be redefined and rearranged for a southern place.

2.7.1.1 The insertion of power as a key dimension of place theory: a review

The theorization of power in relation to place has only gradually been recognized as a necessary component of understanding place in geography. As noted above, place in geography was initially conceived of as a physical location and acknowledged as unique from any other place with idiosyncratic rhythms (de Certeau, 1984; Tuan, 1977). With time, more human-centered descriptions of place formed part of geographers' conceptualization of place, using locale and sense of place to note distinctions in activities and people's relationship to a given place (Agnew, 1987; Relph, 1976). With the work of early place theorists who were far more humanist and focused on a phenomenological understanding of place (Buttimer, 1976; Tuan, 1979), seeing place as the nexus through which power relations and political interests flow became a valued addition to place theory through Marxist and feminist geographers (Harvey, 1990; Lefebvre, 1991[1974]; Massey, 1984).

Much literature on power, including key approaches in urban geography, have maintained that political power is achieved through revolutionary change or slow capture of the state (Pierce and Williams, 2016). This scholarship is underpinned by the Marxist analysis of the working-class struggle against capital domination (Harvey, 1978). Within

a capitalist societal framework where wealth is accumulated endlessly by the bourgeoisie, the working-class seeking liberty calls for a revolutionary overturn or incremental improvements through a more just state. In the 1980s, urban geographers with strong structural Marxist ties, used an urban political economy analytic to strategize ways that the working class, the poor and marginalized might gain power and legitimacy in the city (e.g., Smith and Castree, 1984; Harvey, 1985). Because cities were experiencing high urbanization rates of both the urban poor and elite, resulting in high inequality in disjointed landscapes, scholars became critical to the conversation on power in social studies.

The structural Marxist perspective on power became increasingly disrupted. Feminist and poststructural geographers were concerned with interpersonal, socio-political and socio-cultural acts of oppression and assertion in homes, communities, cities and across borders (Massey, 2005; Rose, 2002). Drawing from works by Michel Foucault (1980), Henri Lefebvre (1991[1974]); Jacques Rancière (1999) and Edward Said (1993), these geographers were engaged in critical scholarship and perceived power as exerted and resisted over time and across space. More recent work has called to see power as running through networks that exist at and connect across scales (Purcell, 2006). Power is seen less as a clear unit of measure, such as governments being overthrown, and countries being occupied as definitive events. Instead, power is understood as multiple actions being taken by a diverse and interconnected entities to assert temporary control over space - and space itself is not contained (Pierce and Williams, 2016). Localized movements that become global, like Black Lives Matter or the Arab Spring are examples of this. Or the act of guarding cars on Grant Avenue in Norwood, as my research showed,

to control public space temporarily is also a country-wide system in South Africa for acquiring livelihoods.

More specific linkages between power and place theory also surfaced in postmodern scholarship. Not only were places innately different from one another, their creation was an ongoing process of social, cultural and political formations shaped through power relations (Pred, 1984). That is, institutions and individuals produce events and material outcomes as tasks for place-making, fueled by political interests and followed by enactments of power. As explained before, Pred (1984) and Massey (2005) argue that place is anti-essential as no claim can be made to a thing that is always becoming and never complete. Even Massey's (2005) theorization of place as loose "bundles" of human and non-human creations "throwntogether" in space must negotiate within the bounds of plural sets of politics and power, to co-constitute.

2.7.1.2 Querying power as it is understood in relational place theory and how it might manifest differently in other contexts.

I use relational place theory, and in particular, relational place-making as an analytical frame to understand place-making in Norwood. As with relational place theory, I also consider power as a key dimension with which to understand how individuals and groups of people shaped by social, cultural and political formations relate to each other and negotiate the co-existence in a place. Published research that use the analytical framework of relational place-making or simply see place as relational (i.e. a bundle or network of entities, with their own trajectories influenced by local-to-global power relations, negotiating through political interests) have studied the impact of various kinds of development projects or industry involvement in local communities. For instance,

Lyons, Carothers and Reedy (2016, p. 5) study the effectiveness of a fisheries policy to include the Pribilof Island communities in St. George and St. Paul, Alaska in decision-making processes regarding the fishery industry in the region. Zhang (2018) studies the displacement of local artists as a result of municipal policy and planning documents to redesign the 798 arts district in Beijing. Despite commentary on power relations between people and entities that form part of the cases, these studies have not examined how power is defined or conceptualized by the relational place theorists. I understand that this was likely not the purpose of their work, while mine is to intentionally provincialize northern-derived theory like relational place-making. My concern, at this juncture, is that, if researchers assume that the causality that determines how power manifests in place is the same everywhere. We may miss certain key differences that inform power relations or place-making practices present in other contexts. I demonstrate this possibility in the following discussion.

Central to northern debates on power in urban and political geography - although not always explicit - is a normative understanding of democracy and the values underpinned by it in relation to power, namely fairness and equality. For instance, feminist poststructural scholars measured power by studying fairness and equality (as core facets of democratic systems) in domestic environments, interpersonal relationships or safety in public spaces (Bondi and Rose, 2003; Listerborn, 2016). Pierce and Williams (2016) argue that the ultimate goal of democracy is the achievement of fairness and the balance of powers, whether through revolution or subversion. Their concept, fleeing-in-place, moves away from Staeheli's (2010) call for redistribution and inclusion to achieve democracy, and instead aspires toward recognition and reconstitution of a place, even

temporarily (Pierce and Williams, 2016). Even in this contemporary theoretical shift, fairness and equality remains present. However, southern urban scholars take issue with this normative understanding of democracy and its associated values. For instance, as Watson (2009) raises in reference to planning theory, is that the logics that inform notions of what is fair and equal vary radically. She notes it is not that such differences do not exist in the Global North, but that much of the theorization of democracy rooted in the north assumes that civil society can adequately represent constituencies and potentially, progressively realize a shared vision of justice. If we consider this argument by Watson (2009) then three questions arise, namely a) what is fair and equal in a Global South context; b) who holds power if civil society is less resourceful in a democracy; and c) how do we understand power relations in a context where democracy looks different or is altogether less present?

My intention in posing these questions is not to answer them in this study, but to make the argument that acknowledging these differences exist. That means we have to query the implicit assumptions we make about our epistemological framing of theories or analytical frameworks (e.g. power as a key dimension of relational place-making). Instead through my empirical research I show that broadly, power relations differ in a Global South case. Power is more dispersed across individuals and entities, dampening the presence of the state and civil society. I suggest conceptual shifts to help frame better what is happening empirically when studying place-making in a southern context. My findings allude to institutions that would ordinarily be the custodians of democracy and its values fairness and equality being weaker in a southern place. I identify two concepts, namely public space and permissions that should be reconceptualized and expanded on,

respectively. These concepts explain power relations observed in my southern urban case that have not been studied before, bringing new understanding of power in place and new vocabulary to relational place theory.

2.7.2 Conceptual shifts for a southern place

My research suggests the revision of public space as a concept that is often associated with place theory and urban planning; and the use of the concept permissions as introduced by Lawhon et al (2018) in their article “Provincializing urban appropriation: Agonistic transgression as a mode of actually existing appropriation in South African cities.” Though public space is specific to my research case, I try to demonstrate with it that when developing theory, critical postcolonial scholarship calls us to reconsider the universal concepts we often use and assume they mean the same everywhere. I therefore unpack public space in the context of a southern city like Johannesburg and argue that it needs to shift conceptually for place theory to be applied appropriately. I also suggest that the concept ‘permissions’ is a way to explain place-making practices in southern cities where the upkeep of rights by law only encompasses a small portion of what actually happens in cities. Permissions allow us to see what is often hidden from dominant narratives of how cities function, because they exist in the liminal space between what is legal or illegal; formal or informal; fair or unfair. From the perspective of power relations not primarily influenced by state involvement, permissions become the lens through which to understand how place-making strategies occur. I also use the literature on permissions to challenge the uncritical use of spatial justice in contemporary urban debate.

2.7.2.1 Public space

In this section I give a non-exhaustive literature review of what public space is and I use the concept “the urban commons” to explain what I mean by public space for this research. I then offer a critical perspective on the exclusionary nature of public space and develop my argument for a revision of public space as a concept when it is used in different contexts. By looking at how other scholars have unbundled public space as a theoretical concept in the Global South, and specifically South Africa, I demonstrate that I have in a similar way done so for place theory. This aims to show the need for theory unbundling when concepts like public space travel elsewhere.

What is public space?

The term ‘public space’ generally refers to designated areas in cities that anyone is allowed to enter and spend time in. These can be parks, squares, pavements or sidewalks, beaches, train or bus stations, libraries and playgrounds (Freeman and Blomley, 2019; Low, 2017; Stevens, 2009). Entry is sometimes restricted if these sites close for a period of the day or week, and they might require people to pay an entry fee. Access control to designated areas of public space is a regular practice in city management. At times this access is controlled by private residents who claim authority as self-appointed custodians of the space. Parks, gardens, memorial sites, may get fenced.

For the purpose of understanding public space in a southern city better, it is necessary to familiarize ourselves with the concept ‘the commons’. The commons refer to public goods that are intended to be shared by the general population of a city (Foster, 2011;

Garnett, 1995). This includes public space as I've described above, as well as the infrastructure and spaces between private and cordoned-off public space. One might think of water fountains, public toilets, dustbins, benches and stairs that lead from one part of a terraced city to another. In Johannesburg, it is common to find public goods appropriated for alternate use. Wooden logs around the perimeter of a park, electrical boxes on sidewalks, and leftover bricks from a construction site are all used as seating (Fieldwork notes, 2020-2021). Electric cables and iron notice boards are cut out for resale at recycling depots; manholes, gutters and electrical boxes are used for storage; servitudes between the wall of a house and the street are claimed for private gardening, driveways or pavements. In the same way, as public spaces are controlled by local residents, property owners or businesses, public goods are also claimed (and for all intent and purposes owned) by utility companies or the municipality (D. Weakley, personal communication, August 12, 2021). In neighborhoods, through-roads that connect to other parts of the city is fenced off with only a pedestrian entrance, or given access using booms and private security, electrical boxes are caged and locked, or low-rise walls or benches get spikes to prevent sitting on (Fieldwork notes, 10/2020).

The 'urban commons' is a term used to refer to land and infrastructure that is not owned privately or by the municipality; rather it is owned by the general public as citizens of the city (Gidwani and Baviskar, 2011). In Johannesburg however, everything is owned by an entity or multiple entities, or the municipality lays claim to things as custodians of the city (D. Weakley, personal communication, August 12, 2021). In this research, I use public space to refer to *all* land and infrastructure *not* privately owned. That is, while I acknowledge the urban commons literature I do not distinguish between public space (not

considered urban commons as it is owned by the state) and all else not private (i.e. the urban commons). In many southern cities the appropriation of public space, space reserved by the state for urban infrastructure, and the infrastructure itself has multiple and alternate uses to what they were originally intended for, is ordinary practice (Auerbach, 2018). Whose and what behaviors are accepted or rejected in public or as part of "the public" cannot only be reduced to what happens in parks, squares and sidewalks alone, what is usually defined as public space. Road reserves, electrical boxes or leftover materials from public construction projects form as much a part of the public's use of urban space - what I refer to in this dissertation as "public space". My research weaves between these different kinds of public spaces because my empirical research shows that appropriation in southern cities is as much about acquiring livelihoods as they are about political actualization and recreation.

Public space and the irony of its exclusivity: a case of spatial justice.

The rhetoric of public space as a place for everyone to participate in the polity of a city or country has often been used by activists (Qian, 2014). Since early Western conceptions like the Greek agora, however, the public has been an exclusionary term. Only men, not women or foreigners, were considered citizens and by extension the public (Mitchell, 1995). This continued for centuries, where women, black people, non-citizens and slaves were excluded. As Young (1990) argues, they were not seen as part of the cohort in society that could maintain rational thinking. Women for instance were accused of being a disturbance because of their affect (expression of feelings) and the temptation to men, resulting in them being relegated to the private space (i.e. the home). This

dialectic between public and private space forced certain behaviors to be hidden from public view, making some things to this day unsightly and unvoiced in public, such as breastfeeding or talking about menstruation (Young, 1990). In contemporary urban studies, we see scholars increasingly concerned with the exclusion of the homeless and vagrants in highly populated and unequal cities (Broder et al, 2005; Ghosh, 2020; Mitchell, 1995; Tipple and Speak, 2005). While it is an important advocacy tactic to assume that everyone is and should have access to public space and be included in public participation to make difference visible. Some scholars have noted that this is an ideal and that in reality, bodies are consistently racialized, gendered, classed...othered (Young, 1990; Ruddick, 1996).

While Habermas and Bergson move away from Kantian's notion of the civic public as a sort of universal monolith where they call for unity and inclusive public participation alongside difference, they still heavily depend on universal analytics to progress their theories (Young, 1990). Yet, the idea that public participation can achieve social cohesion because all voices are being heard, is strongly critiqued by geographers and social theorists. Urban planners are criticized for continuously seeking order and being unable to work with the complexity of the urban world (Sorkin, 1992). It is this fear of disorder in public spaces occupied by the subaltern, that private property owners and planners feel the need to control (Sorkin, 1992). As Young (1990) contends, while public participation often claims that everyone is being heard, it's the privileged that often have the most power in the room to speak, silencing the marginalized who remain oppressed. Here power dynamics in the room is not considered.

There is also a distinction that must be made between the public sphere, which is abstract, and public space, which is material and spatial (Low, 2017). The materiality of public space exists alongside private space in cities and often competes for value (i.e., municipalities as owners of public space sell off land to private investors, claiming economic growth and development for the city at the cost of public access to space) (Smith and Low, 2006). The democratic ideology for inclusion and social cohesion that is desired and abstractly achievable in the public sphere is not how it manifests in public space. For instance, as highlighted by Pierce (2019), in modern states that adopt democratic Western laws on property, owning private property and having access to private space is part of a bundle of rights provisioned by the state. Furthermore, in public spaces, people are entitled to claim space for their personal interests, while simultaneously being protected from what is often termed “anti-social behavior” (Mitchell, 1995).

Poststructural perspectives on the politics of public space.

Lefebvre (1996[1968]) believed that everyone has a “right to the city”, advocating for inclusivity by making public space accessible to all and by participating in the way the city is governed. Public space became the material or physical urban realm. Whoever was considered part of the public, was called on for civic engagement. However, more recently poststructural place scholars have critiqued the structural Marxist and phenomenological ontology of Lefebvre because he wrote from a parochially European and French perspective, making class struggle the only politic worth engaging in urban space (Lawhon et al, 2018; Pierce, 2019; Pierce and Martin, 2015; Ruddick, 1996). Feminist

and pluralist thinkers of place will instead consider the intersection of multiple categories of identity politics that constitute "the public[2]" of public space. In any other context but especially the southern context, the "right to the city" as it was articulated by Lefebvre and other's that use it uncritically, does not sufficiently address spatial justice.

With Massey's provocation of a radically plural conceptualization of space and place, like-minded scholars have considered what are plausible realities for sharing urban space, within the limits of modern property rights premised on the right to have privately-owned land (Pierce, 2019; Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). Place scholars consider the way the city is shared, whether land is private or public space. They challenge us to see the place in a relational, scalar way - across public and private, neighborhood and suburb, city and country. Central to relational place theory is: Analytical frameworks to understanding the plurality in place-making; and making sense of spatial justice from the viewpoint that being and belonging in place is continuously negotiated against multiple claims of appropriation (Pierce et al, 2011; Purcell, 2002). Critical urban scholars also encourage further explorations of democracy in differential contexts (Staeheli, 2008). Studying competing interests and negotiatory tactics to share public space, helps to better understand the plural logics and trajectories of multiple actors and entities (Massey, 2005). Relational place-making theorists are particularly invested in understanding moments, but also ongoing situations of conflict and consensus, in an effort to reason with what it really means for cities to be spatially just (Pierce and Williams,

[2] By "the public" I mean, who all forms part of the urban realm, how they interact individually with others they share public space with, the structures they support that hold and move their political interests, and the systems and behaviors that conform to their normative judgements of using public space.

2016). Public spaces are of particular interest because of the number and complexity of interactions with different trajectories occurring continuously.

In the literature there are some assumed parameters that define engagement in sharing space, whether public or private. This includes a reasonable presence of the state to enforce the laws that protect the bundle of rights, and furthermore that the bundle of rights is held up unanimously and agreeably by the state, entities and citizens (Pierce and Williams, 2016). Few scholars have explored what it means for the politics of place when postcolonial democratic governments, like in South Africa, are neither trusted enough to have reasonable support from the citizens and private entities, nor resourceful and systematically sound enough to adequately enforce the laws that uphold the bundle of rights (Berenschot and van Klinken, 2018; Boamah and Walker, 2017). In these non-Western societies that adopt Western modernist ideals, land ownership and management is superimposed over customary practices, creating complex urban systems and relationships to the land. For instance, traditional ceremonies with animal slaughtering in South African cities practiced by many black African communities are allowed on private land but prohibited in public spaces, which demonstrates racialized terms of socially accepted behavior predicated on colonial principles of Western modern ideals (Ballard, 2010). Postcolonial southern urban scholars insist on the realization that multiple systems of urban land use management and governance exist - whether local, imposed or borrowed - and need research attention and even new vocabularies (Bhan, 2019; Cirolia and Scheba, 2019). With this frame in mind, when thinking through how public space is used and why, expected behaviors, land ownership and land use management should not be assumed.

The complex dynamics of public space and how it manifests in southern cities.

Urban planning more generally has struggled to work with the complexity of the urban world (Sorkin, 1992). It is this fear of disorder in public spaces occupied by the subaltern, that private property owners and planners feel the need to control (Sorkin, 1992). Such insights are particularly significant for planning and public space in cities of the Global South. Watson (2009) emphasizes the coloniality and northern interests that still underpin much of the planning practice in the Global South. However, she also acknowledges that marginalized urban dwellers who largely operate within informality, hold power through struggle and resistance against repressive planning systems. At the intersection of what Watson (2009, p. 2272) calls 'techno-managerial and marketized systems of government' and survival strategies of the marginalized is a 'conflict of rationalities' that becomes visible in a southern city. Watson (2009, p. 2273) sees this conflict *as interactions* like 'the spaces of citizenship, the successes of encroachment, the cracks, spaces and moments of alternative practice, or the positive hybridities'. These conflicts can be particularly acute in public space. My research teases out what these interactions and conflicts might be and how they might unfold.

Houssay-Holzschuch and Thébault (2017) unbundle the urban concept of public space by drawing from the southern turn. They identify its western epistemic roots by locating what *of* its conception is based on the EuroAmerican understanding and purpose of public space. Instead by observing the ways in which public space is used outside of the West and excavating debates from the literature on public space, they use some loose parameters to allow the concept to travel to Cape Town, South Africa (ibid, 2017). To do this they use an empirical case of a political protest about claiming Rondebosch

Commons as land for the marginalized public, contesting regulated access which controls *who of* the general public can use the space. Houssay-Holzschuch and Thébault (2017) then mobilize a range of theoretical debates to provincialize conceptualizations on public space for a South African urban context. This includes Ranciere's (1999) theories on the disruptive mechanics of the subaltern to refuse a 'particular police order' to upheave hegemonic power, as a way of enacting proper politics, as well as Staeheli and Mitchell's (2007) provincializing of public space through their 'regimes of publicity', and applying Mbembe (2001) and Gervais-Lambony (2003) 'entanglement of temporalities…that are both transitional and transactional' to understand South Africa's situated regime of publicity in a time of liminality (Houssay-Holzschuch and Thébault, 2017, p. 566). While Houssay-Holzschuch and Thébault (2017) use the more traditional political movement (a protest as an event that happens), my research examines the everyday politics of public space, to understand how it is claimed for the purpose of exclusion and place-making. I consider permissions as a way to make sense of place-making strategies that are negotiated on an ongoing basis due to power relations and the ebbs and flows of contestation.

2.7.2.2 Permissions and agonistic transgression: Critiquing spatial justice debates like urban appropriation through a southern city.

Many have critiqued the limits of Marxian emphases on class-based politics in the Global South, as well as the limits of a narrow focus on flows of capital, information and commodities as determining factors in the material production of the city (Massey, 1991b; Pred, 1984). There has also been more recent criticism of the spatial justice narrative and the normative, Northern framing of rights in cities (Lawhon et al, 2018), which I argue in

Section 2.5.1 and use to build on for my case. Rights in a Lefebvrian sense are understood to be more than ‘legal rights’ but they are a universalizing call that overlooks both ongoing differences between people, their interests in claiming rights and their vision for spatial justice. For instance, embedded in Parnell and Pieterse’s (2010, p. 146) ‘radical rights-based’ approach is a reliance on the state and an assumption of equal citizenship to claim such rights. They flesh out the role of subnational government using Greater Cape Town as their case area, and the institutional cornerstones required to attain universal human rights in a developmental state like South Africa (Parnell and Pieterse, 2010). The assumption that the state is able to reduce poverty and provide universal rights, even if argued as an aspirational quest for a developmental state, ultimately places the state at the center of understanding of justice.

Yet, how southern cities function daily bears little relation to how formal state regulations intend for them to function and little resemblance to the institutional capacity of the state. This is not to say that the state has no influence as it surely does in and beyond Johannesburg, and in some southern cities more than others (ref). But in a southern city like Johannesburg, a hegemonic state interwoven with hegemonic capital is not active, and therefore the northern understanding of what influences place and place-making holds little explanatory power for the everyday practices of urban appropriation. While owning land in Johannesburg gives power to use and manage space (as both are place-making practices) there are multiple other ways in which people without this kind of power make place. The notion that rights to the city are based on the power of capital, the state and the idea that a singular or dominant urban order is present, does not resonate in a southern city. My research focuses on unexpected patterns and logics of

power in place, especially to outsiders unfamiliar with the space, to demonstrate the dispersal of power amongst a range of interested parties that place-make.

From my research, I suggest that we might instead draw on Pierce and Martin's (2015, p. 1280) recognition that while Lefebvre made useful ontological contributions to 'exploring the multifaceted materiality of space *as an object*' (their emphasis). His understanding of (social) space was limited by his narrow conception of the dimensions that make up the socio-political realities of places. Pierce and Martin (2015) usefully draw on place-framing, originally conceptualized by Martin (2003) and developed further in the development of relational place-making (Pierce et al, 2011). Place in this analytical frame is formed through multiple ways that economic, cultural, institutional, personal and socio-political elements show up in and intersect as collective but movable parts. With this as a premise from which to understand rights in places, squarely situating them within the capabilities of the state and assumed rationale of society (Parnell and Pieterse, 2010), is too narrow to understand actually existing rights claims in cities.

Instead, I explore the work of Anesu Makina (2020) and Lawhon et al, (2018) who challenge theorizations on the existing modes of urban appropriation as insufficient to explain what they observe in South Africa. Using the case of the poor appropriating urban land and property for housing in the inner city of Johannesburg and on the periphery of the Cape Town, Lawhon et al. (2018) argue for a third mode of urban appropriation they call "agonistic transgression". For them, Levebre's notion of the right to appropriate the city, when this forms part of a bundle of rights that is not only available but upheld by the state that is assumed to have a certain amount of political and fiscal power, inaccurately represents many Global South cities. Furthermore, Bayat's (1997) articulation of urban

appropriation in a Global South context with his concept “quiet encroachment” foregoes the idea that every day and reiterative use of urban land can be a political act by the poor to access the city. Instead, the authors conceptualize agonistic transgression to explain an ongoing, incremental process of taking that may be politically motivated and may contradict the logics of claiming basic needs and rights Lawhon et al (2018, p. 118). Makina (2020) studied waste-pickers in Pretoria, the capital city of South Africa and neighboring Johannesburg, and their logics around developing livelihood strategies that simultaneously create new urban systems. In tracing their waste routes and understanding their individual practices and their collective system for waste-picking, Makina (2020) frames her findings through modes of agonistic transgression rather than urban appropriation.

Within their theoretical project on provincializing urban appropriation, Lawhon et al (2018, p. 125) use the term permissions to refer to claims to urban space that is allowed. Whether this is through legal systems or socio-spatial processes, permissions first are written about as if it is more durable than acts of urban appropriation (Makina, 2020, p. 113). However, within an agonistic transgressive frame, permissions may also be informal and illegal, and they are ‘negotiated through always-ongoing relations of power’ (Lawhon et al, 2018, p. 125). In their paper (ibid, p. 120) permissions is worded as separate to rights and privileges:

> In applying RttC (Right to the City) concepts to Southern cities, scholars should be especially wary of how underlying concepts of rights, privileges, and permissions may translate across distance and social contexts.

Lawhon et al (2018) introduce permissions and it is briefly mentioned in Makina’s dissertation (2020, p. 113) where she defines urban appropriation. Yet in neither of the publications do the authors exactly define what permissions means but from my reading

of the texts and understanding of the context within which permissions are used, I find it applicable for my research. Conversations with Mary Lawhon (personal communication, March 20, 2021) suggest that the idea around permissions is that the rights of most urban dwellers cannot only be enshrined in a legal, formal rights-based systems and assumed to be upheld to the extent that it considers or benefits most. Permissions, instead, speaks to the agreements or the allowances given in urban spaces by society through cultural norms and relational coexistence.

From my research I further suggest that permissions are created in the liminal space between formal/informal urban practices; legal/illegal urban systems and acceptable/unacceptable behaviors. Permissions may be more or less durable depending on power dynamics, political interests, and the everyday claim to place asserted through a range of negotiatory tactics. I found that leaning into permissions was one way in which relational place-making, as an abstract analytical method in northern place theory, could travel and be applied in a southern city. However, as argued before, relational place-making is a northern-derived theory that assumes a stronger state presence, in the form of a democratic modernist governing body, in the making of cities. My research builds on the concept permissions as the logical and dominant way in which southern places are made and mediated.

2.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I created a visual representation of the theoretical journey my research project took. Using a grounded theory approach, I allowed the project to unfold along with my empirical research. I began with the intention of critically evaluating the applicability

of a largely northern-derived body of scholarship in Urban Geography, namely place theory. Using a methodology for unbundling theory as propositioned by postcolonial southern urban scholars, I specifically targeted a contemporary analytical framework relational place-making. Therefore, this chapter provides a literary overview of postcolonial theory, southern urban theory and place theory; within which relational place-making and postcolonial southern urban critique is located and also unpacked.

Using my literature review I then return to my research proposal, which we as scholars might consider in the 'making of a southern place'? This is accompanied by a set of research questions which I revise as part of my grounded theory approach. In the final part of this chapter I introduce what I call configurations of a southern place. This is suggesting aspects of relational place-making that might need to be reconsidered (after a process of unbundling theory) and what concepts needed attention after spending time in the field. I first delve into the theoretical developments of power, an epistemological dimension of relational place, before reviewing literature on public space and exploring permissions as potential new vocabulary with which to understand place-making in a southern city.

Chapter 3. Norwood in context

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed contextual description of Norwood in Johannesburg, South Africa, centered around what is most important for this study. I first set the scene by placing Norwood 'on the map' in terms of its strategic location, demographics and socio-economic background. This includes a discussion on the gendered, racialized and cultural geographies of Norwood using present-day and archived media sources, research reports and my participant observations. I further my contextual analysis by explaining how spatial frameworks and development plans are shaping Norwood and Johannesburg in conjunction with broader regional and national development plans. I offer some historical significance of Norwood and South Africa as a whole, pertaining to relevant issues of land rights and colonial rule. I conclude by giving an account of the physical, political and economic geographies that characterize Norwood.

3.2 Putting Norwood on the map

Norwood is a neighborhood located in the northeast of Johannesburg, which is the largest metropolitan city in South Africa. Figure 3.1 below shows Norwood located adjacent to a few neighborhoods including Orange Grove (both Norwood and Orange Grove are shaded in gray). It also shows the Rea Vaya Bus Rapid Transit (BRT Route) in red and the area shaded in blue is considered part of the Louis Botha corridor, which is part of the Corridors of Freedom Strategic City Project I discuss later in this chapter. The 2011 Census is the last published census of South Africa. Data collection for the next

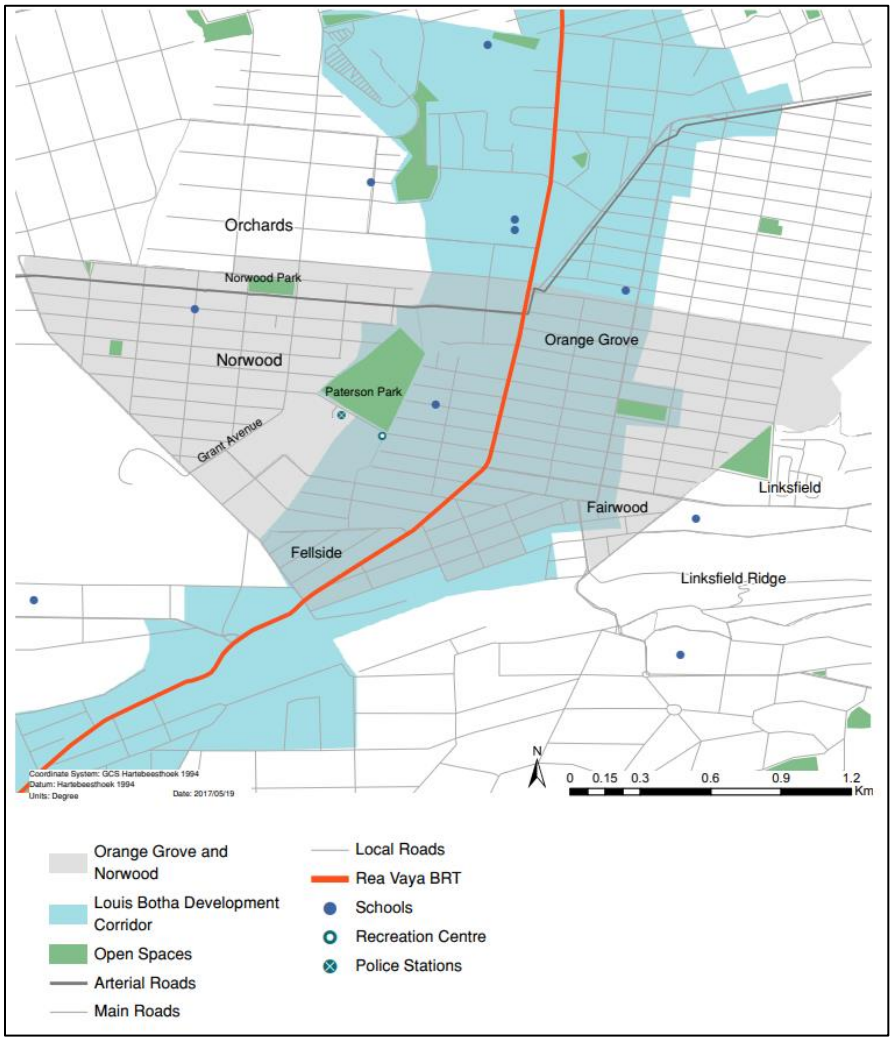
census commenced in 2022, but full results have yet to be released (Statistics South Africa, accessed 8/22/22, https://www.statssa.gov.za/). Below is a table showing the population statistics scaled from national to neighborhood level:

Table 3.1 Census 2011 population per area scaled from South Africa down to Norwood.

Area	Population 2011
South Africa	51.8 million
Gauteng Province	12 272 263
City of Johannesburg (CoJ)	4 434 827
Norwood	3075 / increased to 3365 in 2016

(References: Frith, accessed 9/2/2022; StatsSA, accessed 9/2/2022; CoJ, 2016)

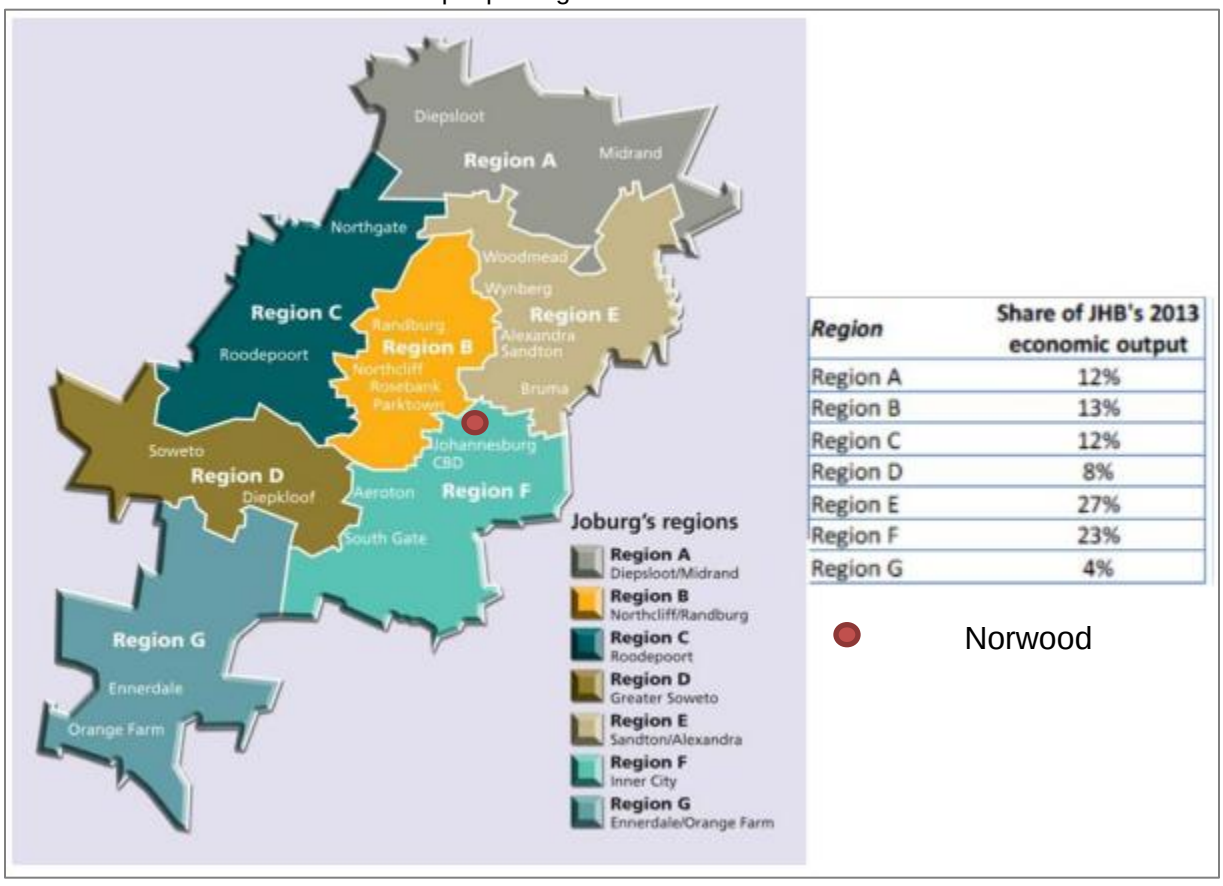
Figure 3.1 Map of Norwood adjacent to Orange Grove (both in gray), with Norwood falling just outside of the Louis Botha Corridor.



(Reference: Appelbaum, 2016, p.9)

The City of Johannesburg (CoJ) is divided into seven administrative regions, with Norwood located in Region E, which was also known to have the highest economic output in 2013 as per the city's Spatial Development Framework 2040 that was last updated in 2016-17. A regional map showing key nodes of the city and the table showing the percentage distribution of economic output across the regions are given below. This map and table are sourced from the CoJ Metropolitan Municipality's Spatial Development Framework 2040 released by the Department of Development Planning.

Figure 3.2 Map of the administrative regions of the City of Johannesburg and a table with the percentage distribution of shares in economic output per region.



Region	Share of JHB's 2013 economic output
Region A	12%
Region B	13%
Region C	12%
Region D	8%
Region E	27%
Region F	23%
Region G	4%

Norwood

(Reference: CoJ Department of Development Planning, 2016a, p. 54)

In 2011 the Census count in Norwood for population by racial composition is given in the Table 3.2 below. It is important to note that this is a residential count which shows

that white people represent the majority of the resident population in Norwood with 53%. This is notable in relation to my observations of street activity which mostly consisted of black people active in the streets.

Table 3.2 Census 2011 population distribution by racial composition in Norwood.

Racial group	Population count 2011	Percentage distribution (%)
White	1641	53
African black	963	31
Indian Asian	330	11
Coloured	76	2
Other	65	2
Total	3075	100

(Reference: Appelbaum, 2016, p. 16)

Norwood is a neighborhood that forms part of the inner-city suburbs of Johannesburg. The last population count in 2016 was 3365 and a household count of 1341 with 2.5 people per household (CoJ, 2016, p. 21). The residential units are predominantly standalone houses, with a few sectional title[3] (apartment) complexes and apartment buildings. Norwood and the surrounding neighborhoods are low density, which is technically insufficient to support a public transport system as it requires a population density of at least 100 p/ha (CoJ, 2016, p. 21). Yet, Grant Avenue is the high street and main business strip of Norwood that attracts employees from other parts of the city; and it has a public bus that travels through it daily and one minibus taxi stop to collect workers needing to travel between work and home.

[3] Sectional title complex is equivalent to what is referred to as an apartment complex in the United States. It refers to one property with multiple residential units that may be standalone dwellings or connected by walls. Typically, these complexes are no higher than three floors. The title deed of the property is divided into the number of units it contains. If a unit is sold to an individual owner, they gain sectional title for that unit.

Norwood is a middle-class neighborhood with a third of the population between the ages of 0-24, another third between 25-44; a quarter between 45-64 and a tenth are 65 and older (CoJ, 2016, p. 21). Between 70% and 80% of people have an education level of a high school graduation and higher (CoJ, 2016, p. 21). Norwood has considerable cultural, ethnic and religious diversity. The houses in Norwood were originally built for Italian immigrant miners in the early 1900s and later attracted the Jewish community from Berea and Yeoville in the 1980s when those neighborhoods located much closer to the inner city began to deteriorate (Appelbaum, 2016, p. 16; Scheidegger, 2015). The Muslim community in Norwood has also recently grown as more businesses along Grant Avenue are owned by Indian and Pakistani people. Norwood and the surrounding suburban neighborhoods are home to several churches, synagogues and mosques (Appelbaum, 2016; Fieldwork notes, 2020-21). From my participant observations and discussions with people living and/or working in public space of Norwood, the official statistics do not account for much of the black population occupies Norwood as they are not in the Census data that count residents only. Besides from South Africa, black people I spoke to in Norwood were from different African countries like Nigeria, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

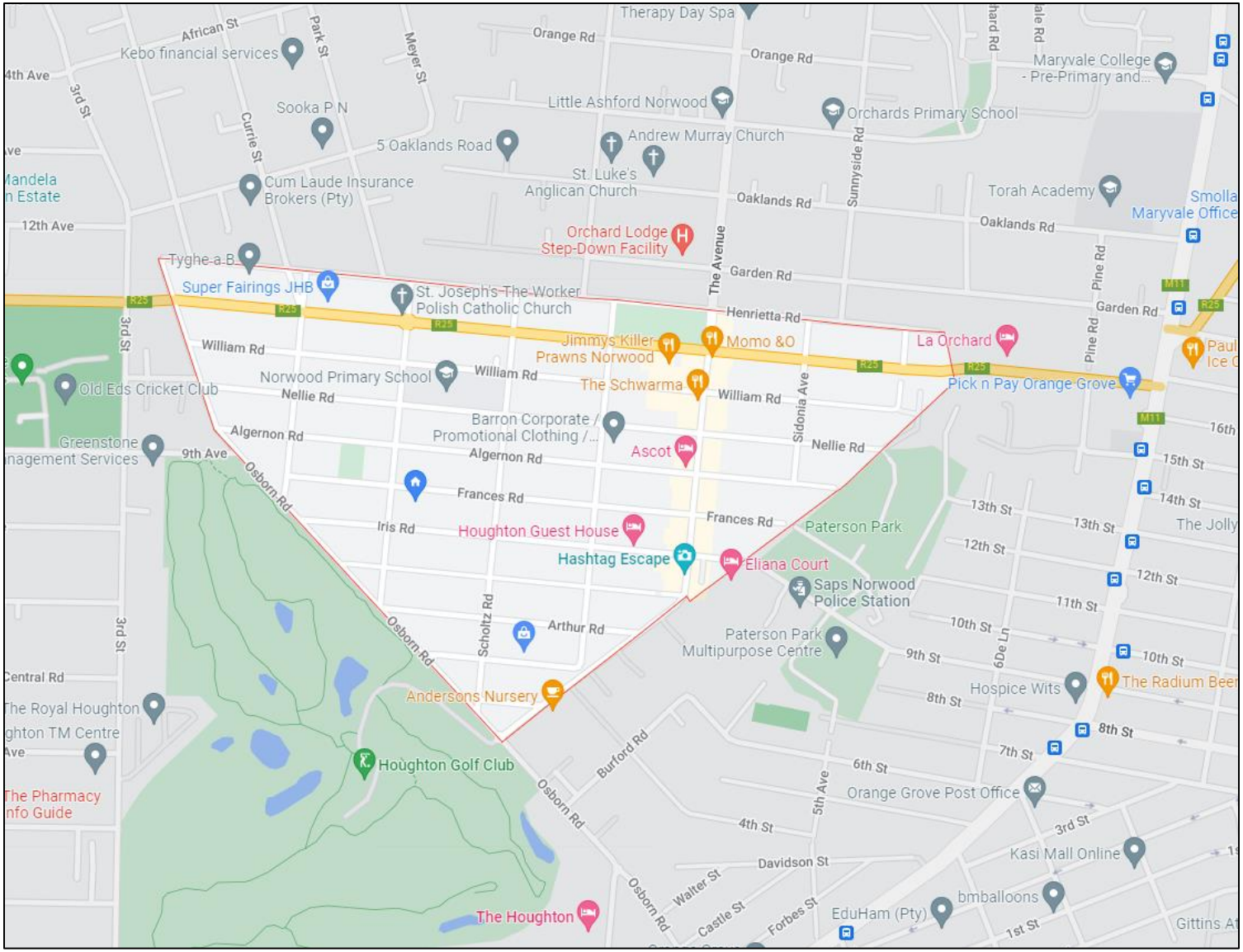
Households that reside in Norwood form part of the middle-income group, what Visagie (2013, accessed 10/13/2022) calls the relatively affluent middle class. The middle-income group earn between R5,600 and R40,000 per household per month (Visagie, 2013, accessed 10/13/2022). In Norwood, 33% of all households earn between R4,500 and R8,000 and 27% earn above R8,000 (Appelbaum, 2016, p. 20). The plot sizes are considerably smaller than those of adjacent neighborhoods, but property

owners in Norwood form part of the upper group of the relatively affluent middle class, who earn R40,000+ per month, to afford the mortgage bond repayment in Norwood (Visagie, 2013, accessed 10/13/2022). A general search using a local property sales website shows that potential property owners of a R2 million house, which is the average price for a house in Norwood, requires a monthly salary of R63,234 (Property24, accessed 10/13/2022). Norwood is also located next to Houghton which contains countless mansions and was home to former South Africa president and Apartheid struggle hero Nelson Mandela for the years from 1998 towards the end of his presidency and until he died in 2013 (South Africa, accessed 8/25/2022). Unlike other poorer parts of the city, these affluent suburbs are relatively well managed by the municipality. Sewage and water pipe bursts, faulty electric cables and broken traffic lights are attended to within a few hours after the call is made to the municipal maintenance teams. Trash is collected regularly on a weekly basis; the parks are manicured and the public toilet facility in Norwood Park is cleaned every day of the week. Socio-economic amenities in and around Norwood include religious and medical facilities, old-age residences, public parks, schools and a police station. The maps below that I created using Google Maps and the CoJ's open-source GIS online maps portal shows the socio-economic and commercial activity in Norwood and its low-density suburban layout.

Figure 3.3 Map showing the suburban low density grain of Norwood with standalone houses and a few 3-5 story buildings along Grant Avenue.



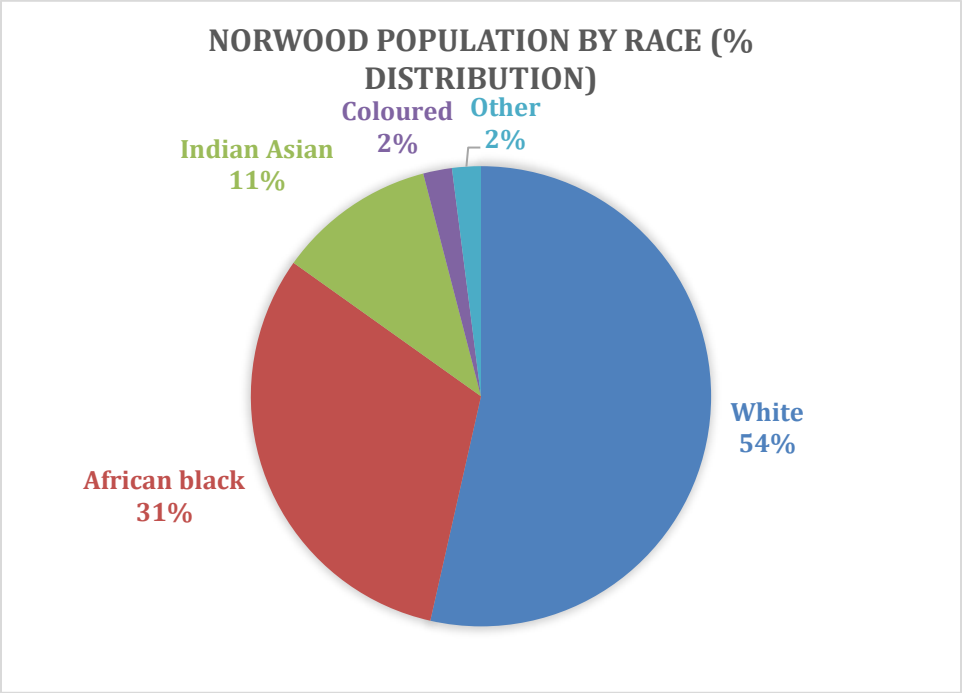
Figure 3.4 Google map showing the socio-economic and commercial activity in Norwood (Google Maps, accessed 8/25/22)



3.2.1 The gendered, racialized and cultural geographies of Norwood

The Census 2011 statistics show that Norwood consists of 53% female and 47% male (Frith, accessed 9/2/2022). The highest average age range is between 30-34 years old, followed by 35-39 and 25-29 years old, and then 0-4 years and 40-44 years of age. With the majority of residents between 25 – 44 years, this neighborhood hosts young to middle-aged adults and families with young children. And the population composition by race is shown in Figure 3.5 below with the majority of the count distributed between more than half (54%) white, 31% African black and 11% Indian Asian.

Figure 3.5 Norwood's population composition by race as per Census 2011 (Frith, accessed 9/2/2022)



The Census data enumerate individuals and households where they spent the night the census was done. This could be their or another person's home, guest accommodation such as hotels, staff accommodation, group living such as hostels or

where on the streets or in public space they find the homeless (Statistics South Africa, 2012, p. 1). It does not include people who work or spend time in Norwood but do not reside in it permanently or temporarily. My participant observations therefore become useful as they reflect who I saw occupy public space during my fieldwork time.

From my participatory observations, I noticed that men mostly occupied the outdoors consistently. These men were homeless residents or employed as security guards, street sweepers, manual laborers and gardeners. Some men were also self-employed as car guards, informal traders and beggars. The women who worked in Norwood and spend their lunchtime outside had indoor jobs as office, shop and restaurant staff, or as domestic workers (i.e. cleaners). There were a few women who were informal traders and occupied public spaces all day. The imbalance of more men than women occupying public spaces was visually evident and had an impact on the participants I had for my research, as I explain in Section 1B: Critical Reflexivity. Men and women I saw socializing outside usually did so in groups that separated them by sex and gender, unless there was a one-on-one conversation between a man and a woman. The women who had lunch outside on the sidewalks or grass patches in public spaces next to the residences they cleaned usually sat in pairs or groups of three or more. These observations demonstrate the sexed and gendered binary that exist between men and women in Norwood.

The north eastern inner city suburbs of Johannesburg are subdivided farmland after Afrikaner-Boer families and their non-white workers settled on the land as the gold rush began around 1886 (McDougall, 2016). Prior to this colonial settler period the land was used by nomadic indigenous African tribes, although no tribe is recorded to have settled on it. When the Anglo-Boer war broke out in 1899 the British captured Johannesburg and

this farmland was further divided as a township establishment (McDougall, 2016). Norwood is amongst the suburban neighborhoods that are considered some of the oldest in Johannesburg (Joburg.co.za, accessed 9/2/2022). Most of the houses were built in the 1920s and 1930s and attracted Italian immigrant families, with the men employed as miners in the goldmines (Joburg.co.za, accessed 9/2/2022). With the onset of the Apartheid regime in the 1950s the north-eastern suburbs of Johannesburg, including Norwood, was legally instituted as a whites-only neighborhood. Yet, it and other surrounding neighborhoods like Orchards and Orange Grove hosted anti-racist, anti-Apartheid struggle leaders Helen Joseph and Mahatma Gandhi (Abrahamse, 1978; The Satyagraha House, accessed 9/2/2022). It is until today still considered a liberal melting pot of immigrant communities, who were originally from Europe and are more recently from South-East Asia and other African countries (Joburg.co.za, accessed 9/2/2022). Residents of the inner-city suburbs of Johannesburg have historically and continue to be at the forefront of progressive liberal politics, making neighborhoods like Norwood and Orange Grove some of the most diverse and integrated communities in the country.

Despite the existence of a multi-cultural, mixed-race society in Norwood and the presence of a progressive liberal, leftist politic the neighborhood is not without socio-economic and racial discrimination and biases. The post below as Figure 3.6 on the Love Norwood Facebook page (Facebook: Love Norwood, accessed 8/17/2020) is an example of unhappiness that some residents of Norwood have toward people identified as ‘vagrants’ who occupy and use Norwood Park. It also shows that residents are not united in their approach toward ‘vagrants’ as some help them while others wish to have them leave the neighborhood.

Figure 3.6 Post on Facebook on the Love Norwood page by a person of the general public voicing their opinion of people who temporarily occupied Norwood Park (Facebook, accessed 8/17/2020).



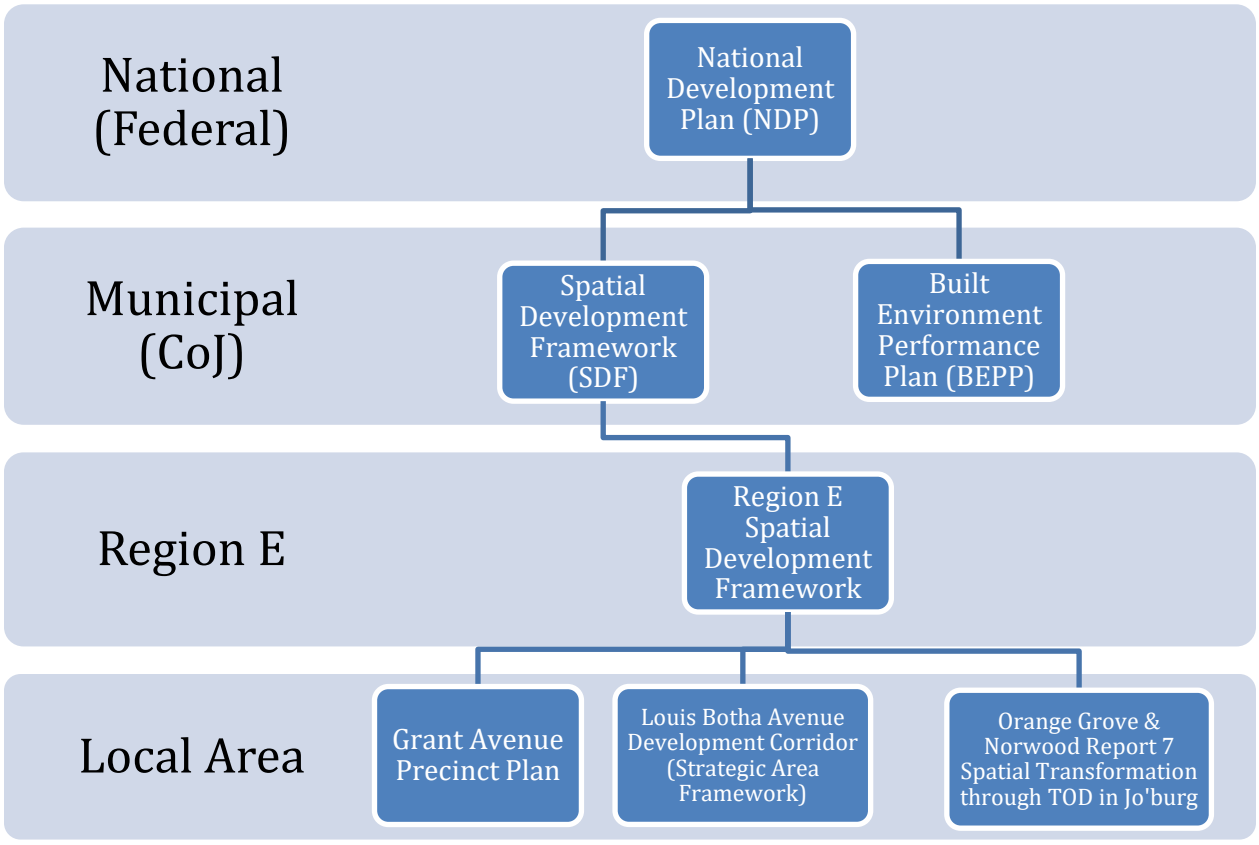
An article published on 22 July 2006 by Sheena Adams in the Saturday Star, a prominent South African newspaper, reported a fight that broke out between the caretaker of an apartment block and a tenant and his father, the apartment owner, when racial slur (i.e. 'coolie' is a derogatory term for an Indian person in South Africa) was used against them. During my fieldwork, I heard discriminatory comments made about black and

Muslim people in Norwood dirtying the public spaces and “taking over” Norwood, and the word “cockroach” as a derogatory term used to describe beggars and informal traders walking past restaurants asking customers for money or food (Fieldwork notes, 2020-21).

3.3 Situating Norwood in a broader developmental context

The City of Johannesburg (CoJ) has a hierarchy of spatial frameworks and plans that earmark certain areas of development for social and economic growth and identify key infrastructure projects to assist with the overall growth and sustainability of the city Grant Avenue Precinct Plan (CoJ, 2016b, p. 23). The hierarchy of plans and frameworks pertaining to my research are given below in Figure 3.7 and I refer to them to situate Norwood in Johannesburg’s official, strategic development plans.

Figure 3.7 Hierarchy of development plans and frameworks pertaining to my research of Norwood.



3.3.1 The National Development Plan (Vision 2030)

The National Development Plan (NDP) Vision 2030 is a development plan for South Africa that was published in 2011 by the National Planning Commission. The National Planning Commission is not a government department, but an entity appointed by the South African president consisting of 26 people given the authority to critique the state of the country and strategically guide it toward a future that could “eliminate poverty and reduce inequality” (NDP, 2011, p. Forward). At the time the National Development Plan was developed in 2011, it consisted of a vision for 2030 with several development

objectives for economic, social and environmental sustainability. The NDP was shaped by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) formulated as a global development agenda that so-called developing countries are encouraged to adhere to (Naidoo and Maré, 2015). The NDP has a strong spatial component to it as it considers infrastructure development for regional economic connectivity and country-wide industry growth. It also focuses on people's basic services such as running water, electricity, sewage and shelter by what is commonly referred to as 'transform(ing) human settlements' (NDP, 2011, p. 259). Part of this focus includes addressing the entrenched 'social inequality and economic inefficiency' of communities believed to be created by Apartheid spatial planning, by improving access to economic opportunities (i.e. jobs and business creation) and social amenities such as schools, hospitals and green open spaces (NDP, 2011, p. 259). The NDP (2011) uses one of the main planning principles that public transport systems between socio-economic nodes help to increase density which improves infrastructure efficiency. These developmental focus areas are also reflected in the municipal and regional spatial development frameworks and precinct plans discussed below, illustrating the relationship between plans and frameworks across spatial scales.

3.3.2 Municipal and regional spatial development frameworks

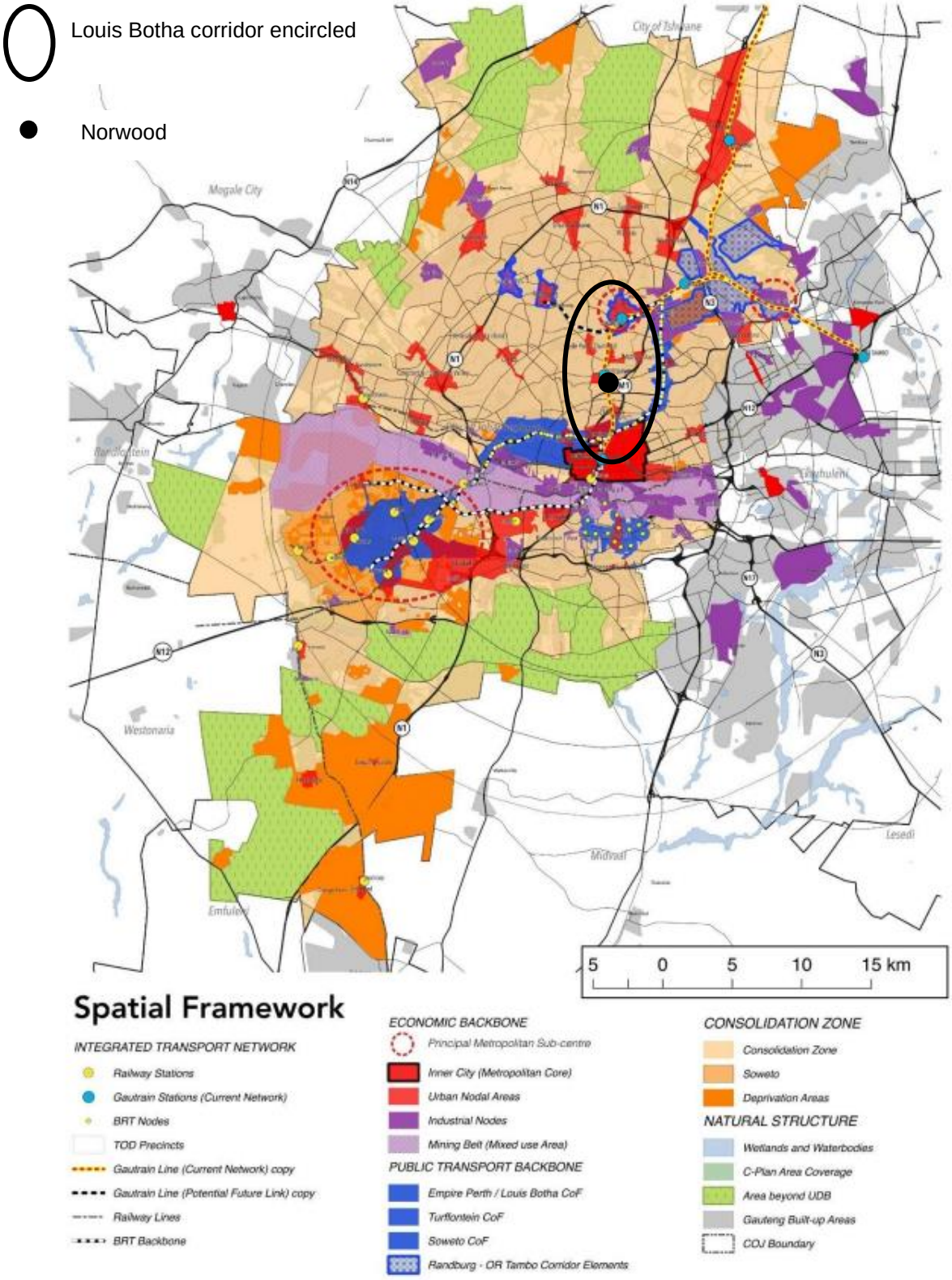
Spatial Development Frameworks (SDF) are documents that all municipalities in South Africa are required to create and update every year as it feeds into each municipality's Integrated Development Plan (IDP). An IDP is a strategic municipal plan that guides all decisions for development, including budget provision for five years at a time with annual reviews on progress made. The IDP is mandated by the Municipal

Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) and feeder plans such as the SDF are created by the municipal department responsible for spatial development and city planning. In South Africa, spatial frameworks are intended to promote integrated and sustainable human settlements and maximize the efficiency of land, urban infrastructure and other resources (Sam, 2013). The executive summary for the Spatial Development Framework Vision 2040 (CoJ, 2016, p. 11) provides the shortcomings of the existing spatial structure of the city that inform projects like the Corridors of Freedom:

> Spatial inequality remains a defining characteristic of the settlement pattern of Johannesburg. The location and concentration of jobs does not match that of where people live. This job-housing mismatch significantly contributes to inequality in the city as- for many residents- access to economic opportunities is stifled by costly and distant commuting.

Metropolitan cities, such as Johannesburg, also have regional spatial development frameworks. The City of Johannesburg is divided into seven regions of which Region E, wherein Norwood is located, and Region F collectively produce 50% of the city's economic output and where only 23% of the population reside (CoJ, 2016, p. 42). The map below is extracted from the SDF 2040 and is a visual representation of the spatial framework for Johannesburg (CoJ, 2016, p. 16). To contextualize Norwood in the city and in relation to the corridor being developed, I have circled the Louis Botha corridor and pinned where Norwood is situated.

Figure 3.8 Spatial framework for the City of Johannesburg, also showing Norwood and the Louis Botha development corridor.



Norwood is located next to a strategic corridor of the city called the Louis Botha Corridor. This corridor connects the Inner City [Central Business District (CBD)] of Johannesburg to Alexandra township, the most central and dense township[4] of the city, and Sandton as a primary economic node. The purpose of the corridor is focused along Louis Botha Drive, which is a key arterial route for the city. Here is where a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system is being built and where interest to develop economic, residential and social amenity projects will be directed to (CoJ, Built Environment Performance Plan, 2017/18). The Louis Botha Corridor forms part of a strategic and long-term spatial development project for Johannesburg, called the Corridors of Freedom, and falls under the Spatially Targeted Investment Areas program of the City of Johannesburg (CoJ, 2018; CoJ, 2017; CoJ, date unknown). The overarching aim of the program is to integrate Johannesburg by creating a more compact city through densification and public transport. The intent is to connect key residential and economic nodes of the city, using arterial routes for transit-oriented development (TOD).

3.3.3 Built Environment Performance Plan (BEPP)

The Built Environment Performance Plan (BEPP) is a document that metropolitan municipalities are required to compile as a strategic overview of the capital expenditure for infrastructure projects in the city. For the City of Johannesburg (CoJ) the BEPP was first created for the financial year of 2012/13. In the revised version for the financial year

[4] Township in South Africa is a town planning term that signifies the subdivision of land for residential purposes and is registered as such at the municipal deeds office. It is also a commonly used word that refers specifically to areas of the Apartheid city where black people who worked in the city were designated to reside. Even though black people can now choose to live anywhere in the city, “township” is still used to refer to those historical black labor reserve residential areas.

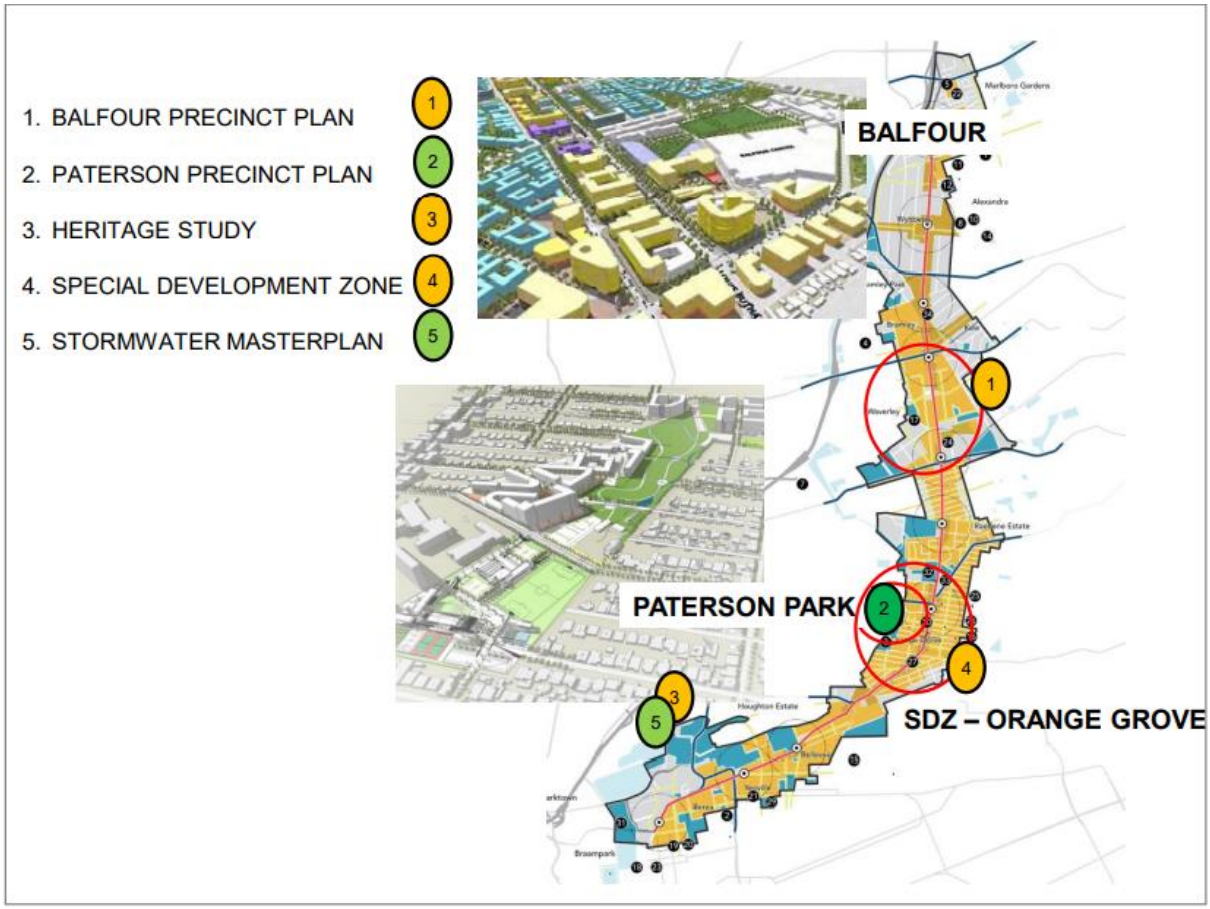
2017/18, which is the document I am using for this study, it states that approximately 40% of the City of Johannesburg's capital investment is received through national grants to help develop the city (CoJ, BEPP 2017/18, p. 8). These grants are created through the collection of national tax revenue. The BEPP is a legal requirement of the Division of Revenue Act 9 of 2021 (DORA) aimed at equitably distributing revenue that is raised nationally among South Africa's three spheres of government, namely national, provincial and local (South African government, accessed 8/31/2022). As explained in the document itself, the purpose of a BEPP is to improve intergovernmental relations by providing transparency and clarity on budget allocations and the progress of infrastructure projects in metropolitan cities (CoJ, 2017/18).

This document is significant for my study as it shows the strategic alignment of spatial planning and development goals of national and local government through grant allocation. That is, the national government has several grants that can be allocated to municipalities to support the implementation of infrastructure projects for the improvement and overall sustainability of poor communities. Additionally, these grants are for non-motorized and public transport projects, compact city development and infrastructure investments specifically for bulk infrastructure for electrification in underserved neighborhoods (CoJ, BEPP 2017/18, p. 8). It also specifically refers to the Louis Botha Corridor as a strategic growth area of the city whereby improving the capacity of infrastructure will benefit the overall development goals for the area.

Figure 3.9 below, extracted from BEPP (CoJ, 2017/18, p. 33), shows a detailed development plan for the corridor, including Paterson Park which is located between Norwood and Orange Grove. The intention is not to explain each plan for areas along the

corridor but rather to show that a) Norwood is adjacent to Orange Grove, which is the neighborhood through which the Louis Botha Drive passes; and b) Paterson Park, which acts as a green divide between Orange Grove and Norwood, has been earmarked for development. I discuss the local community politics and power dynamics concerning Paterson Park in Chapter 5: Manifestation of power in place.

Figure 3.9. Provides a sketch map of Louis Botha Corridor, including Orange Grove and Paterson Park, which is located adjacent to Norwood (City of Johannesburg, BEPP, 2017/18, p. 33).



3.3.4 Local area studies, plans and frameworks

There are two planning documents commissioned by the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) for the City of Johannesburg (CoJ). Each offers detailed research and

planning for the development of the Louis Botha corridor and Grant Avenue in Norwood. This is the Louis Botha Avenue Development Corridor Strategic Area Framework (Iyer Design Studio et al, date unknown) and the Grant Avenue Precinct Plan (Albonica Sack CC Metacity Architects and Urban Designers *et al.*, 2016). There is also the Orange Grove and Norwood study, which is Report 7 of the Spatial Transformation through Transit-oriented Development in Johannesburg commissioned by the Agence Française de Développment (AFD), the National Research Foundation's (NRF) South African Research Chair in Spatial Analysis and City Planning, and the University of the Witwatersrand. These documents give physical-spatial and physical-environmental, economic and commercial, political, social and heritage assessments of the area and suggest what infrastructure, urban design and urban management systems will help the CoJ reach its development goals of access to adequate housing and economic opportunities through densification, mixed-used neighborhoods and mobility.

I used the Grant Avenue Precinct Plan and the Orange Grove and Norwood study, which is Report 7 of the Spatial Transformation through Transit-oriented Development in Johannesburg, to help frame my research project. These documents show the strategic development plans of the city and illustrate how Norwood fits into these broader institutional structures scaled from local to international level. The documents also refer to different entities that have either directly commissioned the study, report, plan or framework or guide development goals. Some of the entities are the United Nations (UN), Agence Française de Développment (AFD), South African Research Chair in Spatial Analysis and City Planning (SARCSACP), the National Planning Commission (NPC); the City of Johannesburg and Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA).

These documents also identify community organizations such as the Norwood/Orchards Residents' Association (NORA) that contest the development goals of the CoJ. For instance, Appelbaum (2016: 4) discusses the tensions that arose between NORA and OGRA (Orange Grove Residents Association), as well as between the City of Johannesburg (CoJ) and middle-class residents of Norwood and Orange Grove. The CoJ wanted to develop a precinct around Paterson Park, as detailed in the Strategic Area Framework (SAF) for the Louis Botha Avenue Development Corridor. This SAF is a planning document that was commissioned by the CoJ and the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA). It lists this precinct development as a "priority intervention" by the CoJ for the Louis Botha corridor. The SAF (2014: 130) states:

> Major redevelopment of Paterson Park Recreation Facility to include a new library, upgraded park and recreation facilities, safe pedestrian access and sports fields and opportunity for an integrated higher density residential development.

Despite this desire by the CoJ to redevelop areas along the Louis Botha Corridor, Appelbaum (2016: 4) writes that residents represented by NORA disagreed with this project. First they questioned the CoJ's ability to manage social housing stock. NORA points to the poor management of police barracks located next to Paterson Park. These are apartments managed as social housing by the CoJ. Second they claim that support from the Orange Grove Residents' Association (OGRA) for the redevelopment project was influenced by OGRA's chairperson who is also contracted by the Johannesburg Property Company (JPC) to develop properties like the public land available in the Paterson Park precinct area. As a result, NORA raised 600 objections against the project, rejected densification with the intended 2000 resident units and stated the CoJ is unable to manage such a large-scale social project. Appelbaum (2016: 4) states the following:

> …the prospect of this development, coupled with the behavior of City entities, has fueled considerable tension in the area. Norwood residents are concerned about the increased number of people in the area, their socio-economic differences and the ability of CoJ to manage its housing stock…The City has, through this project, fostered uncertainty and mistrust among middle-class residents…

She also highlights that the residents who objected to the Paterson Park project are middle-class because residents' associations exclude informal business, tenants that lease apartments and houses in Norwood and Orange Grove, and rough sleepers (homeless) of the area.

This contentious situation in Norwood and Orange Grove is, to me, an illustration of what scholars of relational place-making refer to when they say that multiple entities show interest in and make meaning of a place when they intersect at moments in time and relate to each other (Pierce et al, 2011). These times of engagement (i.e. intersect and relate) can happen through alignment or misalignment around a particular issue or situation. A diversity of social, political and economic interest in a place is what will cause tension or consensus between entities. Entities can be individuals, organizations, institutions or companies that operate at different levels but all have some influence in a place and how it changes. As explained by Pierce et al, 2011: 59):

> …relational place-making draws on scholarship and insights about place, politics and networks by explicitly recognizing the flexible, multi-scalar and always developing meanings of place: meanings that are produced via socially, politically and economically interconnected interactions among people, institutions and systems.

In the instance explained by Appelbaum (2016), middle-class residents and the chairperson of OGRA who is also contracted by JPC are individuals showing interest in what happens in the Paterson Park precinct. NORA and OGRA are local-level organizations as they are based in Norwood and Orange Grove, and the CoJ, the JDA and JPC and city-level institutions and companies. These entities are also influenced by

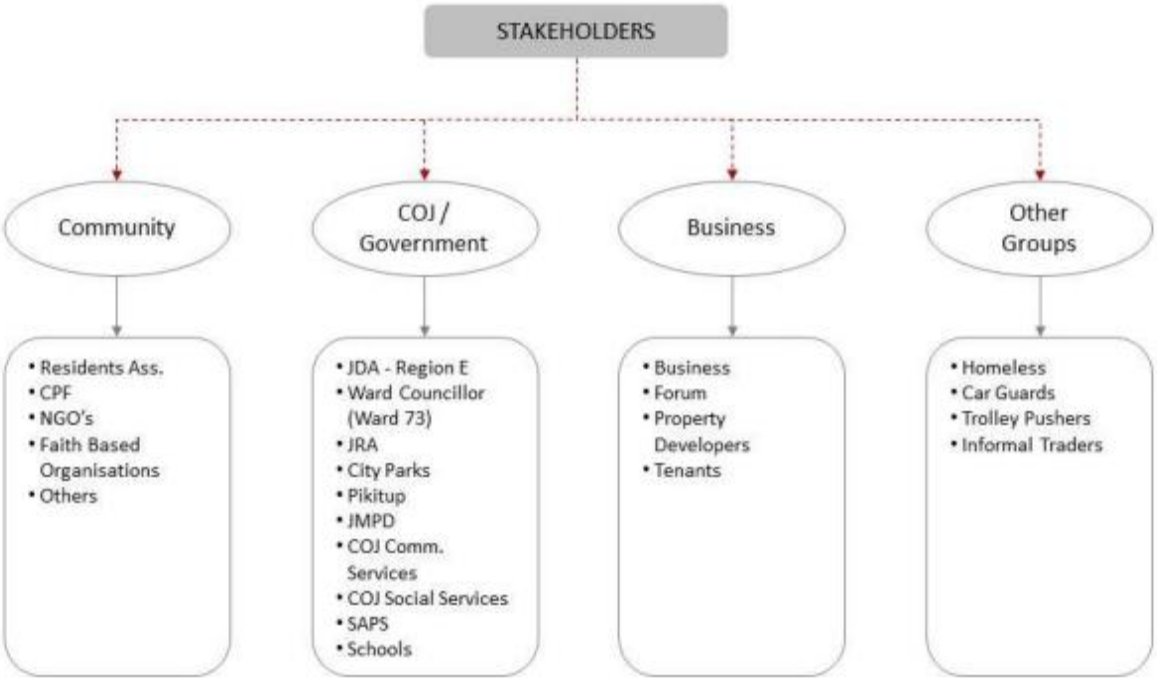
global interests in developing urban areas in specific ways to increase property value, to densify cities and to install a BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) system (Wood, 2014). NORA is in disagreement with OGRA and the CoJ, while OGRA and the CoJ have aligned with each other to support the redevelopment proposal of Paterson Park precinct. Existing networks between residents and the residents' associations were used to object against the proposed redevelopment, while the network between the Johannesburg Property Company (JPC) and OGRA with the chairperson of OGRA also being a contractor of JPC supported the notion of redevelopment. Interests of residents seem to primarily focus on maintaining the middle-class socio-economic status of Norwood, while the city-level institutions are interested in meeting urban development targets as set out in their plans and policies. Relational place-making is an analytical frame that views the making of a place in this networked, political and ongoing way, as the interests of entities shift and places change overtime.

I used the Grant Avenue Precinct Plan to understand how the suggestions to redesign Grant Avenue given in the document feeds into the broader strategic city plan around the Corridors of Freedom. The document also provides the stakeholders that were considered and engaged with as part of the public participation process for developing the implementation strategy of the plan. The following diagram helped me understand what the stakeholders[5] who formed part of the public participation process considered important (Albonica Sack CC Metacity Architects and Urban Designers *et al.*, 2016: 16). The groups of people listed under 'other groups' in the diagram was my initial guide to

[5] Stakeholders is a term commonly used in South African planning documents to represent individuals, organizations, institutions or companies that are included in a planning process. I use the term entities in this dissertation to refer to stakeholders or any other individual, organization, institution or company not included in a planning process but still important for place-making research.

knowing who I wanted to research because they mostly live and/or work outside in public space and are typically marginalized in terms of their political strength to assert their needs and must find alternative means to claim place.

Figure 3.10. A diagram showing the stakeholders involved in the “public engagement strategy” for the Grant Avenue Precinct Plan project (Albonica Sack CC Metacity Architects and Urban Designers et al, 2016, p. 16).



All of the aforementioned plans, frameworks and strategies represent the institutional interests from national to local community level that also draw on international development mandates to encourage socio-economic improvement through social integration, access to economic opportunities and higher densities for more affordable housing and efficient use of urban infrastructure. The development of these documents is also driven by political and economic interest to lay claim to and direct future changes of a place. I now turn to the significance of historical, political and global economics when thinking about relational place-making in Norwood.

3.4 Significance of historical, political, and global economic factors that impact place-making in Norwood.

European colonization of Africa occurred from the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s (Burchard, 2005). Though Spain, Italy, Belgium, Portugal and Germany took part in African colonization, France and Great Britain were by far the dominant colonial powers. The Berlin Conference in 1884 was the beginning of what is commonly referred to as the Scramble for Africa, which led to the continent being partitioned into 52 European colonies (Asiwaju, 1985; Griffiths, 1986; Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2016). However, the 1950s forward anti-colonial movements across Africa (with the support of sanctions from some countries in the Global North) resulted in the progressive independence of African states from their respective colonizing countries (Burchard, 2005). During this time South Africa gained independence from Britain, but Apartheid was the post-independence continuation of the global imperial project of European, Western and white domination through the leading political party called the National Party headed by Afrikaner white supremacist nationalists (Adhikari, 2006). It was in 1990 that the Apartheid regime was dismantled through the political efforts of the African National Congress (ANC) to gain international support for their black liberation struggle. Under the pressure of international sanctions against South Africa, the National Party was forced to relinquish its national control and political leadership. South Africa was one of the last African countries to gain full independence from colonial rule with its first democratic elections taking place in 1994.

As with other British colonies in Africa, South African spatial planning policies and city design were premised on segregation between Europeans and indigenous Africans (Njoh, 2008). There was also a sense of exclusivity and material comforts that formed

part of the colonial rationale for spatial ordering that deprived black Africans of access to these material resources (Myers, 2003). Since the ANC gained political power in 1994, the official mandate of the South African government has been to reverse Apartheid (and prior to that British-colonial segregationist) spatial planning (Chobokoane and Horn, 2015; Van Wyk and Oranje, 2014). The postcolonial and postapartheid foundations of spatial management and urban development policies, grant programs and plans of South Africa, from national government to local municipal level, are rooted in the goals of the Black liberation struggle. This involves a) free movement for everyone but especially the black majority population who were restricted and policed when entering cities; b) easier access to more social and economic opportunities to help lift the black majority out of poverty as the Apartheid regime prevented people of color at various degrees, but especially black people, from accessing adequate education for skills development, working in industries of their choice and owning their businesses; and c) adequate provision of basic human rights such as water, electricity, shelter, health services and other socio-spatial amenities such as schools, parks, religious facilities etc.

Despite clear state intervention with budget allocations to develop strategically selected urban areas, South Africa is also affected by neoliberal strategies to reduce public-sector funding. Beall, Crankshaw and Parnell (2002) identify Johannesburg as one of a growing number of cities globally that are divided by a range of spatial, social and political variables. South Africa's housing market is generally slow-moving because its mortgage market is poorly developed. It has a perpetually high unemployment rate averaging around 44% presently (StatsSA, 23 August 2022) and household finances are abject. Still there are neighborhoods in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg, like

Norwood, and in Cape Town that meet global property demands, creating a deeply divided urban landscape. The disparity between the urban rich and poor creates a contentious urban environment where transgressions to claim space and rights form part of everyday practices and socio-political logic. Normative and ambitious planning interventions, such as the BRT and TOD corridors, also form part of the City of Joburg's attempt to join global development trends (Harrison et al, 2019).

It is also important to note that, like other non-Western societies, South Africa has spatial practices and logics that disrupt the colonial foundations upon which a city like Johannesburg was built. This includes differentiated tenure systems that exist beyond the homogenous modernist version of urban land as either privately owned property or publicly owned and managed by the state. As argued by Pierce (2010) a diverse approach to tenure is more clearly visible in the southern cities because what is considered valid forms of tenure is broader. Pierce (2010, p. 1751) points to the 'dimensions of tenure' including the length of time tenure can be maintained; the ability to partake in economic markets with tenure; and the rights that can be claimed for tenure to achieve social equity. He goes on to argue that these dimensions are present in US cities but higher densities with more entrenched private/public land systems with more distinct land use rights obscure the everyday, informal negotiations for use of space (Pierce, 2010). For instance, temporary parking spaces on privately owned properties around campuses that host football games that are leased to the general public at a cost. Western land use practices only form a part of land tenure systems in the Global South because diverse land tenure. The intersection among understanding how space is shared, demonstrates the multiple influences that determine how South African urban places are made. This includes

communal land systems using customary African tribal law; Western and Eastern distinctions in the use and use value of land property; and the gray space of permissions (i.e., rights and informal or unlawful claims) (Pierce, 2010; Pierce and Lawhon, 2018; Yiftachel, 2009). The significant presence of the unemployed, the underemployed or the informally employed black body, that agonistically transgresses exclusionary urban conditions which uphold colonial ideologies of productivity, whiteness and separateness, also shapes place-making in South Africa (Cooper and Stoler, 1997; Lawhon et al, 2018; Wafer, 2017).

Still, evidence of permissions in Norwood show that transgressions of land use regulations for the exclusive use of public space for private gain, are enacted by affluent (and many are white in accordance with the population statistics shown above, under "Putting Norwood on the map") suburban property owners, as well as marginalized black people who live and work in public space. This demonstrates that transgressions occur across race, class and cultural backgrounds (i.e., Western / non-Western), making it even more important to understand how and why the permissions are granted or not, and negotiated in the effort to place-make. Though I highlight it here, I discuss it further in my data chapters.

3.5 Concluding remarks: choosing Norwood

Pragmatically, Norwood was the best suburban neighborhood in Johannesburg for me to study. Though I had not lived in Norwood before for more than a few days or weeks at a time while staying with friends, I was familiar with the multi-cultural, multi-racial middle-class to affluent community that reside in the inner-city suburbs of Johannesburg. I also

did not want to study a stereotypical northern suburb where inequality is extremely stark. I was more interested in understanding the negotiatory tactics of marginalized individuals who were place-making in an urban setting that is not overtly divided. Rather I wanted to study a part of Johannesburg where there is enough interaction between people of different positionalities where I could anticipate observing moments of contentious interaction or overt conflict.

As part of my ethnographic research, I lived in two different parts of Norwood, one in a suburban house on a quiet residential street and the other in a low-middle income apartment building on the commercial high street, Grant Avenue. During the day when my participants were working, I spent time with them in the public spaces they occupied. The locations I lived in were only 250 meters apart but in each I experienced different class, race and cultural dynamics, which spoke to the diversity of Norwood. I found that spending a lot of time in Norwood, using participant observations augmented by interviews, gave me the opportunity to identify and learn about the everyday practices and logics of people. The plot sizes of the houses are also smaller than surrounding neighborhoods, making the fine grain of the area more compact and walkable, allowing for frequent human interaction and urban activity (Fieldwork notes, 2020-21).

From a feminist postcolonial methodological standpoint, researchers are encouraged to anticipate how their positionality might be read against the social environment of their fieldwork (Katz, 1994; Gilbert, 1994; Nagar, 2014). Dowling (2016) explains that collecting and interpreting data from the field always happens within a social context and that the feminist researcher never works without cognition of their power in relation to others and to the place(s) they study (Moss, 1995; Nast, 1994). For example, an interview between

a participant and a researcher is influenced by social norms and expectations, the structures of power, and the multiple layers of a place determined by its cultural, political, economic and physical dimensions (Dowling, 2016; Elwood and Martin, 2000). Using this chapter to lay out the contextual dimensions of Norwood, I now turn to my research methodology.

Chapter 4. My feminist methodology to an ethnographic study in postcolonial southern urban research.

This chapter discusses my feminist methodology for the study. The purpose is to situate my research approach for data collection and analysis within existing scholarship that frames, supports and may critique my process. My methodology is primarily guided by the work of feminist postcolonial scholars and feminist geographers. I more specifically approach postcolonial development theory from the perspective of feminist geographers who do research in the Global South to, in part, guide my research design. My methodology is further informed by the connections and disconnections between grounded theory and southern urban theory and the ways grounded theory can solidify my empirical research. These dis(connections) are being detailed out in my theoretical framework.

As part of my feminist methodology, I examine my position as a researcher through critical reflexivity and the possibility of developing friendships with participants as a mode of interpersonal relatability, whilst being cognizant of power relations. In the second half of this chapter, I explain my ethnographic approach with the methods I chose for it. I elaborate on the limitations that constrained my study and the ethical considerations I had to conduct my research. Finally, I discuss my strategies for data analysis for the ethnographic and desktop data I collected. I conclude by summarizing this chapter and connecting my methodology to the broader scope and main arguments of the research project.

4.1 A geographic approach to addressing “wicked problems” in a planner’s world.

A qualitative approach to studying the city is not new in academia. Since the 1980s there has been an expansive interdisciplinary body of scholarship engaged in understanding the city as the setting for social, cultural and political change (Jacobs, 1993). Urban research was no longer limited to town and regional planning or geography, engineering and architecture. Feminist and cultural studies in the social sciences and humanities found the city evokes significant anthropological and socio-political meaning for contemporary human experience (Jacobs, 1993). In reviewing a range of qualitative studies done on urban spaces, Jacobs (1993) found that researchers tackled citywide and street level issues, as well as structural and interpersonal factors affecting marginalized groups.

I used qualitative research methods for two main reasons, in no particular order of importance. The first is that working as a planner in South Africa I was trained to use mixed methods which I find restrains more in-depth and micro-scale understandings of the city. Mixed methods is a combination of qualitative and quantitative research techniques like surveys, enumerations, statistical analysis and GIS mapping. These all form part of a planner’s toolkit and due to the technical nature of the work they are useful for producing large amounts of data for whole cities and/or municipalities and within the limited timeframes of projects averaging around six to twelve months. In its early years of conception, from the late nineteenth century to the 1940s, the planning discipline was seen as the technical route to apply scientific solutions to real world problems (Davoudi and Pendlebury, 2010). Planning is amongst an array of disciplines dealing with the

world's '"wicked" problems' (Rittel and Webber, 1973, p. 55) and intervention requires inter- and transdisciplinary use of mixed methods (Mertens, 2015). According to Dandekar (1986, p. 42) planning was 'the application of technical, scientific rationality to societal problem solving'. Quantitative research methods were initially foregrounded in planning education and practice but as feminist and postmodern scholarship influenced academia, technical degrees like planning that leaned into the social sciences, transitioned to using mixed methods.

The second was to understand everyday practices and logics of place-making of marginalized people from a postcolonial southern urban perspective through a feminist methodology. Fortunate to undertake a doctoral degree, I had the room to observe and interact relationally with people in Norwood, Johannesburg over an extended period. As a discipline, Geography has deepened my philosophical, theoretical, and social science understanding of Norwood and for studying urban places in general. Pursuing a qualitative research approach has shifted my knowledge on the politics of urban places to a more nuanced and critical perspective.

4.2 Postcolonial theories that aid feminist research practices in the Global South

The two main aspects of postcolonial theory that are relevant to my methodological approach are that of universalization and representation. I briefly discuss these aspects below but they are detailed out in the theoretical framework. The teachings Chakrabarty (2000), Said (1978) and Wolf (1997 [1982]) and other scholars are that dominant Western knowledge production is parochial theory that is disseminated across the world as truth for all places. They argue that theories from research conducted in the West (more

recently referred to as the Global North) are transposed to places (in the Global South) that are different to the north but assumed to be applicable without much question because of the power the north holds. It is this universalizing of theory and concepts that Said (1978), and others, argue erases the histories, narratives and humanity of subaltern peoples in the Global South. Using ethnographic methods for my research, informed by feminist research practices and grounded theory, was a way to capture actually existing urbanisms and build a narrative around place-making from the ground up. These methods comprised of a) participant observations to uncover the place-making practices of marginalized people often erased by dominant constructs of how a city functions and is used; and b) interviews with participants that were conversational and interactive to help me understand the logics and motivations for the place-making strategies they develop to negotiate and claim their place in Norwood.

The other aspect of postcolonial theory that is also key to feminist methodologies is that of representation. In response to feminist, poststructural and postcolonial schools of thought in academia, qualitative approaches also considered representation a critical element to developing the research methodology (Jacobs, 1993; Sharp, 2005). Following the teachings of Spivak (1988), the researcher must go through a process of unlearning and come to terms with their limits as a Western scholar to represent the subaltern. For Sharp (2005) unlearning can happen in the way projects are conceptualized and how researchers behave and are engaged in the research design and data collection processes politically, emotionally and ethically. Many postcolonial geographers adopted feminist methodologies as they shared the perspective that conducting research should address issues of social justice and should be empowering to the oppressed in some way

(Al-Hindi and Kawabata, 2002; Johnson and Madge, 2016, p. 78). Yet feminist methodologies are not only about representation of the researcher and the subject, but also what constitutes knowledge and how we might unlearn what we have been taught before (much like the work of Said, 1993 and Chakrabarty, 2000). This unlearning is also extended to the challenge for postcolonial southern scholars to un-see the city with modernist ideologies of how a city ought to be (Lawhon et al, 2016).

Several geography scholars explain that feminist approaches to research are underpinned by three themes, namely a) troubling the research process by accepting that we can only understand any research situation partially; b) there are multiple ways of knowing and explaining the world around us; c) building long-term dialogic relationships with research subjects/participants where possible; and d) contesting the objectivity of our research position while validating the experience of the subject (Johnson and Madge, 2016, p. 80; Rüller et al, 2020). It is useful to draw from development geography for my research as it examines place-making of marginalized people within an urban context with several development plans, frameworks and strategies that are intended to address socio-economic inequality and housing shortages. I detail out this developmental setting in my contextual chapter. For this section, I refer to Raghuram and Madge (2006, p. 271) who recommend three steps of formulating a method for doing postcolonial development geography. The first is being aware of the limits of academia (i.e., the partiality of theory) and the role it plays in addressing real world issues, and what that means for producing research questions. For Raghuram and Madge (2006, p. 273) this awareness ideally leads to developing accountable research practices which include being in dialogue with participants, even from the onset of developing the research questions. Secondly, they

argue that universalized theories (from the Global North) often do not speak to the material reality of the Global South. This requires a two-pronged approach, namely the provincialization of existing theory and the creation of new theory from the perspective of research subjects. Methodologically this informed how I designed my research using ethnography, how I interacted with participants in the field, and how I developed my critical reflexivity, which I discuss next.

4.3 My critical reflexive processes

A key step in feminist and postcolonial feminist research practices is related to that of representation. The researcher unpacks their positionality and reflects critically on their research practice in relation to their positionality. In this section I discuss my positionality and the power relations that exist when conducting research. I examine my ethical behavior through self-awareness and the negotiations I had internally to uphold ethical standards and the values of postcolonial feminist research. Not only in this section but in the discussion on my ethnographic methods I share my thinking process around situations that arose in the field. I had to consider terms of engagement, such as what I was able and willing to share personally and materially with participants and what personal and professional ethical boundaries I wanted to set.

4.3.1 Positionality

While I am from a country that was colonized by the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British, my identity and positionality in South Africa complicate the narrative of a "colonized subject" because I am of settler colonial descent. As Raghuram and Madge

(2006, p. 272) argue, “a postcolonial perspective does not simply presume all the inhabitants of the third world as subaltern but, rather, recognizes how the postcolonial present is constituted through the simultaneous presence of a range of subject positions, differentially located along different axes of power across different locations.” In South Africa the settler-colonial community is a dominant minority that realizes a different kind of white privilege than that in the Global North. This statement is not to measure which kind of whiteness has more or less privilege in the world, rather, it is to state the axes of privilege vary across locations and the political identity of the white researcher should be provincialized (Christian, 2019; Sultana, 2015). The global critical race and racism (GCRR) framework proposed by Michelle Christian (2019, p. 170) “posits global white supremacy as shaping *all* (their italics) geographies and national racialized social systems but in different, nuanced, and indirect forms.”

I have both race and income privilege as a white, middle-class female. I also form part of minority groups being white, Afrikaans. In the South African context being part of the white minority affords me privilege, but is also limiting in some spaces (Visser, 2000). For instance, being Afrikaans I was afforded the opportunity to attend a multi-racial, multi-cultural private school that increased my chances of entering higher education and acquiring university degrees. Being middle-class and white allows me to enter shops, restaurants, and affluent neighborhoods without experiencing discrimination. I also embody the profile (a white female) that security guards are hired to protect from criminals or perceived criminals in Norwood. Alternatively, being white and middle class can create a barrier between myself and people of color. This excludes me from conversations I might otherwise be privy to if I shared a different racialized social location. I also do not

speak the vernacular in Norwood, so I do not fully grasp situations that occur in public or understand conversations that happen between people that speak this vernacular dialect. In this context I am to some extent an outsider to street activity which limits my social interactions with a black majority South African society. My lived experience on the streets and public spaces of South Africa sometimes conjures a feeling of alienation, mostly because of the language barrier but also as a dominant minority. It is an important part of my identity formation in my home country because it is a constant reminder of my colonial ancestry that serves to separate me from the African. This act of division and superiority undoubtedly affects my ability to relate to the participants of my research.

Many feminist postcolonial scholars of the Global South have reflected on these axes of subjectivity when entering the field and call for a more critical perspective on the limitations of positionality for doing research 'back home' (Giwa, 2015; Minh-ha, 1997). As a doctoral candidate based in the United States and a South African trained as an urban planner in my home country, I am both an insider and outsider when I go back home to do qualitative fieldwork. I hold a less clear outsider position than researchers and development professionals from the Global North with a north-to-south development agenda (Raghuram and Madge, 2006). Prior to starting my doctoral degree which relocated me to the United States, I formed part of a cohort of local professionals that were invested in addressing urban inequality and inequity through a developmental lens. Over time I became aware that my developmental framing and motivation for doing urban planning work was produced by the rhetoric of public policy, higher education and knowledge production – all informed and dominated by the agenda of the north (Parnell and Oldfield, 2014; Watson and Odendaal, 2013). As local planning professionals, we are

in part, agents of a global development agenda that is spearheaded by agencies like the United Nations. We also form part of the body of governance and local expertise that the development sector denotes poorly capacitated and in need of assistance. Raghuram and Madge (2006, p. 272) explains the unequal relationship between the northern development professional and the colonial subject as follows:

> The subject of development is a colonized subject who is artificially produced as distinct from the colonizer and whose fate is often linked not to the histories of the production of inequalities but to its own lack of capacity. The intellectual authority of the colonial project therefore sits heavily on the shoulders of the northern development professional working in the south.

In the case of southern development professionals, we are simultaneously instigators and recipients of northern influence and intellectual domination.

Another consideration on positionality worth noting for the wider research goals is that I run the risk of sabotaging the very reasons for doing the research. Part of completing a doctoral degree in the United States was to learn to critique the northern-derived theories I was taught in the Global South, which are foundational to how southern cities are studied, planned and perceived. In my work experience as a planning practitioner and in planning literature, the theories that inform urban development plans have failed to reach their intended and desired outcomes (de Satgé and Watson, 2018, p. 11). As I spent time in the United States, and in particular smaller towns and cities that face various challenges like poverty, urban sprawl, dilapidated infrastructure, whole neighborhoods in ruin, my perception of the distinctions between northern and southern cities became blurred. As I became more familiar with what Jennifer Robinson (2006) calls the “ordinary city” in a Global North country I found that the ways in which Western power shows up is complex. Even though northern theories are dominant in global knowledge production and the literature may be more useful as it speaks directly to the context within which it was

written, in practice policies and plans in the north face as many challenges as when they are used as ‘best practices’ in the Global South. Cultural imperialism and knowledge production may yield global power for the United States, but this does not necessarily translate an improved urban living. For instance, suburban living is an American city-design and has been copied worldwide, but it has created food deserts, crippled public transport, and depleted housing stock in the United States.

The intent of this brief discussion is not to compare northern and southern cities, as it is beyond the scope of this research. Instead, I use this brief discussion to acknowledge that my subject position shifted overtime during my doctoral years of study as I moved between the United States and South Africa. I base my understanding on my lived experience and textured feel of a city I visit or live in, while simultaneously drawing on knowledge I have of theoretical and structural elements that manifest differently in each city. To remain critical and relevant, I had to be open to seeing things differently, seeing them in new light and allow my research and doctoral goals to evolve. Thus, my goal to critique northern theory has not been sabotaged as such, but it has prompted me to separate northern theory from the northern urban reality.

4.3.1.1 Choosing Norwood from a positionality standpoint.

Many feminist and postcolonial development scholars who ‘return home’ to do fieldwork highlight the challenges they face by doing research in their own community or in poorer, rural, more traditional communities (Gilbert, 1994; Giwa, 2015). This insider/outsider dynamic is present for many students who study abroad in the Global North and feel alienated when they return home. Being associated with wealthier, ‘more advanced’ parts of the world, they hold a new positionality (Giwa, 2015; Visser, 2000).

Visser (2000, p. 232) for instance discusses how he was met with suspicion by former Apartheid town councilors that were still working for the local municipality in the Western Cape province of South Africa, and thought he was interviewing them to criticize their work performance because he was from a British university. At the same time his position as an Afrikaans-speaking white male who had left South Africa once it had achieved democracy was criticized by liberal participants because he was considered a sell-out. In both cases Visser (2000) was an insider as he shared the same Afrikaans-speaking white male profile as his participants, but his affiliation to a wealthier country and British university rendered him an outsider. This is accentuated by historical conflict between the Afrikaners and English when they fought for South African rule via the Anglo Boer wars at the end of the 19th century. Considering the insider/outside aspect of doing research at home, I now reflect on my motivation for choosing Norwood as my study location.

Having worked with poor communities in South Africa for a few years prior to my doctoral studies, I intentionally chose to research a middle-class suburban neighborhood in proximity to where I went to school as a child. In very poor communities the inequality between me as the white skilled professional is far starker and my presence is loaded with expectations to provide resources and solutions for the issues they face. We are trained to be very cautious in making any claims or promises that will cause upset if the plans and policies we develop from our research and community engagement do not come into fruition. My positionality created a savior profile that I felt made participants' involvement inauthentic and perpetuated existing power relations. I chose to move away from such a polarized researcher-participants setting by choosing Norwood as it was already at the forefront of interracial and intercultural relations. In particular Grant Avenue

is a vibrant urban environment and although there are clear class, race and gender distinctions evident in who frequents which stores and who works where, there are different kinds of shops that cater for various clientele and produce interactions across identities. Neither me or my participants' identities were strange in this setting and though I still held class and race power, my participants had their own independent claim to Norwood. The insider/outsider dichotomy was less obvious for myself and my participants because we could lay claim to being in Norwood in different ways. For instance, I had the privilege of living in Norwood and being white and middle-class. My participants had all worked in Norwood and lived in adjacent neighborhoods such as Orange Grove or Houghton from much longer than I had. My participants all had a wide social network of friends and colleagues whereas I was still building mine. Though we were of different race, class and gender backgrounds we all had other people in Norwood that shared our identity.

4.3.2 Power relations

Feminist scholars in general, feminist scholars doing research in the Global South and feminist geographers have conveyed the undeniable influence of positionality on power relations between the researcher and their research participants (Bondi, 2003; McDowell and Sharp, 1999; Nagar & Ali, 2003; Olukotun et al, 2021; Sultana, 2015). The positions of both the researcher and the participants are determined by the intersectionality of identity categories (i.e., race, class, gender etc.) that coexist and interact at any given moment in time and place (Minow, 1997; Valentine, 2007). Intersectionality was originally coined by critical race theorist Kimberle Crenshaw (1993) to recognize the interdependency and interconnection between race and other identity categories within

existing systems of oppression (Crenshaw et al, 1995; Valentine, 2007). Fernandes (2003, p. 309) explains that: 'intersectional analysis names and describes these hidden acts of multiple discrimination and how they obfuscate damaging power relations, and it also brings to the fore how they construct, while paradoxically obviating, identities of the self.' A groundbreaking dissertation by Philomena Essed in 1990 shows how racism forms part of everyday practices of black women, such as using public transport or grocery shopping. From the viewpoint of black women, she reveals the discriminatory behavioral and cognitive responses from society in public that activate underlying power relations (Wekker, 1994). Her research demonstrates that racism is not only structural and institutional but expressed in the everyday interpersonal relations between people (Wekker, 1994). She also argues that discrimination is experienced in multiple ways as black women are disadvantaged by their race and gender. Critical race theorists argue that intersectionality exists in any interaction between people and is already lined with structural and interpersonal systems of discrimination. In the case of the researcher-participant interaction, the multi-layered identity of the researcher gives them a societal position of power in relation to the multi-layered identity of a participant. As Dowling (2016, p. 35) explains, the researcher holds power as a producer of knowledge that can feed into, for example, public debate and policy changes that impact on people's everyday lives.

Intersectionality grapples with the hard reality of identity and positionality. Any combination of the following categories determine what power relations are present and how researchers and research participants interact: race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, class, language, education level, access to the Global North, material and

monetary resources. Positionality not only partially determines what data will arise out of an exchange but it may result in acts of privilege or thoughts, words or acts of discrimination that affects the relationship between the researcher and their participants. For instance, my desire to acquire knowledge and insight from my participants ought to give my participants some negotiatory power over the terms of exchange. Yet in most instances, I was given a lot of freedom on when I wanted to see and interview my participants and how I might offer some kind of remuneration for their time and information, which I suspect was in part due to my white, middle-class and female identity as most of my participants were black, lower-income and male.

Nagar (2002) commented that researchers altogether refrained from doing research in the Global South for fear of misrepresenting participants and perpetuating exploitative relations from neocolonial forms of north-to-south domination. Even when, as in my case, the researcher is from the Global South, doing feminist research is difficult because my privilege and power underwrite all interactions I have in the field. I have to be conscious that my interactions do not fall into an exploitative exchange where I use my privilege to gain knowledge without using these advantages to benefit my participants. Feminist geographers encourage students to accept the volatility of such research and allow constructive criticism from peers to shift the politics of the academy and the geography discipline (Sultana, 1995). Furthermore, I did not actively involve my participants in the research design, even though participatory action research (PAR) is a key method for feminist methodologies. Instead I followed a grounded theory approach, relying on methods in ethnographic research that would reveal things to me about place-making in Norwood, which did not call for PAR. I spent many hours walking around

Norwood and having conversations with various people, which called for a more passive approach where I absorbed what was going on around me. With this knowledge I formulated interview questions and more points of inquiry for further observations. As detailed in the theory chapter, there are advantages and disadvantages to using a grounded theory approach for my empirical research. Formulating a methodology premised on grounded theory meant that I could ease my way into Norwood and become more familiar and comfortable with the dynamics and people of the place. I could build trust with my participants and be introspective about my positionality. The COVID-19 pandemic also helped me develop trusting relationships and my own trust in Norwood because of the extended time I had to conduct fieldwork. I therefore focused on my interactions with participants and the relationships I built with them to work on my ethical responsibility as a researcher with feminist methodology. Lawson (2007, p. 2) argues that geographers have a responsibility to ensure that their work maintains a standard of "critical care ethics". She explains that geography is a "caring discipline" because it asks critical questions about human rights, social and environmental justice, political ecology and climate change, uneven development and geopolitical issues that impact whole societies (Lawson, 2007). Our influence as researchers, knowledge producers and contributors to public debate means that we have an ethical responsibility to ensure that each exchange with our participants upholds a standard of care. To me this means being concerned with their personal well-being and the implications of research on them in the immediate and long-term.

Keeping the above discussion in mind, I now discuss my relationships with different participants and some of the ethical challenges I faced during my fieldwork; and had to

grapple with while reflecting on this process. I include this discussion as part of my feminist methodology because in being transparent I welcome constructive criticism from peers as Sultana (2015) encourages (see also Falconer Al-Hindi and Kawabata, 2002). I point to some approaches I used when interacting with participants to try remaining ethical, while questioning my success at doing so. Later in this chapter I review my ethical practices of these exchanges by discussing confidentiality, informed consent and taking photographs.

4.3.2.1 My relationship with participants

In this section I reflect on the dynamics of my relationships with participants. In this process I am reminded of Swanson's (2008, p. 62) words that "uneven geographies of power" exist and while we might not be able to change this in our fieldwork, confronting the unease we experience from uneven relations of power affords more honest and expansive research. From the onset of my research, I knew that I wanted to study how people marginalized by race, class and ethnicity, navigate the challenges they face because of their positionality, when making place (see introduction for an explication of this concept) in a middle-income suburban neighborhood in Johannesburg. The reason for my interest is to understand better how an urban setting is utilized for place-making but the group of people for whom the setting was not designed. The marginalized in Norwood occupy public space more consistently and are the majority that live and/or work outside. Therefore, understanding their place-making practices and the logics behind these practices are critical for effective urban planning and design. While the ability to place-make creatively and steadfastly in the face of adversity impresses me, I became aware of the agency that marginalized people hold in public spaces. Through sharing the

knowledge of my research, I may contribute to a planning and urban design process that better integrates the needs of the diverse community in Norwood.

Having resided in Norwood before, I was familiar with the social dynamics and the kind of eclectic mix of people that interact in this neighborhood's public space. Some of my participants shared the same relative race, class, education level as I do and were not the marginalized people whose lived experience I set out to understand. These were either planning professionals I had asked to interview, or they were shop owners and a Norwood Neighborhood Watch member who shared their insights into and opinions about private security for the area. What felt like mutually beneficial exchanges with these participants emerged out of 1) a shared interest in the long-term betterment of Johannesburg and Norwood; or 2) regular purchases of coffee, cakes and lunches from shop owners. My interviews with planning professionals and the neighborhood watch were pre-scheduled and held via Zoom and with a phone call. They consented to doing the interviews with me, so the exchanges were voluntary and professional. Conversations with shop owners were initially predicated on customer satisfaction and mutual interest in the daily affairs of Norwood. My frequent visits allowed the relationship dynamic to transition to acquaintance and even friendship levels. Insights that I gained from these exchanges were not based on pre-scheduled interviews with official consent. Instead, I categorize them as part of my participatory observations, which includes interacting with the social fabric of a place. My sense is that the evenness of power stemming from similar class and education levels meant that the weight of the exchange was much lighter on my conscience than with research participants of unequal power that stemmed from me being of a higher class and education background.

In South Africa, a higher educational level usually translates into having more income and therefore being of a higher class. The participants that I call 'marginalized' live and work in public, outdoor spaces. Their marginalization results from race, class and in some cases ethnic disadvantage and being vulnerable to conditions from working and living outside. Their positionality in society exposes them to the dangers and difficulties of spending long hours in public space for their livelihood. On top of having a lower level of education and earning less income than I do, these research participants' socio-economic class standing simultaneously intersect with their ethnic and racialized identities. These circumstances magnified their social disadvantages and the unevenness of power between us.

I make a distinction between race and ethnicity because within a racial group people have different ethnic backgrounds. For instance, a white person in South Africa may be Afrikaans-speaking or English-speaking and have a different ethnic background, as a result. Afrikaans-speaking white people are usually of Dutch and French Huguenot descent; while English-speaking white people are typically of Jewish-Lithuanian, Italian, British or Portuguese descent. In the case of black people in South Africa, ethnic differences refer to foreigners from other African countries, such as Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Cameroon etc. Ethnic differences also include black people from South Africa that are Zulu, Bapedi, Tswana, Basotho, Xhosa etc. In my research it is important to highlight that even amongst the same racial group, black Africans experience discrimination because of their ethnic differences.

Given the uneven power relations between the marginalized participants and me, I approached our interactions and the time spent in public space in Norwood in a way that

felt authentic and respectful to me. I cannot be sure of how all my participants felt about our interactions, I have four participants that I have become friends with as we keep in touch via WhatsApp, which is an international mobile phone chat application. Although I cannot claim this is true with all my participants because I did not ask them directly how they experienced our interactions, I think the friendship that has developed with four participants is reflective of a mutual respect and care between us.

I became a familiar face on Grant Avenue, regularly greeting and talking to pedestrians/visitors, business owners, beggars, car guards and informal traders. Because I wanted to be approachable to potential informants and participants, I intentionally walked with my head up and made eye contact and greeted people who I passed by. From my experience, when I did this my eye-contact and greetings were reciprocated. Sometimes people also first made eye-contact, in which case I would reciprocate and this was usually followed by a greeting between us. I think this open demeanor made me more approachable because after an initial first exchange like this the same people would greet me again and again. In some cases, this would result in verbal exchange.

My positionality as a white female affluent by South African standards meant that my encounters on the streets were sometimes predicated on my ability to spend or give money. Exchanges with people who regularly asked me for money had a stark transactional feel to them and unless the dynamic changed, they did not develop into researcher-participant relationships. This was the case with a woman who was an informal trader and sold clothing and household items like tablecloths or dish towels. We exchanged greetings and she asked me questions about where I am from and where I

live. She then tried to sell some items to me and asked me to support her because she needed to care for her children. I declined to buy an item from her because I had no need for them and a few weeks later I gave her some money to help her pay for a child's school books. In another situation there was a beggar who sometimes guarded cars on the street. He often saw me exit my apartment building where he was guarding the cars and he would greet me and sometimes ask me for money, or to buy him groceries. In the winter of 2021, he asked me if I had a spare jacket. While I supported both individuals in the ways they requested, I did not feel comfortable asking them to be research participants because I did not have research funding to pay for my participants' consistent involvement in my study. I also did not want their participation predicated on my paying them because I felt it would accentuate the class difference that already existed between us. It may also create an employer-worker type relationship by which they might feel obligated to perform a specific role or answer questions in a specific way to get paid.

When asking my participants to be part of my research I asked them if I could visit them at their place of work so as not to divert their time or energy from earning a living. While there I would sit or stand around and have conversations with them and sometimes other people that were also there. We would talk about work, the weather, the neighborhood, politics of the country and our personal lives. I would make mental notes of what I was observing while with them and sometimes ask my participants to clarify a specific incident that involved them, that I would witness or hear about from them. These visits formed a core part of my research and was essential to me gaining insight and understanding of their place-making strategies. During this time, I used participant

observations and informal interviews to conduct my research. I discuss the findings from these visits in my data chapters (chapters 5 and 6).

Swanson (2008) and Dowling (2016, p. 36) remind us that every research encounter in this unequal world is a 'potentially exploitative relationship'. Postcolonial feminist scholars recognize that it is not possible to balance out the power dynamics of research. They strive to be reflexive in a way that might make the exchange more equitable by considering the intersectionality of diverse identities. That is, knowing what power dynamics play into any interaction I have with a participant may help to develop a rapport with them that is respectful and sensitive to the unequal differences. For instance, Isaac Osei, was a shoe-repairer and informal trader who agreed to be one of my research participants. I noticed at an early stage that he had a black bag with small bags of a substance that looked like cannabis and sachets of alcohol which he discreetly sold to people. I decided not to ask about these products he sold because of the power I must report the illegal activity to authorities, which would jeopardize Isaac's livelihoods. He later voluntarily shared information about the alcohol sachets with me. I also had three conversations with black participants who blamed black people for an increase in crime in Norwood, for Norwood Park being dirtier than when white people used it before and that more white people made Norwood nicer and quieter. In these instances, I tried to convey that while I do not invalidate their response, I do not agree that what they had noticed about the crime, dirt and noise were because black people were occupying a space. I considered it important to voice my disagreement so that they know that I, as a white person, do not support these common negative perceptions of black people (their racialized group).

Even though I tried to build a rapport with my participants that was respectful and sensitive to the unequal power dynamic between us, I do not know if I succeeded. I did not ask my participants if they felt they could trust me to respect them or whether they felt I discriminated against them in any way. I also have not received any voluntary feedback from a participant who felt disrespected. Reflecting further on the researcher-participant and uneven power dynamic between us, I realized that I overlooked some gendered comments made by my male participants. If a male peer of the same socio-economic background as I made that comment to me, I might have challenged and disagreed with them. But in these exchanges, I chose to downplay and see the humor in the way the participants posed the questions to me or made the comments. Two participants were curious and concerned about my not having a child nor a husband or a boyfriend. One participant also commented on my wearing denim shorts of thigh length when I went to visit him. He said, “I have never seen you dress so casually…I did not think you wore these types of clothes”. I do not know why he made that comment, except perhaps to signal to me that he has noticed what I wear and that he did not think I wore clothes that revealed so much of my skin. I also did not want to alienate my male participants concerned I may lose the relationship we had built. While our relationship began from my research, and I am benefitting from our exchanges, I am still in touch with these participants on a friendship basis using WhatsApp which is an international communication application for smartphones. That we are still friends suggests to me that the power I hold as a middle-class white person overrides any threat I may feel due to my disempowered position as a womxn.

Concluding remarks

This section has addressed core aspects of critical reflexivity, namely positionality and power relations while conducting my fieldwork. I had in depth discussions on my identity as a white, middle-class, female researcher from the Global South during research in the Global South with participants, many of whom are low-income earning, black male. I explore how my perspective on north-south knowledge transfer has changed as I have evolved during the course of my doctoral studies. Finally, I unpack the power relations with participants and confront the practical and ethical challenges faced when doing feminist, postcolonial research. Having concluded the explication of my feminist methodology, I now turn the methods I chose to conduct my research using an ethnographic approach.

4.4 My methods of inquiry for studying a particular place

This section explains the methods I use for my research to inquire about place-making in Norwood, Johannesburg. My choice of methods is centered around an ethnographic approach and consist of participatory observations, walking tours and interviews to augment my observations. Prior to detailing my methods, I account for the limitations that constrained my fieldwork. I also explain how I undertook desktop research to better understand Norwood and frame my study. I conclude with a review of the ethical practices I had for conducting my research.

4.4.1 My ethnographic approach

As expressed by Hay (2016, p. 443), ethnography is “a research method dependent on direct field observation in which the researcher is involved closely with a social group or neighborhood.” It takes account of situations and events that occur in a place and/or for a group overtime. Studying the meaning of these events as well as the behaviors and social structures that influence group dynamics and their lived experiences in place. Humanist geographers began to use ethnographic methods in the 1970s to show the value of understanding everyday social and cultural processes that shape people’s lived experiences (Crang and Cook, 2007). Historically researchers that used ethnography claimed a detached position from the social and cultural practices they studied. Feminist theorists have counteracted this supposed objectivity by demonstrating the ways research is an inter-relational exchange between the researcher and the researched, which in turn changes the socio-cultural context of the study (Crang and Cook, 2007, p. 3). For instance, Katz (1994, p. 71) wrestles with the possibility of her as the researcher connecting with her subjects across differences of race, gender, class and other aspects. Working with Sudanese youth in Harlem, New York, Cindi Katz confronts her position of power and whether she’s actually able to positively influence the everyday lives of the marginalized people she intended to help with her work (Nast, 1994, p. 58). Katz (1994) finds that while she’s able to analyze and comment on the structural and political implications of the development agenda for Sudan in the context of global capitalism, her influence in the fieldwork is at a much smaller scale and dialogical. Despite sharing similar political goals of improving the everyday lives of her subjects, she recognizes the limitations of her outsider and privileged position. She realizes that only if her interactions

are premised on mutual learning and finding common ground, might she be able to honor the political commitment of her work (Katz, 1994, p. 70). Feminist researchers who do ethnographic research also acknowledge their role in the very social relations they study and that develop further within and across different fields they research (Crang and Cook, 2007; see also Clifford, 1997).

Because I was closely involved with the neighborhood and some of the people that lived and/or worked in Norwood, and I was trying to understand some intricate details with regards to people's everyday practices that were about acquiring livelihoods as much as they were about making meaning, finding belonging, laying claim to their place in Norwood. The social, economic, cultural and institutional structures that influenced these individuals required them to negotiate their positions in Norwood as they used the neighborhood in ways not ordinarily associated with the suburbs or not allowed as per town planning bylaw regulations. These practices took time to uncover and an ethnographic approach was the best way to do so. I had to pay attention to their everyday routines, their social and socio-technical interactions with their environment to learn what they had to negotiate and how they would navigate these situations. To understand the various place-scenarios of the individuals I followed, I had to spend a long time in the field. I did so to first identify the place-scenarios and practices of the individuals I wanted to study, get to know my participants and their socio-political positions which they had to negotiate their place-making practices with. Here I used participant observations and walking tours. I also had to consistently spend time with my participants, and hold multiple conversational interactive interviews with them. To understand what I was observing and experiencing in the field, I had to verify some of my findings. Keeping in mind that

ethnographic approaches accept that knowledge is partial and there is no singular monolithic truth.

A major contributor to using ethnography was the COVID-19 pandemic which significantly affected South Africa in 2020, the same year that I initiated my fieldwork. The fieldwork period spanned over eighteen months of rather unusual conditions, including COVID-19 lockdowns. The research design developed organically in order to respond to the ebbs and flows of the pandemic, which in retrospect gave me insights into Norwood that otherwise would have remained hidden to me. Even though there were positive outcomes for my research, the pandemic was still a limitation and I discuss it in detail below.

4.4.1.1 Limitations that constrained my study

The fieldwork period for this research project spanned over eighteen months from March 2020 - July 2021 under unusual and unexpected conditions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. During these months South Africa had a hard lockdown of five months, disallowing citizens to leave their homes except to buy groceries and other essentials, for medical reasons or assisting family members in need. Unless people worked in essential services, they were not allowed to leave their homes. Although, when the lockdown levels reduced, people were able to exercise outdoors for an hour a day. Toward the end of 2020 the South African government relaxed the lockdown regulations but again put certain measures in place in the early months of 2021. It is for these reasons that the research design developed organically and responded to the ebbs and flows of the pandemic.

It limited the number of formal interviews I conducted with planning professionals, as many people were struggling with work-home pressures and from physical and mental health issues. I focused my attention instead on the observations I gained from walking around when I could be outside and from informal interviews I had with participants that lived and/or worked in Norwood, who I managed to build trusting relationships with. In retrospect, this shift in attention to how I originally imagined the fieldwork to go, gave me insights into Norwood that otherwise might have remained hidden to me. What became clear is that the slow-burn of the fieldwork period met the suggestion made by postcolonial southern urban scholars: To let the urban landscape unravel and reveal spatial orders that may be different from intended use or normative expectations of how a city ought to function and dwellers ought to behave.

The other limitation I experienced was my inability to understand most African languages. Unfortunately, I did not have funding available to work with a research assistant that could understand a variety of African languages. While most people in Johannesburg can speak English, and many in South Africa can speak my mother tongue Afrikaans, other African languages were spoken amongst people on the streets of Norwood. At times when I was particularly interested in hearing what people would be discussing or arguing about during an incident taking place in public, I was frustrated by my limited comprehension. For future research projects on street politics and place-making in South Africa, I would recommend assistant researchers who are able to understand various local languages.

4.4.1.2 My methods for ethnographic inquiry

I practiced three methods for my ethnographic inquiry. They are participatory observations, walking tours as a useful strategy for my participatory observations which I discuss as a separate method, and interviews. My interviews varied depending on the person or group of people I was interviewing. They ranged from formal, semi-structured interviews and (informal) conversational interactive interviews. I detail them below:

Participatory observations

The data collection included participatory observations over an extended fieldwork period of 18 months, with times of lapse in between due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Even though the pandemic intermittently paused my research, the extensive fieldwork period helped me gain a better understanding of Norwood, and as noted by Winchester and Rofe (2010, p. 14) helped to develop more meaningful relationships with my participants. Observations formed part of numerous walks through Norwood and surrounding neighborhoods, sitting alone and observing certain interactions and everyday practices in public spaces, or while socializing with other locals (some were participants I had informal interviews with) in public spaces. Participatory observations like these are seen as a method of conducting ethnographic research (Cook, 1997; see also Winchester and Rofe, 2010). I would also make regular stops at selected locations on Grant Avenue and some side streets where I would “catch up” with research participants and hold informal interviews. This was an immersive data collection process that enabled me to see spatial practices and systems I would not have seen without the longitudinal observation and conversation time. Like an optical illusion, where if you look at something long enough it can reveal a logic to the image and patterns you could not see before. I kept a fieldwork

journal to make notes on observations, conversations, experiences and thoughts or ideas I had to help propel the research forward. With a grounded approach for the methodology, journaling was a valuable routine I developed to keep track of data I collected that may change the course of the research. Making notes of personal experiences, thoughts and feelings I had during my fieldwork, helped me work through ethical concerns or introspective moments I had around my positionality in relation to the participants.

Walking tours as a useful strategy for participatory observations

I spent many hours walking around Norwood to understand how public space was used. I instituted a regular walking route through the area, including adjacent neighborhoods Orchards, Cheltondale and Forbesdale. I was introduced to a local resident (David is his pseudonym) of Orange Grove who had lived in the area for twenty years. David made a living through laborious jobs, such as gardening, cleaning, fixing pools and security. As a black, low-income earning man who could speak multiple African languages and was well known in the area, he held a very different positionality to me and carried agency in ways that I did not. I conducted three walking tours with him, each consisting of two-hour long walks in Norwood, Orange Grove, Cheltondale and Forbesdale. David had deep knowledge of the area and a very different positionality to mine. He would share stories and information about past events and current situations that provided me with invaluable insight. We would walk two hours at and he would greet and speak to numerous people, flaunting that “I know everyone, even the undercover police that come to the bars” (D. Nhlapho, personal communication, October 17, 2020). While this statement was surely an exaggeration it was clear that he knew a lot of people. He told me “I used to cause a lot of trouble, drinking too much and starting fights in the

bars and on streets". The time spent in bars, clubs and on the streets picking fights when intoxicated had earned him a reputation in the area. The observations I made while walking alone or with David or hanging around in public spaces talking to participants and other users, was a major component of my research.

Interviews to augment my participatory observations

As part of my methods I included interviews with urban planning professionals, the Norwood neighborhood watch and marginalized people who live and/or work in the public spaces of Norwood. I did so to augment my participatory observations so that I can verify the accuracy of the conclusions I made from what I was seeing and to better understand how regulations are enforced and how policies and plans are realized. I explain the purpose of these different interviews below.

- *With planners and the neighborhood watch*

I conducted four formal semi-structured interviews with four informants from the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality (CoJ), the Johannesburg City Parks and Zoos (JCPZ) and the Norwood Neighborhood Watch that is involved in city development, management and regulation. They reflected on local area design projects; precinct, regional and city plans; as well as urban and land use management systems that influence relational place-making and claiming of public space. Participants reflected on design projects and management systems that impact and change the use of public space, as well as my questions about the discrepancies between documents and everyday activities. I also had discussions with residents, workers and business owners that frequent, interact in and influence how public space in Norwood is used. Most

research participants were deeply invested in place-making of Norwood because they live and/or work in the neighborhood.

- *With people living and working in Norwood's public spaces*

I conducted (informal) conversational interactive interviews (Ellis, Kiesinger and Tillman-Healy, 1997) with ten participants that live and/or work in public space in Norwood. Interactive interviewing is described by Tillman-Healy (2002) as an interview structure where the researcher is in dialogue with participants in an informal and fluid way; such that the researcher is as much exposed to questions from participants as they are from the researcher. Tillman-Healy (2002) explains that interactive interviews "demands more sharing of personal and social experiences on the part of the researcher than does PAR" because the researcher is making themselves vulnerable to participants in a way that participatory action research (PAR) does not necessarily demand. My weeks consisted of making regular stops at selected locations on Grant Avenue and on some side streets where I would "catch up" with these participants. It was at this time that informal interviews would unfold almost spontaneously. Friendship as method depends on PAR to be in conversation with subjects throughout the research process so that they might feel empowered. I used participatory research methods by combining some ethnographic research as a resident of Norwood and participant observations combined with interactive interviewing with my participants (Tillman-Healy, 2002; Winchester and Rofe, 2010).

4.4.2 Framing my study through desktop research

I undertook desktop research to frame my research and to gain more understanding of Norwood before entering the field for my ethnographic methods. It was also intended to verify what I was observing and querying as I spent more time in and around Norwood. Below is a table of the kinds of information I sourced:

Table 4.1: List of secondary data sources found through desktop research and used for my research.

Type of Secondary Data Source	Specific Name of Source
Website and newspaper articles	1. Munro, K. (2017) A stroll through the Eastern Joburg suburbs of Orchards, Maryvale, Sydenham and Orange Grove. 2. Ball, J. (2017) One of Norwood's oldest homes restored. 3. McDougall, B. (2016) Peeling back the layers of Orange Grove. 4. Sibanda, N (date unknown) Noah CAN still gives to those in need. Web link: www.rosebankkillarneygazette.co.za
Government Project Programs	1. Greening and Open Space Management by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment. Web link: https://www.environment.gov.za/projectsprogrammes/greeningandopenspace#
National Plans	1. The National Development Plan, Chapter 8: Transforming human settlement and the national space economy.
City and Neighborhood Plans	1. City of Johannesburg Built Environment Performance Plan 2017/18 2. Grant Avenue Precinct Plan and Management Framework, 2016
Frameworks	1. City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality Spatial Development Framework 2040, published 2016 2. Louis Botha Avenue Development Corridor Strategic Area Framework
Public dialogue documents, public briefs and reports	1. Re-thinking the role of parks as platforms for building a common African-ness: Perspectives on the use, enjoyment, and significance of public space in the contemporary cities of Africa. By Joburg City Parks and Zoo (JCPZ). 2. Transforming public parks into safe and inclusive community spaces: Lessons on collaboration and participation from the City of Joburg. By JCPZ, 2019. 3. Urban Safety Brief No.1/2020: Public Space and Urban Safety. By Urban Safety Reference Group of the South African Cities Network 4. Contestation, transformation & competing visions: A study of Orange Grove & Norwood. Report 7 in the series Spatial Transformation through Transit-oriented Development in Johannesburg. By Appelbaum (2016). 5. UN Habitat, World Cities Report 2020. The value of sustainable urbanization.
Strategies	1. Inner City Regeneration: Strategy for safe community parks in the inner city – Summary and synthesis. By JCPZ
By-laws for the City of Joburg	1. Public Open Spaces By-law, 2004 2. Informal Trading By-laws, 2012

	3. Encroachment on Property By-laws, 2004 4. Street Trading By-laws, 2004 5. Public road and miscellaneous By-laws, 2004
Media sources	1. Facebook page: Love Norwood, web link: https://www.facebook.com/Republic.of.Norwood/?fref=ts 2. Facebook page: Rosebank Killarney Gazette, web link: https://www.facebook.com/rkgazette/ 3. Facebook page: NOAH CAN, web link: https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=noah%20can
Archived newspaper articles about events in Norwood (1975 – 2020)	1. Abrahamse, R. 15 August 1978. Helen Joseph se huis onder skoot. Die Vaderland. 2. Bega, S. 14 May 2011. ANC bid to change true blue Ward 73. Saturday Star: Election Special. 3. Thakali, T. 2 February 2008. Cops turn a blind eye to decaying flats in their smart north-eastern suburbs backyard. Saturday Star. 4. Adams, S. 22 July 2006. Geriatric fist fight breaks out at swish Norwood complex. Saturday Star. 5. Serumula, R. 5 December 2015. Hustlers cash in on the refuse workers' strike. Saturday Star 6. Horwitz, G. 1 September 1997. Media's exaggerated picture of crime harming Norwood. Saturday Star. 7. Thakali, T. 29 March 2008. Norwood police flats set for facelift. Saturday Star. 8. Serumula, R. 13 July 2013. Residents Endure Stench of Uncollected Rubbish as Pikitup Strikes Continue. Saturday Star 9. Cox, A. 24 November 2005. 430 Flats for Landmark Houghton Golf Course. The Star. 10. Cox, A. 2015. Grant Ave on the Road to Revamp. The Star 11. Cox, A. 23 August 2019. No End to Property Hijackings. The Star. 12. Cox, A. 1 March 2013. Norwood School Finally Gets to the Root of the Tree Felling Problem. The Star 13. Germaner, S. 5 March 2013. Probe to Gay Killings Comes to a Standstill. The Star. 14. Masango, B. 7 July 2008. Skaters Left High and Dry after Park is Sold. The Star 15. Cox, A. 31 January 2005. Squabble over what to do with Joburg's Paterson Park. The Star. 16. Skade, T. 31 March 2008. Taxis impounded for obstructing free flow of traffic. The Star. 17. Meyer, T. 1978. House Prices Should Double in the next 10 Years. Sunday Express. 18. Hyman, J and Mogale, C. 1 April 1975. Needless nights in cells for thousands: pass law horror. Sunday Express. 19. Citizen Reporter. 9 August 1982. First round to residents in bus-depot row. The Citizen 20. Olckers, C. 15 June 1978. Reckless public to blame for 'easy crime'. The Citizen. 21. Author unknown, 21 August 1978. Beauty and the hypermarket. The Star.

	22. Ryan, C. 2 February 1984. PFP Name By-election Candidate. The Star. 23. Mkhwanazi, S. 29 February 2000. Police seek 'Israeli mafia' pair. The Star 24. Author unknown, 16 October 2020. Recreation Centre for the People. The Star.

To gain understanding of the structural and strategic influences on Norwood, I sourced institutional-led policies, strategies, plans and reports. These documents were written by various entities at national and municipal level, as well as by organizations such as UN Habitat and research institutes, such as the Centre for Urban and Built Environment Study (CUBES). I used the information from these various sources to frame my study area in relation to the social, political, economic and spatial development goals of the City of Johannesburg. These entities influence where international funding, state and municipal resources will go. That is what parts of the city receive, what kind of resources and how will these resources change the urban landscape? Chapter 3: Norwood in Context, and data Chapters 5 and 6 discuss these documents in detail and which local and strategic entities have an interest in and hold power in Norwood.

I used media sources to gain an understanding of the everyday events and citizen perspectives on issues pertaining to Norwood. I used two Facebook pages Love Norwood and NOAH CAN to see interventions made from the local community and concerns they have about the public management of Norwood. On the one hand, NOAH CAN is concerned about the homeless and poor that reside in the area, and on the other hand residents and business owners are concerned about cleanliness, preservation of the parks, safety and security, and the development of high rise apartment buildings. I also accessed archived newspaper articles from 1975 – 2020 that gave me insight into the political, social, economic, environmental and urban development dynamics of Norwood. Considering that Norwood is one of several suburban neighborhoods in Ward 73 of

Johannesburg, it was difficult to get information specific to Norwood. Alongside some secondary data I sourced from institutional plans, strategies and reports about Norwood and the surrounding area, the archived newspaper articles gave a historical perspective on the make-up of Norwood until 2020. I mostly use these articles to get a better understanding of my location, which I detail out in my contextual chapter.

Finally, I use the South African Constitution (1996) and by-laws written by the City of Johannesburg to establish what rights and regulations are formally in place and legally binding for Norwood. These rights and regulations formed part of analyzing place-making strategies in a context where national human rights, planning laws and permissions in place coexist. I detail out this discussion in my data Chapters 5 and 6. I found my desktop research useful in framing my study area and my research; and as supporting data to verify formal plans and legal practices against permissions and illegal activity. My ethnographic approach furthered my understanding of everyday practices and place-making strategies of marginalized groups in a way that secondary data sources could not. This was neither the intention of the documents nor was ethnography used as a research tool. Given that my desktop research should be viewed as supplementary, I now unpack my ethnographic approach with its limitations and the methods I use.

4.4.3 My ethical practices

Below I explain three ethical practices I used for different components of my research and why I chose these practices. They are: 1) the confidentiality and 2) informed consent of my participants; and 3) the approach I took when taking photographs in Norwood and surrounding neighborhoods.

4.4.3.1 Confidentiality

All participants, except town planners and members of organizations, that are named in this study were given pseudonyms to protect their identity. It was something I decided was important to maintain for all participants because their livelihoods are secured by working or hustling outside, in public space. Some of these individuals also slept outside in parks or along building walls. Because many participants were in the same place and frequented the same places daily, they could easily be identified if someone read this study and intended to find them. In my findings and analysis, I discuss some unlawful activities and disclose information given to me by my participants that could implicate them in criminal activity. While they shared this information willingly after reading the consent forms and agreeing to form part of my study, I want to ensure their safety and the safe keeping of their livelihoods to the extent that I can.

4.4.3.2 Informed consent

For my participants I used different types of informed consent. I use the table below to distinguish between them and explain the method of consent I used.

Participants	**Type of informed consent**
3 x planning professionals	Signed consent forms before conducting Zoom interviews.
1 x member of the Norwood Neighborhood Watch	Verbal consent over the phone as it was a phone interview.
1 x long-term community member of Orange Grove I did 3 walking tours with	In-person verbal consent after giving them the verbal consent form to take home and read through.
11 x participants that live and/or work in public space; or that own a business on Grant Avenue	6 x In-person verbal consent after giving them the verbal consent form to take home and read through.

	2 x Online verbal consent via a Zoom interview after explaining the consent form to them. 3 x Permission to use conversations with shop owners that formed part of my participatory observations.

4.4.3.3 Photographs

For this study I decided to take photos very early in the morning and while on a walking tour with David to avoid having too many people in the images. I took photos of Grant Avenue; the locations of the place-scenarios I describe and analyze, as well as the specific street infrastructure or socio-technical objects that form part of these place-scenarios. As the day progresses, Norwood and especially Grant Avenue get quite busy with cars and people. A conversation with David made me aware of people's fears around having their picture taken, especially without consent. He said many people fear their picture might be shared with dangerous individuals who may intentionally want to harm them. Though I was aware this is David's opinion and perhaps anecdotal here-say, and I had no evidence to corroborate this as truth, I decided to respect potentiality. I only took pictures of individuals who I asked consent from beforehand. Where I took pictures of place-scenarios that had people as part of the image, I took the photo at a distance or angle such that they are not recognizable in the photo.

Concluding Remarks

This section delineated the methods I used to study Norwood, as a particular place of inquiry for place-making in Johannesburg, South Africa. I used ethnography to conduct my research and chose methods that aligned with this approach. These methods were participatory observations which included walking tours in Norwood and surrounding

neighborhoods; and repeated visitations with my participants at the locations they were based at in Norwood. I also conducted interviews to augment my participatory observations and to gather local and strategic planning and urban management information about Norwood and Johannesburg at large. I also used current and historical (archived) news articles to gain more background knowledge of the socio-political relations in Norwood, as a way to frame my ethnographic research. I also take stock of limitations I faced during my fieldwork period, of which the COVID-19 pandemic and language barriers between me and participants or people on the streets, in general, played significant roles. I concluded this section explaining my ethical practices while conducting my empirical research. I now move to the final component of my methodology, expounding the strategies I use for my data analysis.

4.5 My Strategies of Data Analysis

Conceptualizing my methodology with a grounded theory approach made for a data analysis process that was organic and inductive. By this I mean that my findings, from the different methods I used to collect data, would surface spontaneously as events happened in Norwood or as my understanding of place-scenarios improved over time. I used my first set of research questions to frame my initial inquiry into Norwood, and after spending some months in the field I reframed my questions according to what I was discovering. I give a detailed explanation of this process in my theoretical chapter.

Observing how the urban landscape changed over 18 months and being exposed to various socio-political and socio-technical relations through participatory observations and interviews meant to me that I had to be open to revisiting my initial ideas around place

and place-making. For example, where I had originally expected more conflictual interactions between people in Norwood with different positionalities, my findings revealed a more symbiotic relationship. Furthermore, negotiations that took place between people or between people and the environment, demonstrated subtle contestation that leaned into analyzing permissible place-making practices and the logics behind them.

The grounded theory approach to my methodology challenged me to reconsider analytical concepts I originally centered for my research, such as relational place-making. It was still important for critically evaluating north-to-south theory travel and for framing my analytical lens of place-making in Norwood; but the concepts ‘public space’ and ‘permissions’ became much more important aspects of southern urban place-making. This approach also influenced the strategies I used to analyze my data in that the analysis occurred in phases as I framed and reframed my research inquiry. I used roughly established categorical themes for analysis and elaborate in these below, as per type of data I collected.

4.5.1 How I analyzed my data collected

4.5.5.1 Ethnographic data

My ethnographic data I separate out into observational and conversational data which I analyzed differently. Using participatory observations as a method, I collected data through walks, sitting and observing the urban landscape and through visitations with my participants. I collected conversational data through informal and structured interviews I had with participants, as well as through spontaneous conversations I had with people on

the streets of Norwood. I also collected data through desktop research and explained how I used it in the context chapter, and in the section above on framing my study. I used memos, in the form of a fieldwork journal, to take notes and keep record of what I was seeing in Norwood and hearing in conversations. For Cope (2016, p. 375), keeping memos is an "interpretive practice towards making meaning of the data" and "useful for sorting out ideas, identifying patterns and similarities". This was the primary way in which I stored data from my participatory observations and conversations from the field. Taking notes was also a reminder to reflect on the data I was capturing later. I now explain how I analyzed the different types of data.

Observational data

My observational data analysis occurred in phases as my grounded theory approach led to me uncovering more over time. I intentionally had broad analytical themes that stemmed from my research questions at the start of my fieldwork period. Thus, the place-scenarios I originally thought I would study changed because I allowed my analytical themes to be shaped by what I was observing, hearing, and experiencing in the field. This made my research inductive; revealing what was actually happening (i.e., the place-making practices, the logics behind these practices). The data also showed me what really mattered for place-making and how these manifested as place-scenarios in Norwood.

My strategy for data analysis happened in phases as I explain below:

Phase 1: Understand the context, identify different place-making scenarios, observe behaviors of people, interactions between people, between people and infrastructure,

and between people and nature. I looked for repeated patterns and practices to identify the place-scenarios I wanted to focus on.

Phase 2: I classified what I was seeing into place-scenarios where I could approach people and ask to be part of my research. Place-scenarios came from identifying the livelihood strategies of people working and/or living in public spaces, and observing that they had certain practices that spoke to place-making in Norwood. The livelihood strategies I chose to focus on were informal trading, car guarding, private security and rough sleeping. Thereafter, I approached certain individuals in Norwood who were engaging in these livelihood strategies and asked them to be part of my research. I also classified observations into human-human / human-nature / human-infrastructure interactions as they spoke to interpersonal and structural influences of place-making. For example, behaviors in parks that went against the bylaw regulations; or security infrastructure that speak to class privilege and racial profiling in Norwood. These interactions were part of the place-scenarios I selected.

Phase 3: Once I identified the place-scenarios, my analysis homed in on what I was observing after repeated visitations to the places where my research participants were based. My analysis oscillated between the interactions I was observing and the conversations and interviews I was having with my participants. I discuss this conversational data next. After repeated visitations and observing the various kinds of interactions mentioned above, namely human-human / human-nature / human-infrastructure I could also ask more specific questions about place-making practices. For instance, how do they create a sense of belonging, why they choose to stay in

Norwood, or what difficulties they face from external influences such as police presence or the weather.

My analysis from observational data was consistently informed by the elements of relational place-making as expounded by relational place theorists such as Doreen Massey (2005) and Pierce et al (2011). This required me to think in scalar ways, querying local and global influences on Norwood as a place, as well as interpersonal and structural interactions that shape place-making. I simultaneously used the analytical components of southern urban theory to guide my attention to practices and observations that use the urban environment in alternate ways and contradict normative planning and urban systems.

- *Visual data: photographs that I took and sourced from Facebook and newspaper articles*

Visual data from desktop research and social media helped me to understand the history of Norwood and the context within which I observed certain place-making practices by people and entities in the area. Reporters that reported on events in newspaper articles and the opinions conveyed by the general public in the media, helped to frame my study around socio-political issues that shape interpersonal relations.

The photographs I took were aimed at illustrating my findings from observations, and what I was analyzing according to the themes I chose to focus on for my study. Once I separated out what I was initially observing and data I was gathering from my desktop research, I identified themes that arose from my analysis. I then chose which photographs

would illustrate best what I wanted to represent visually in the contextual and data chapters.

Conversational data

Conversation data that I gathered during my fieldwork include semi-structured and informal interviews I had with planning professionals, the neighborhood watch, shop owners and marginalized people working and/or living in public spaces. Most data was collected from research participants who had consented to being part of my study. However, sometimes spontaneous conversations were held with people in Norwood who engaged with me on the streets, in the shops or while I was visiting my research participants. I consider this data to form part of my participatory observations. I recorded valuable insight from these impromptu conversations by making notes in my fieldwork journal and would analyze this data in relation to the place-scenarios and themes I had identified around place and place-making that I discuss in my data chapters. Below I detail out how I analyzed audio and textual data I collected from interviews.

- *Audio and textual data*

I used Zoom to hold interviews with research participants. I requested permission to audio record the interviews and thereafter I transcribed them. I had informal interviews with participants in the public spaces of Norwood that I recorded by taking notes in my fieldwork journal. Because these informal interviews stretched over several visitations, I wanted my participants to feel at ease and comfortable with me throughout our exchanges. We were always located in public spaces where others could observe our interactions. The novelty of having a white middle-income women spend many hours

“hanging out” on the street corners with lower-income black men attracted attention from passers-by. It intuitively felt more appropriate and more discreet to use a journal for notetaking than to audio record our interviews.

The notes I made from conversational interactive interviews I also analyzed in phases of data collection, which I describe below:

Phase 1: The interviews helped me understand my participants’ positionality by asking personal details about their lives and their backgrounds, how and why they came to Norwood, what their everyday lives entail, and the logics behind their livelihood strategies. Learn what exactly their work or means of acquiring livelihoods entailed. This included formal or informal jobs they had that could be full-time or part-time, or strategies to work for tips or for a meal, begging, recycling or collecting food and other necessities from churches, restaurants and charities in the area.

Phase 2: I collected data on the context within which my participants worked and/or lived: what they are exposed to being in public space for extended periods, whether working 12-hour shifts as a security guard or sleeping in the park. I was simultaneously spending time with my participants observing their routines, practices and interactions with others. This gave me the opportunity to make mental notes that might evolve into more questions I would follow up with the next visitation I had with them.

Themes that came to the fore through my observations, notetaking and interviews became my core points of analysis. Some of these themes cut across different types of data I collected and some were unique to only one observation, conversation or interview I had. As patterns from the data sources emerged or when a stark difference or unique event or situation occurred, or I found a noteworthy piece of evidence, I then began

formulating a narrative for my findings and analysis. My analysis was framed by the theoretical themes and concepts I discuss in my theory chapter, and I used the findings from the data I collected to analyze place-making in Norwood in relation to the framework. My grounded theory approach to this research project meant that my framework shifted to include other theories on power and democracy and the concepts public space and permissions. These emerged as central to place theory and place-making in a southern city. My approach for analyzing my data can be described as developing the narrative of a story that unfolded as I gained more insight in the field.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter is about the feminist methodology I use to conduct an ethnographic study on place-making in a Global South city and in the broader literary context of postcolonial southern urban research. Trained as an urban planner, I wanted to approach studying cities differently to the more technical lens that planners are accustomed to. I moved away from mixed methods and focused concretely on qualitative methods to illuminate the everyday, micro-scale interactions that form part of the making of a place. Using a geographic approach to study an urban environment reframed my planner's perspective on how a city functions and how to address what planners call its "wicked problems" to instead explore the teaching of social, political and cultural philosophies, challenging me to see the city anew. Postcolonial theory is part of the theoretical framing that shaped my research project as a whole and could usefully extend to inform my methodological approach. Guided by feminist theory, postcolonial scholars working in the Global South critically evaluate the impact of representation (of the researcher and the research

subject) and universalization of theories. Understanding the gravity of these two factors in knowledge production, I am guided by feminist and postcolonial scholars that urge for a research practice of unlearning (Spivak, 1988). Along this line of thinking postcolonial southern urban scholars have coined the phrase ‘to un-see the city’ from the ‘modernist infrastructure ideologies’ that has been imprinted in the minds of students, scholars and practitioners through Western domination (Lawhon et al, 2016).

Core to these practices is going through a process of critical reflexivity which I explain in detail, focusing on my positionality and the power relations between me and my research participants. My positionality as a white, female, middle-class South African whose identity shifted when I became a researcher from a Global North university shaped the power relations between me and my participants, the kind of data I collected and ethical practices I tried to uphold. In reviewing my ethical practices and the limitations of my study, I come to terms with the imperfections of my work and the difficulty of undertaking feminist, postcolonial research. This chapter also has a detailed breakdown of the methods I used for the study after choosing an ethnographic approach. Ethnography was the best fit for my research project which aimed to understand everyday practices of place-making for people not ordinarily considered in normative planning and urban design systems. A critical component of southern urban research is to pull apart dominant (northern) urban theory into its constituent parts and using empirical research, typically from the Global South, to query the accuracy, relevance and epistemological foundations of the theory. My fieldwork needed to identify and study urban practices and place-making strategies, and the logics that informed these. Participatory observations, walking tours and interviews over the course of 18 months (with intermittent pauses due

to COVID-19) were the main methods I used to collect data and seemed most effective for conducting in-depth qualitative research. I also used desktop research such as gathering archived newspaper articles, using social media posts and assessing urban policies, plans and regulations to understand the historical, cultural, socio-political and institutional context better. I developed my strategies for data analysis based on grounded theory, which also informed my overall approach for conducting my fieldwork. This meant that I analyzed my data in an ongoing way as new findings surfaced that called me to revisit my research questions and analytical themes.

This approach created uncertainty and unease during the research and writing process, and required a significant amount of new literature review. As mentioned before, the theoretical concepts public space and permissions; and theory on power and democracy were new literature I needed to add to my research. I discovered their significance to place-making in Norwood, and more broadly a southern city like Johannesburg with my grounded theory approach. This included a process of theory unbundling and spending some time in the field before revisiting my research questions. The two data chapters that follow explore the ways in which my findings from the empirical research coincide with northern-derived relational place theory, and specifically relational place-making as a poststructural analytical framework for studying place-making. I use tentacles of relational place theory, such as power and claim to space, to delineate the ways in which they manifest differently in a southern urban context. Through my analysis of the place-scenarios, I identify the interactions I observe, and the stories that are told to me by research participants. I demonstrate the value of unbundling extant theory before it travels and is applied elsewhere. I also show how a grounded theory approach to

research, along with postcolonial and feminist thought as a basis for developing my methodology, gave room for theory concepts not initially included in the theoretical framework to surface as important for place-making in a southern urban context. Which in turn is a core component of southern urban theory. I expand on this in my dissertation conclusion.

Chapter 5. Permissions as enactments of power: How we might understand power anew from a southern place.

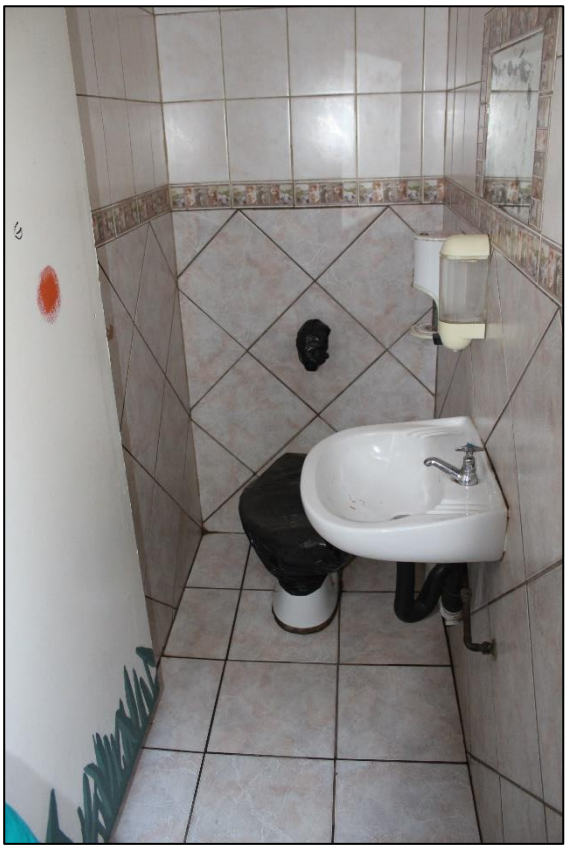
Anecdote

Norwood Park has a public toilet facility. It is fenced off with a palisade to prevent vandalism. It is unlocked every morning at eight and locked again at four in the afternoon (G. Twala[6], personal communication, August 19, 2021). During this time a cleaner, appointed by the City of Johannesburg, ensures the toilets are cleaned and kept tidy throughout the day (*ibid.*). The palisade also prevents people from sleeping inside the facility overnight (I. Osei, personal communication, December 6, 2020). Even though the public toilet can be used free of charge, many men in and around Norwood Park instead urinate on trees. This is a daily activity with no noticeable reaction from the general public or law enforcement, despite it being illegal as per the Public Open Spaces By-Law of the City of Johannesburg (2004a).

In Johannesburg, where large portions of men work outside and walk for kilometers to work or to run errands, the practice of urinating against trees and walls is very common. Even in rare cases like Norwood Park where public toilets are available, men choose to urinate outdoors to avoid possible unsafe experiences that might occur inside public toilets (I. Osei, personal communication, December 6, 2020). Public toilets are not always kept clean and maintained adequately, and they can be dangerous spaces. During my fieldwork I was given access to look at the male and female restrooms, of which each had three cubicles, each with toilets. These are shown in figures 1-3 below:

[6] All participants, except town planners and members of organizations, that are named in this article were given pseudonyms to protect their identity.







Figures 5.1 – 5.3: Public toilets in Norwood Park showing the palisade to prevent rough sleepers from occupying it at night. Some toilets are broken. (Photo by Le Roux, 2021).

On each side, both male and female, one toilet was broken. Across much of the Global North, open urination is considered anti-social, disorderly behavior (Scott, Sohail and Cavill, 2017, p. 2). In parts of the south this is also true: a widely studied media campaign in India shamed men as a way to encourage the construction of toilets (Sachdev, 2017). Despite by-laws and fines in place, open urination by men across South Africa is still an ordinary activity (Scott, Sohail and Cavill, 2017).

5.1 Introduction: Grounding 'theory unbundling' through empirical research on power in place.

I begin this chapter with an anecdote to emphasize that controversial behaviors often do occur in public. Yet, why these practices may be permitted despite their controversiality is poorly understood. Urinating in public can be somewhat hidden from the public eye if it is done behind a tree or a wall, when it is dark and quiet in the streets of a city. There are also wider dynamics at play that shape why such behaviors are tolerated, accepted and normalized. We might consider that most public urination is enacted by men, which as reflected in my study is also the space that is dominated by men. Though this is not a finding I explore deeply in my research, feminist scholars and feminist geographers have shown the exclusionary and precarious facets of the public realm in society, such as public spaces in urban centers (Boyer, 1996; Mitchell, 1995; Namaste, 1996; Ruddick 1996; Young, 1990). What is noteworthy is that public space use is lined with power and politics. Place scholars, and in particular relational place scholars, have highlighted the significance of politics that shape power dynamics (Massey, 2005; Pierce et al, 2011; Pred, 1984; Purcell, 2006). Power in place is multi-layered and enacted through interpersonal and institutional relations that operate on the ground (e.g. in the streets)

and metaphysically (e.g. negotiations between organized groups or decisions made with institutionalized systems).

In my research project I attempt to understand how power is deployed empirically and theoretically. With my grounded theory approach I weaved between theory and fieldwork to understand how power is enacted and how it manifests in place, and how it is framed in place theory. This was a necessary approach to take because although I found the literature on place and power had much promise, it did not always help me to understand what I observed and learned about in the field. My empirical data called me to reassess the epistemological dimensions (of which power is one) of place, which determine how a particular place might be analyzed. This is important because analytical framing also informs the claims that researchers make about what we know about a place.

Through the process of 'unbundling theory' (Lawhon and Truelove, 2020), a method I adopt from postcolonial and southern urban scholars, it became apparent that power is framed within a particular northern-contextual understanding of democracy and entity-weighting. Northern-based geographers and place theorists largely frame their debates on power around the understanding of democracy based on modernist systems of urban governance (Martin and Pierce, 2013; Purcell, 2006). Yet postcolonial and southern urban scholarship query the assumptions that are made by dominant northern scholars about a) the strength of and trust in civil society and the state to maintain civic order; and b) a universal agreement about what is fair and equal, as associated values of democracy (Ranciere, 1999; Staeheli and Mitchell, 2007; Watson, 2009). This not only brings into question how power can be understood differently from the perspective of a southern place, but what or who has power and how much (i.e. entity-weighting)? To answer these

questions, I use relational place-making and southern urban theory to frame my empirical research. I also use ethnography, with participatory observations and interviews, and desktop research to collect data. I explain this investigative process further below:

5.2 Uncovering the logics of place-making practices and expanding the concept permissions to better understand power in a southern place.

Relational place-making analytically illuminates the presence of power and plurality in place, with the notion that multiple multi-scalar entities must continuously negotiate intersecting political interests (Pierce et al, 2011). This aligns with southern urban scholars who argue that the modernist urban ideal framing of cities in dominant northern literature foregrounds the universality of uniform urban systems and trumps the heterogeneous nature of (especially southern) cities (Lawhon et al, 2016; Simone, 2004). Both groups of scholars argue for a more plural and interconnected perspective on urban places where human and non-human interactions are informed by power dynamics. Yet, how cities in the Global South are actually made and how they function is under-documented and poorly understood (Ghertner, 2020; Myers, 1994; Robinson, 2002; Roy, 2009). This call for urban research and my interest in place-making in a Global South city prompted my investigation into how a southern place might be configured.

To investigate this, I must understand the parts (human and non-human entities) that make up a place and how they come together in that place. How they come together I explain as place-making strategies, which include place-making practices and livelihood strategies; people's behaviors and negotiated interactions between entities. I expand on the southern urban concept, permissions, to explain enactments of power observed in my

study area, Norwood. With my empirical research I explore the logics behind practices, behaviors and permissions because they shape the interpersonal relations and power dynamics between multiple entities. The overall aim for this part of the research is to illuminate that power, as a key dimension of relational place and place-making theory, should be reviewed because how it is enacted and how it manifests in a southern place is different. I now turn to an analysis of my findings of the place-scenarios I study to help make my case.

5.3 Findings and analysis of place-scenarios

Using a grounded theory approach for my research, I entered the field with a preliminary set of questions that aimed to address two aspects of my research intent. The first was to further develop scholarly research on place in the context of a Global South city. The second was to interrogate an already open and critical analytical framework on place, namely relational place-making. Guided by postcolonial and southern urban theory, I use a process of theory unbundling to challenge the causal relations and underlying assumptions or normative judgements that might hinder our understanding of place in a non-northern context. An essential part of this process is to conduct empirical research from the Global South.

For my empirical case I chose Norwood in Johannesburg, South Africa as an entry point into some of the burning questions I had about place-making in a southern city. My sub-questions (see chapter 2 section 2.6) were formulated with my already existing contextual understanding of the study area. This included Norwood being a neighborhood I frequented several times in my life and located in Johannesburg, a city I grew up in. As

a planning practitioner working across South Africa, the City of Johannesburg is a metropolitan municipal area I am familiar with. My questions were also shaped by my literary comprehension of relational place theory and relational place-making as an analytical framework for studying place. My preliminary research questions and early months in the field were useful for identifying the examples of place-making I wanted to study. I call these examples “place-scenarios” to denote that these examples are not unique cases of place-making across Johannesburg and other South African urban centers. Instead, place-scenarios are urban practices of marginalized people that result in permissions, which are enactments of power that are negotiated by multiple interacting entities in a place. Although place-scenarios with this broad framing can be found anywhere in the world, I expand on the southern-derived concept “permissions” to provincialize place-making for a southern place. I also chose these scenarios because they were categorized by aspects of urbanization that I argue are more prevalent in southern cities. This prevalence is demonstrated through the different epistemological comprehension of power from a postcolonial, southern perspective and empirical evidence of logics, negotiations and entity-weighting not yet written about in northern-derived place theory.

I chose three place-scenarios in Norwood, which I title and explain as the following:

1. Operating from headquarters**:** This is a scenario of an informal trader, located at a prominent intersection in Norwood at the foot of Norwood Park, who sells miscellaneous goods and repair shoes.

2. The street ambassadors of Norwood: This is a scenario of two security guards that share a security post in Norwood to monitor street activity at an intersection between four blocks of affluent suburban houses.
3. Rough sleepers and the park of Norwood: This scenario covers the use of parks in Norwood by residents in the area, with a specific focus on the contradictory approach to monitoring the behaviors of rough sleepers, in relation to middle-class residents.

After spending some time in the field I revisited my research questions and I revised them (see chapter 2 section 2.6) to more concretely speak to what I was seeing and learning from these place-scenarios. As mentioned before, this is something I had room to do using a grounded theory approach for my research. I centered my questions around a) the specific marginalized people in the place-scenarios that I asked to be part of my research; b) around spontaneous interactions I had with shop owners and acquaintances on Grant Avenue; and c) desktop research and interviews with planners that gave me strategic knowledge on the management and development of Norwood.

In order to uncover the logics of place-making practices in Norwood I had to understand the activities, behaviors and negotiations that become permissible in relation to the power dynamics at play. I first present the scenario and these aspects of the scenario in the discussion below; and weave in an analysis on these findings followed by some concluding remarks. At the onset of the discussion I note that these activities and behaviors were repeated daily or regularly and in different locations in Norwood. With my focus on marginalized individuals, what evidently became important as a way to contest, contradict and create new power dynamics, was their ongoing presence and occupation of public space. Their routine interactions with other humans, institutionalized systems

and non-human elements, such as infrastructure, waste and nature in the space, solidified their positions and claims to the place. I refer to this as the “staying power” of marginalized people, despite their behaviors being monitored and their presence policed by more powerful entities in Norwood that found their particular transgressions intolerable. Furthermore, the prevalence of permissions I find active in Norwood reveals the plurality of interests and the diverse range of logics that inform place-making practices. Though such plurality is present the world over, I suggest with these findings that the weighting of power between entities is different in a southern place. The liminal space allowing interactions between what is formal and informal, legal and illegal, allowed or disallowed exists because the hegemonic power of a democratic modern state is diluted. This is unlike what has been more commonly presented and published about northern places. In part because of the privileged position the Western modernist ideal holds in knowledge production and more specifically in place theory. Power is framed through the lens of a hegemonic state that secures a bundle of rights around property ownership and privatization. I now turn to the place-scenarios.

5.3.1 Place-scenario 1: Operating from headquarters

At the northern end of Grant Avenue intersecting with Ivy Road and at the corner of Norwood Park, there are three informal trading stands that were erected by the City of Johannesburg (CoJ) years ago in an effort to support informal traders operating in certain parts of the city (see Figure 5.1 below). Although it is not the only location where informal trading occurs along Grant Avenue it is the only formally built structure. The traders who lease out the stands from the CoJ used to pay a monthly fee of R300 before the COVID-19 pandemic started (I. Osei, personal communication, October 22, 2020). Until this time

Isaac, the current trader, said he has not paid again. As these are the only government built, permanent trading stands in the whole of Norwood and situated at the tail-end of Grant Avenue, its location and singularity stand out. No other stands have been built along the section of Grant Avenue where all the shop fronts are, which is the busiest part of the commercial high-street. Other informal traders walk along the busiest section or situate themselves at the corner of a side street that runs perpendicular to Grant Avenue to attract customers. Even though, from observing foot traffic, it seems that informal traders would benefit from having stands built adjacent to other stores on Grant Avenue, it is not something that has been implemented. There is a power dynamic here that suggests that property owners, store front business owners and the municipality have the power to exclude informal traders from a specific space by objecting to and not building permanent structures for them or using signage to forbid trading/hawking (see Figure 5.4 below).

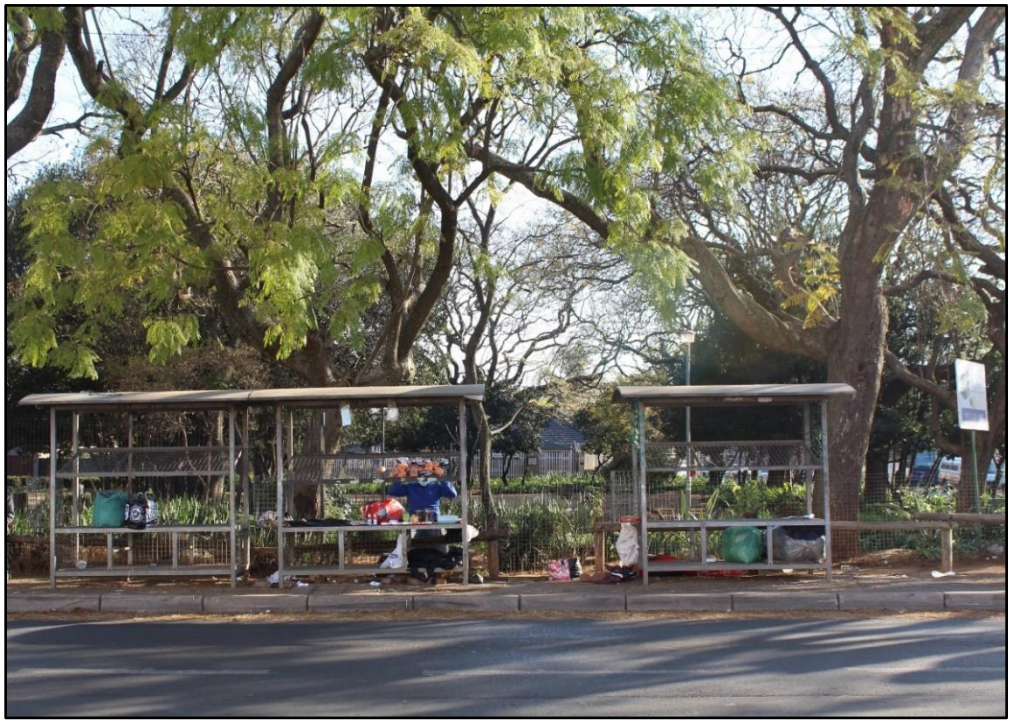


Figure 5.4: The formally built trading stands where Isaac works, with Norwood Park behind it (Photo by Le Roux, 2021)



Figure 5.5: No hawking sign to the left of the road place by the traffic department making informal trading illegal in this area (Photo by Le Roux, 2021).

Isaac is Ghanaian and has been living in South Africa since 2008 (I. Osei, personal communication, October 22, 2020). Prior to moving to Norwood he used to work in Johannesburg's Central Business District (CBD). He moved after receiving an offer from a fellow Ghanaian to take over the lease of the stands, since his friend was leaving the country (ibid). Isaac's original and unique trade is shoe repair, but he also sells a number goods ranging from sweets, cigarettes, peanuts, masks, second hand clothes and some illegal substances to make ends meet (ibid). He rents out one stand and sections of his stand that he doesn't use to other traders. This includes fresh produce traders that sell their goods at the small but busy intersection and along Grant Avenue. Besides

supporting the informal economy, trading stands act as a stabilizer to many workers and residents in the area. Even though Norwood only has this one location designated for three trading stands it creates a space of permanency that allows informal traders to develop staying power. Other informal traders that do not have stands have ascertained their own staying power in Norwood by situating themselves along Grant Avenue daily, but trading stands built by the municipality and approved by property owners, legitimizes the presence of an informal trader along legal terms. As I will explain, the permissions given by the state, and backed by private capital through private property ownership, reduces some but not all precariousness that come with working outdoors in public space.

Isaac had built up a large customer base that accommodates all income groups, from the residents living in and employees working in Norwood, to the rough sleepers, beggars and piece job workers who spend time around Norwood Park. As observed, the trading stands are a welcoming space for lower-income people who want to take their breaks chatting to others. Notably it is mostly black men who occupy this space. At time I did see a few black women sit in the park or trade using one of the stands, but they were largely outnumbered by the number of men that frequented the space. Though I do not specifically research the gendered negotiations involved in place-making, this imbalance in favor of male presence speaks to the exclusionary aspect of public space for women (Namaste, 1996; Ruddick, 1996).

As I spent time around Isaac and the other traders, I noticed the same people who I saw working along Grant Avenue frequenting this gathering spot. One such character was Solomzi, a car guard/street sweeper working at the intersection of Grant Avenue and Algernon Road, who began to notice my whereabouts too (as the only white female who

spends time at the trading stall I'm hard to miss). We soon began greeting each other and when he saw me walking in the direction of the trading stands, he would ask me "are you going to "headquarters" (K. Moloi, personal communication, July 12, 2021). I found this reference intriguing. A few times I had seen Solomzi drinking behind the stands and in his tipsy state he would start talking about politics and the state of the country; he would enquire about my work and go on to tell me his parents were teachers. He would also begin to revere Isaac, saying "he is like a father because he works so hard and he is strong and tough, so no one can mess with him" (K. Moloi, personal communication, July 12, 2021).

In conversations with Isaac I know that he is religious and he does not drink. His family lives in Kumasi, in Ghana, and he is responsible for supporting his wife and four children. He frequently sends remittances home to his family to help pay for school and living costs (I. Osei, personal communication, October 22, 2020). Isaac often complains of the ill-discipline of South Africans, mentioned how he's been bullied and stolen many times because he is a foreigner *(ibid.*). He complains about the "young boys" who steal from him, the "lazy" people who do not want to work and the corrupt police who do not make arrests (I. Osei, personal communication, December 06, 2020). In our conversations he often complains about "black people messing up Norwood Park". He repeatedly said "that before when the white people used the park it was nice and beautiful. Now it is dirty and the white people don't want to use it" (I. Osei, personal communication, December 06, 2020).

From our conversations and my observations, it is apparent that Isaac needs to negotiate his position on the street corner as a Ghanaian selling goods in public, where

he is always at risk of having his items stolen. Despite being given permission by the municipality and property owners of Norwood to occupy the legally approved trading stand, Isaac needs to negotiate his position to keep the stand by making enough sales. He also needs to manage intimidation “young boys” who bully and steal from him because he is an African foreign national. These young boys may cheat and steal from him, or they will burn items if he accidentally leaves them overnight. To manage the behaviors of antagonistic customers or passers-by, Isaac would give things away for free or allow a customer to take items on loan. Considering his numerous different customers Isaac has a tight grip on who owes him how much. At any given moment with an owing customer he can tally up the outstanding amount. In these cases, he has to manage any tensions that arise from him being assertive. At times he reprimands a customer that still owes him, takes without asking or in some cases messes with the layout of goods on his trading stand. When there was a contentious word exchange in my presence, it was quick and direct with Isaac having a scolding tone. Sometimes he remains calm and friendly but earnest; other times he sounds agitated and upset. He once explained to me that “I’ve learned over the years how to work with people who try to cheat or disrespect me”.

Isaac once showed me sachets of whiskey that he sources from Ghana and sells at the trading stand. This part of the business is illegal, hence its hidden from public view. The Public Open Spaces By-laws (2004a, p. 10) states that it is prohibited to “consume, brew, store or sell any alcoholic beverage” in a public open space. Rather than focus on the legality of certain activities, acknowledging that there are multiple orders (with their own moral codes) that exist in place, it foregrounds the negotiatory element that relational place-making calls for. Isaac justifies his sale of illegal substances as a means to make

a living by meeting a market demand (I. Osei, personal communication, December 06, 2020). His legal permission to occupy the trading stand is simultaneously set off by the permission of the niche and hidden market to sell alcohol sachets illegally. Isaac also randomly faces visits from the police who will ask him for his immigration documents and documents to legally occupy the trading stand. If he fails to present his papers, they will fine him or confiscate his goods. Despite various acts of discrimination and the careful management making legal and illegal sales, enough to hold his place at the trading stand, Isaac returning to work almost every day for 13 years. This speaks to the necessity of power in place to be valued by the staying power and negotiatory tactics of individuals who operate in the liminal space between various entities, each with their own political interests and positional power. A study in the Global South has used relational place-making to encourage a focus on local politics in the same place, as with the case of the relational dynamics between two Indian trawl fisheries of a similar caste ranking operating off Palk Bay in South Asia (Stephen, 2014).

The informal trading stand is representative of a set of logics that operates separately but in relation to Grant Avenue as a commercial high street designated largely for the middle/upper-income market to accommodate the surrounding suburbs. It is a stabilizing feature of Norwood with Isaac serving a diverse clientele - the affluent, the working class and the poor. He acts as a place-making agent for a diverse group of people in Norwood who rely on his skill as a shoemaker, his sales items, his reliable and paternal characteristics, and his ability to work with a loan system. Isaac's ability to negotiate his position within the precarious aspect of working in public space, and to operate an informal business selling some illegal products on a formally established trading stand,

demonstrates that permissions do not follow any one instituted code. Rather, they are allowances made by multiple entities as enactments of their power and political interest in place.

5.3.2 Place-scenario 2: The street ambassadors of Norwood

Wendy houses are the common security structures erected because they are movable and affordable. These are wooden structures that look like small houses with space inside, originally used to store garden equipment and placed in people's backyards. They became security posts for security guards to sit in on chairs and store a few items for their working hours (see Figure 1 below). One of the first security guards in Norwood who started working on Frances Road in 2000, said he was the first security guard to start working there and the wendy house was new at the time (B. Menziwa, personal communication, August 18, 2021). As with other suburbs in Johannesburg, the neighborhoods in my study area, namely Norwood, Cheltondale and Orchards, have a number of wendy house security posts on street corners or in the middle of a block. During lockdown a number of wendy houses stood empty with no security guards occupying them but from September 2020, after South Africa's intensive five-month lockdown most of the security posts have been filled again with security guards.

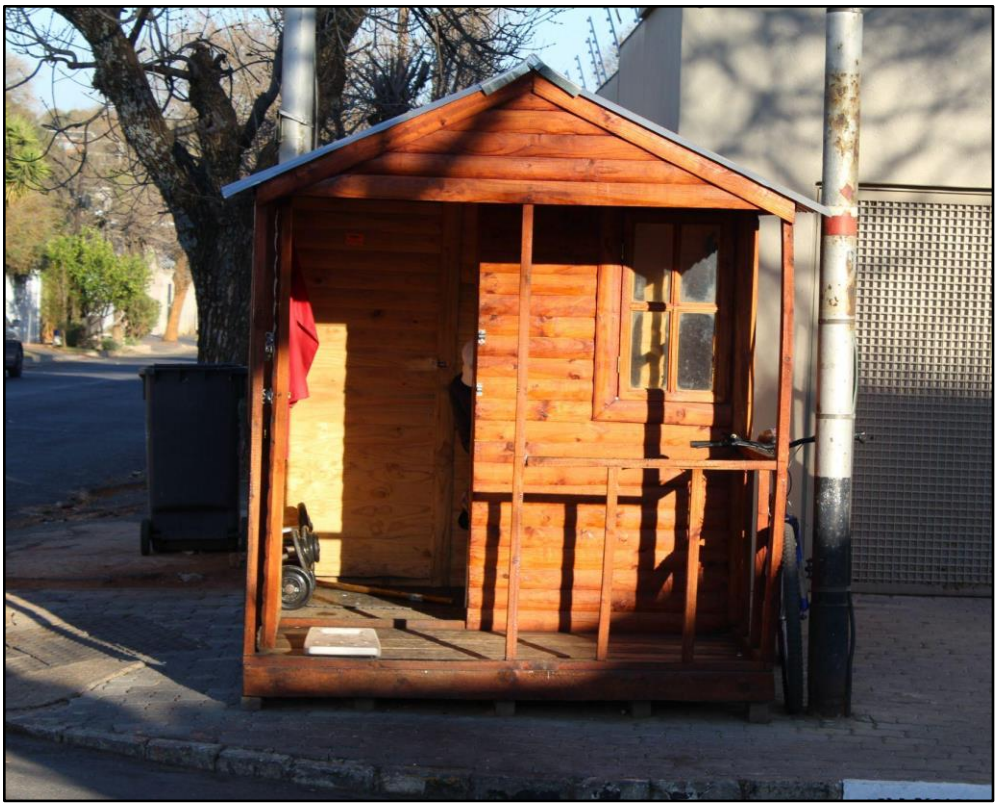


Figure 5.6: A typical wendy house on pavements along streets or on street corners for public space private security (Photo by Le Roux, 2021).

Over time it became clear that the security guards at these posts had a broader and more dynamic role to play than merely securing the streets and neighborhood. They were meeting points for friends and neighborhood work colleagues. What I mean here is that low-income earning workers in the neighborhood would become friends over time and they would meet at the wendy houses and socialize there. The security guards based at the posts were integral to these friendship circles. Security posts were also resting places and safe havens for rough sleepers overnight. Security guards I interviewed said the nights were generally quiet, but sometimes a homeless person asked to rest by the wendy house or waste pickers would start collecting waste from bins from 4am in the

morning. They may also see “young guys” they call “the nyaope[7] boys” roaming the streets looking for things they can take and sell for alcohol or drugs (D. Nkosi, personal communication, June 23, 2021).

In one of my interviews with Daniel (D. Nkosi, personal communication, June 23, 2021) he said “I’m a security guard but I’m more like a street ambassador. We have to work with a lot of people and we have to deal with all sorts of things”. Daniel explained that as security guards they are always outside in public, on the streets, they have a variety of different tasks to fulfill, even when it is beyond security. This includes being knowledgeable about what’s going on in the neighborhood, sourcing and offering information when needed, helping people with directions, keeping people company, helping them feel safe and assisting residents with miscellaneous tasks. Daniel says that it is not an easy job and one has to be able to relate well to people. In my observations residents of the area will walk past with their dogs and children, pass by jogging or walking for exercise, or drive by and greet the security guards. Besides me I only once observed a white female chatting to a security guard as if socializing with him. It would almost always be with other black people, despite the majority of residents being white and Indian staying for a while, chatting to the guards and whoever else was at the post at that time. All the security guards in the area are black men.

Security guards in wendy house security posts provide a sense of safety, guidance and belonging for residents, workers, rough sleepers and visitors to the area. While the initial aim was to have ‘eyes on the street’ these have also become a source for diverse social activity on suburban streets. This shows that their logics have changed over time

[7] Nyaope is a highly addictive street drug cocktail of ‘low-grade heroin, cannabis products, antiretroviral drugs and other materials acting as cutting agents’ (Mthembi et al., 2018).

and are somewhat different to how they were intended. Security posts are sites of permission as black people are now legally free to enter and socialize in any part of a South African city, even though they are under surveillance by the residential community. The state no longer spatially segregates racial and class groups by law, but residents of historically whites-only suburbs may be wary of the low-income black body occupying space in the neighborhood. In postapartheid South Africa, the power of race and class privilege is meant to be diminished through integrative modes of urbanization, but private security mechanisms still exclude and control behaviors of marginalized people. Through property rights and hiring private security companies, private capital enacts its power. And the state, through police assistance and enforcing land-use regulation when called upon to do so, support private capital. And yet, the practice of putting up wendy houses is an informal and illegal system, according to land use regulation. While I discuss further in the next chapter, this example of permissions demonstrates that power dynamics in a southern city does not escape the global capitalist system based off race and class discrimination and supported by private capital and at times the state. However, there are other power dynamics at play that are mobilized by entities through place-making practices that are less commonly researched in northern studies on place.

Security posts represent negotiated spaces, with security guards acting as ‘keepers of safety’. Even though they uphold the power of wary residents to maintain some surveillance and by extension control over who walks the streets around their homes, the security guards also “vet” the black bodies in their position as ‘street negotiators’. Daniel (D. Nkosi, personal communication, June 23, 2021) shared that when something they deem is ‘suspicious activity’ of someone or people in the street, or of

people in a car driving around or parked alongside the street, they alert the private security company of the neighborhood using a panic button. The private security company is the armed response to any suspected criminal activity and they will arrive at the scene to confront the suspect. Specifically, on Grant Avenue, security guards are hired to monitor the street and chase away anyone that looks suspicious or is creating a nuisance (Z. Karam, personal communication, July 18, 2021).

Security posts also reveal the plural logics of urban systems that operate simultaneously, from walking routes and pit stops, to outdoor job locations, information and meeting points, private security vehicle rounds, and may inform how criminals map their movements if they decide to act in the area. The trajectories of entities intersect at wendy houses and leverage the power they have to place-make. They also use one another's power to assert their own. For example, residents paying for private security have veto power over its existence, and security guards use this power to attain employment. Yet their positions on the street remain precarious. Although none of the security guards reported feeling unsafe doing their jobs, they are paid minimum wage without benefits and work twelve-hour shifts. Not all the security guards have undergone training either (M. Ndlovu, personal communication, August 17, 2021).

Still, security guards cultivate a sense of safety and security for the greater community. With security measures in place, affluent residents feel more at ease to walk around their neighborhood, to exit their homes with their cars and fall asleep knowing they have night-time eyes on the streets. In turn, the lower-income black body who might feel uncomfortable in exclusionary public spaces in affluent, previously whites-only suburban neighborhoods like Norwood, find connection with security guards who are themselves

black but have a legitimate presence as permitted by property owners. Pierce et al. (2011, p. 66) use place-frames to express the way entities perceive a situation from their political vantage points, and they may align themselves temporarily with entities that have compatible place-frames to assert a particular desire in place. In a similar way I interpreted the connection between lower-income/working class black individuals with security guards as leveraging the security guard's power for their own. At the same time, security guards use and maintain the power they are given by their employers to temporarily exclude others in public spaces. They use their own moral code and discretion of certain (mostly black) individuals to make a judgment call to assert their power.

5.3.3 Place-scenario 3: Rough-sleepers and the parks of Norwood

My study area consists of three prominent parks, namely Norwood Park, Paterson Park and Cheltondale Park. These parks are spaces for community gatherings, charity distribution, rest stops and lunch spots for employees working in the area, and as sleeping and social gathering spots for the homeless - otherwise known as rough sleepers[8]. This example demonstrates the way in which parks (and pavements to an extent) are protected by the surrounding affluent residents of Norwood and surrounds. They use their position as property owners and permanent residents to physically exclude and control behaviors of rough sleepers and other unwanted users from the parks. The permanency I refer to here is not with regards to how long residents have continuously lived in Norwood, but rather that they reside in a house, a permanent and formally built structure.

[8] Recent research has shown that some people who sleep in parks or on pavements along streets and shop-fronts in Johannesburg have better quality homes elsewhere, but they are too far to go to every night as many rough sleepers work in the inner city (Perlman and Charlton, 05/17/2021).

I make this point to highlight that some rough sleepers can spend years in the same place and can technically also be considered permanent residents, albeit they sleep in temporary or impermanent structures, or have no form of shelter. I pay special attention to Paterson Park as it is located in between middle-income neighborhood Norwood and low-middle income neighborhood Orange Grove.

Rough sleepers refer to those who sleep outside in public spaces. In my case, they include people who are substance-users involved in petty crimes; the elderly and those physically and/or mentally unable to work. They are also car guards, construction workers, gardeners, artisans and informal traders, waste-pickers and sex workers unable to afford a home to sleep in. It is common for one person to dabble in more than one type of work or trade in order to get by. Some make the choice to send remittances to their families in rural areas, sacrificing a place where they'd have to pay rent. Rough sleepers I encountered in my study do not only sleep in the parks, but they also sleep on pavements along buildings or under the shelter of a bus stop. I found that some sleep in small groups of four to ten people, depending on available space, others will sleep in isolation. These decisions are made around safety and association. They may be a group of young men that have become friends, or they might be a couple. Rough sleepers are mostly black, but there are a few white and Coloured[9] people too. Others are from other African countries. The distinctions in their race, gender, ethnicity and dominant occupation also impacts who they associate with as their personal safety depends on it.

[9] Coloured people in South Africa are a separate racial group as captured in the census data. In South Africa, being Coloured is an identity construct that Coloured people use to distinguish themselves as racially, culturally and politically. It is not considered a derogatory term in South Africa.

The political positionality of individuals forms part of a network of rough sleepers that occupy Norwood.

Neighborhood Watch groups that monitor activity in public space at night will investigate what rough sleepers and others who are outside after dark are doing if they are suspicious or concerned. In June 2021 I accompanied and assisted an outreach programme of NOAH CAN who had blankets, bedrolls and pillows made from recycled material by school children, to distribute to rough sleepers that sleep outside in Norwood, Orange Grove, Highlands North and Cheltondale. This was to aid with the cold winter nights. One member of the Norwood Neighborhood Watch joined us because a lead member of NOAH CAN felt this man (white) would be able to protect us as two females (also white) in case anyone outside (in the dark) wanted to harm us. During this outreach, Angelo explained that he did not want to help some rough sleepers who do not behave in accordance with his and the Neighborhood Watch group's principles (Fieldwork notes, 06/30/2021). This behavior included using cannabis, nyaope (a common South African street drug) and other drugs. He also explained that two white rough sleeping men were seen and heard having sex out in the open, in public space along Louis Botha Drive. Both behaviors were clearly unacceptable to Angelo and his approval of rough sleepers' behaviors determined their access to resources distribution.

Residents and business owners have complained about the behavior of the low-income place-makers, such as rough sleepers and other dwellers (loiterers) that use public spaces like parks, sidewalks and the streets for informal trading, gambling, substance-use, socializing and resting (Facebook Love Norwood, retrieved October 25, 2021; A. Costoglou, personal communication, September 7, 2021). These complaints are

made on public virtual sites like Love Norwood and more private sites like community WhatsApp groups, mostly accessed by higher-income earners.

In the daytime parks are used by residents for exercise, either as part of walking routes or in the case of Paterson Park and Cheltondale Park, using the outside gyms. Employees that travel from other parts of the city walk through Cheltondale Park and Paterson Park when they're dropped off on Louis Botha Avenue and work in suburban houses, or on Grant Avenue or at Norwood Mall. However, Paterson Park is fenced off so more people will use the adjacent roads rather than the park to walk through. There are also many Jewish people that live in the area who, on the Sabbath, walk through the parks. Cheltondale Park and Paterson Park both have playgrounds where children play and Norwood Park has a public toilet open from 8am - 6pm daily (G. Twala, personal communication, August 19, 2021). Paterson Park and Cheltondale have marshy areas either with small water basins or streams. Rough sleepers use these water sources to bathe and wash their clothes.

Residents of the study area have organized a number of events and projects to maintain the parks. Residents' associations raise money to cut the grass, hire gardeners for upkeep of the flowers and plants, clean the parks of litter and other rubbish. This is done in addition to what the City Parks and Zoos department does for the upkeep of the parks (A. Roji, personal communication, September 9, 2021). Residents' associations have also raised funds to put up fencing around the parks or in the case of Paterson Park, collaborated with government institutions (Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo) to hire a landscape architect and redesign the entire park (KH Landscape Architects, accessed 10/25/2021). In 2018 a local neighborhood organization called Love Norwood hosted a

Love Norwood Day with a neighborhood market and family entertainment (Facebook: Love Norwood, accessed 10/25/2021). It is also routine for residents and business owners to call the police to chase away people considered to be a nuisance, such as rough sleepers and so-called loiterers spending too much time or squatting in and creating a mess in the parks with all their possessions and waste (Facebook: Love Norwood, accessed 10/25/2021). As a tactic to keep such people out, the police will confiscate and/or burn their possessions. Norwood's Neighborhood Watch, a volunteer group of residents patrolling the streets at night, keep an eye on the activities of rough sleepers and so-called loiterers will notify the police if they wish to intervene (A. Costoglou, personal communication, September 07, 2021).

Paterson Park is situated between Orange Grove and Norwood. To the east and west, it borders houses of both Norwood and Orange Grove, as well as having an entrance to a municipal bus depot on the Orange Grove side. The south side of the park has an entrance opposite the Norwood Police Station, and a newly built community center and sports facility. This is along Iris Road. On the north side, the park borders Ivy Road, along with where houses are built opposite the road. The Grant Avenue Precinct Plan (CoJ, 2016b) showed that Ivy Road and Iris Road have the most foot traffic from Louis Botha Avenue to Grant Avenue, as workers from all over the city enter Norwood and surrounding neighborhoods for work. Despite the park having been recently revitalized through landscape architecture for the benefit of the general public, it is rarely visited by surrounding residents. Except for the north end of the park which is still under construction the rest of the park has been gated with green and black palisade fencing. Access to the park is typically limited to daylight hours and is dependent on who has access to the

various car and pedestrian gates. However rough sleepers have found a way to access the park and have either attempted to sleep in it at night until the police chase them away, or actually do find a way to sleep over (J. Dumisani, personal communication, June 13, 2021)

Prior to the hard COVID-lockdown in South Africa at the start of my fieldwork, I frequented the park to use the outside gym and observe activities in the park for research interest. When I visited it five months later when the lockdown levels reduced from Level 5 to Level 2, the upkeep of the park had deteriorated, and the built infrastructure had been appropriated for other uses. Another term for this, where reference is made to the destruction of the urban commons, is vandalism. Changes to the park included that the top, approximately 30cm of some of the steel bars that act as railing, on either side of the footbridges crossing over the small river (vlei), had been ground off (see Figure 2 below). Sections of a metal information banner explaining the nature conversation of the park were cut out. Though I was unable to ask those that did this, through conversations with long-time local resident of Orange Grove, David, I gathered that people would take any copper wires or metal they can find and take it to the local scrapyard shop on Louis Botha Drive (D. Nhlapho, personal communication, October 17, 2020).



Figure 5.7: Steel bars of railing for the foot bridge crossing a small river (vlei) of Paterson Park welded off and sold to local metal scrapyard (Photo by Le Roux, 2021).

Furthermore, off-cut water pipes discarded or unutilized after construction in the area were appropriated for housing by homeless individuals sleeping in the park (see Figure 3 below). Other rough sleepers who erect temporary shelters either relocate by choice or as mentioned previously get chased away by the police. Piles of burnt items I saw indicated that the police confiscated and burnt their belongings and chased the rough sleepers away. Some people also wash themselves and their clothes in the water stream that runs through Paterson Park (Fieldwork notes, 12/11/2020).



Figure 5.8: Off-cut waterpipes discarded and unutilized after construction were reappropriated for housing by homeless individuals sleeping in Paterson Park (Photo by Le Roux, 2021).

There are multiple ways in which parks are used and expected to be used by different entities. The Public Open Spaces By-law (CoJ, 2004a, p. 9) sets out criteria for “prohibited activities” which includes not being allowed to: Bathe or wash any objects like clothes in any body of water; “camp or reside” in the park; consume or sell any alcohol; hawking, displaying and selling any goods; pollute or deposit any waste except in designated rubbish bins; and damage any property in the public open space. These are all activities I observed in the parks. Most of these were conducted by rough sleepers and low-income earning people monitored by residents and the police, largely as unwanted users of the parks. But the by-law (CoJ, 2004a) also prohibits activities commonly undertaken by more affluent people using parks for recreation, such as playing music from a stereo, playing active games and walking dogs without leashes in areas not designated for dogs. All the activities given above, practiced by a diverse group of people holding different positions and levels of power in Norwood, are permitted with the general

lack of by-law enforcement. It is this absence of the state that give room for permissions in place to develop.

While there are by-laws and legal systems in place for structures like residents' associations to control how public space is used and developed; there are everyday practices and uses of the space that go against laws and preferred behavior (City of Johannesburg, 2004a). The question here is, preferred by whom? A group called Love Norwood has a website (https://www.lovenorwood.com/) and Facebook page (Facebook: Love Norwood, accessed 04/25/2020) where residents share information, complain or praise certain activities and behaviors occurring in the neighborhood. With the assistance of the local police at times, or more conveniently private security, as well as with the backing of by-laws, residents are able to intervene when they choose. For example, the CoJ may also enter into 'co-operative agreement with...any organ of State, local community or organization' to aid with development and management of, and 'the regulation of human activities within a public open space' (City of Johannesburg, 2004a, p. 12). This includes residents' associations of neighborhoods that consist largely of property owners who, amongst other things, care to protect their financial assets. Assisting the CoJ or JCPZ with the maintenance and management of public space forms part of this endeavor (A. Roji, personal communication, September 9, 2021). In Norwood, this gives the affluent residents power to develop, manage and control behavior in public spaces, using private resources they have at their disposal to do so.

However, I noticed that things still happen that I would assume residents do not approve of, such as appropriation of urban infrastructure or using the river water for bathing. Neighborhood watch groups that make use of volunteer residents to monitor the

streets and public spaces for any vandalism/appropriation or criminalized activity, may not chase away or restrict the behavior of rough sleepers (Love Norwood, accessed 04/25/2020). When something disapproved of happens it is likely because it could not be prevented (i.e., it happened when no one was looking) and no intervention could be made at the time it happened (Fieldwork notes, 12/11/2020). It is in these cases that tensions and frustrations around rough sleepers seem to arise. That is, certain behaviors are deemed inappropriate, making them unwanted and where possible residents find ways to exclude them from the parks. One way of doing this was erecting palisade fences along the perimeters of some parks and while it is not legal to restrict access to public amenities such as parks, the monitoring and disapproval of behaviors of rough sleepers, make it permissible for residents to erect a fence that excludes rough sleepers and other unwanted people. We see that the liminal space in which permissions exist can be optimized by anyone who wants to enact the power in place.

Only activities conducted by rough sleepers and low-income dwellers are intentionally monitored and forcefully restricted by residents, who raise money to fence off the parks, and the police who confiscate goods or burn property, and chase away rough sleepers. While the power of law enforcement by the state and the financial means of property owners clearly enact biased interests in how parks should be used, the irregularity of the enforcement allows for another dimension of power to arise. This is the power of relational place-making through daily occupation of the parks and ongoing repurposing of public infrastructure. Rough sleepers and low-income earning people who, day-in and day-out, sit and socialize in the parks, sleep in discarded water pipes, bathe and wash clothes in the water bodies, or secretly weld off iron rods from the bridge railing to sell to the local

metal scrap shops. Permissions are established through ordinary, everyday practices and the ongoing occupation of space and claiming public infrastructure. Police are unable to or disinterested in patrolling public spaces for violations of the law and tend to do so when triggered by complaints from affluent or influential residents or incentivized by other means. Place-making here seems to be characterized more by staying power, that is the consistent everyday making of a place, than by an established written code of laws and regulations upheld by the state and a critical mass of law-abiding city-dwellers.

It is also true that control can be asserted in a moment by entities more powerful than the marginalized people of my research, and the impact of this assertion can be severe and devastating for them. Power is evidently a complex dimension of relational place-making to unpack analytically. As mentioned before, the weighting of power held by an entity is determined temporally (e.g., staying power), politically (e.g., socio-political position by race, class, gender etc.) and against values ascertained through governance regimes (e.g. fairness and equality in democracy). Certainly, the weighting of power in this way is not exclusive to entities that place-make in southern cities. Following the teachings of southern scholars like Comaroff and Comaroff (2012) and Connell (2007) who call for theorization from the south, I suggest instead that expanding on place theory from the perspective of a southern place may open us to configurations of place not yet explored.

5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I present the empirical findings of ethnographic study on place-making in Norwood, Johannesburg that is augmented by interviews with planning professionals

and a member of the Norwood Neighborhood Watch. Strategically, I use the work of postcolonial and southern urban scholars to go through a process of theory unbundling that enabled me to provincialize relational place-making (Lawhon and Truelove, 2020). Relational place-making is a northern-derived analytical framework to understand how places are made (Pierce et al, 2011). More concretely, through my grounded theory approach. I use desktop research, participatory observations and conversations with my participants to identify three place-scenarios in Norwood to study more in-depth. I also revise my research questions and develop categories of inquiry from them to analyze my findings.

My findings from researching place-scenarios first identify some key place-making practices and behaviors of marginalized people, which include livelihood strategies. I center my research around informal traders, rough sleepers and black workers in my place-scenarios. However, to understand the relational connections between various entities that influence place-making, I also discuss practices and behaviors of security guards, affluent residents, resident or community organizations, the police and the municipality. In my discussion I explain the logics behind activities and behaviors I observe and learn during my fieldwork to help make sense of them as place-making practices specific to Norwood. Activities include, for instance, the erection of palisade fences and wendy houses; appropriation of urban infrastructure like using discarded water pipes for housing or welding off steel bars for scrap metal; selling goods outside and informally or sleeping in parks and on pavements.

In analyzing the political, economic and spatial conditions under which place-making practices are enacted in Norwood, I use the southern concept permissions. This explains

the liminal arena in which activities and behaviors with their associated political interests and power dynamics, manifest. I expand my definition of place in Chapter 2 section 2.7.2.2 but for the purpose of this discussion, I reiterate that permissions can also be understood as enactments of power in place. Permissions is an entry point into my deliberation over power as a key dimension of northern-derived relational place theory that I argue changes the epistemological framing of power. I focus this discussion around democracy and entity-weighting to argue that the existence of plural logics in place and the dilution of state power also challenges the assumptions that values enshrined by a democracy are upheld. These values are not only around fairness and equality to share public resources (Watson, 2009), but also regarding the bundle of rights for private property upheld by a modern democratic state (Lawhon et al, 2018; Pierce and Williams, 2016).

My observations and interviews revealed that many people regularly break by-laws instituted by the City of Johannesburg. Their interests in using public open spaces are very different in how the state expects them to be used. On one hand, officials I interviewed explained their views on how parks should be safe and inclusive places for everyone and called for a change in the by-law. Yet, while the official and political rhetoric of the postapartheid South African government is that the city must be accessible to all citizens of a fair and equal democracy. Power is enacted spatially in the form of permissions which operate between official and unofficial, legal and illegal, formal and informal urban systems.

With private security and surveillance managed by the resident and business community, the balance of power is in favor of this community when they can pool private

resources together to monitor, respond, reward and punish according to what they determine is appropriate behavior and activity in public space. However, the capacity of the state and private resources to control certain behaviors is also limited in the Norwood context. Having sex, using narcotic substances, fighting, littering, vandalizing and stealing, urinating on trees and walls cannot easily be prevented because they sometimes occur quickly, frequently and often out of plain sight. Even when activities and behaviors are not physically hidden (e.g., behind a tree or wall), the streets are empty enough for people to conduct these activities in plain sight. Activities such as these are not unique to a southern place but framing them as place-making practices in tension with more privileged practices (e.g., walking a dog versus bathing in the river), allows scholars to consider people and power dynamics that have been given less attention in extant place theory.

Chapter 6. Claiming public space: From permissions to the exclusive use of space.

Anecdote

Themba[10] and Sifiso are two fruit and vegetable traders that work at the busy intersection of Grant Avenue and Ivy Road in Norwood. In an interview with Themba (T. Dlamini, personal communication, March 7, 2021) he explained to me that they form part of a group of traders who buy fresh produce in Marabastad in Pretoria, the neighboring city to Johannesburg, and travel to Norwood and surrounding affluent neighborhoods to sell their goods at traffic lights of busy intersections. To save on transport costs these traders collectively pay a driver to transport them and their produce most days of the week to their designated selling points.

Themba and Sifiso are dependent on the waiting period between changing traffic lights to run their business. While drivers are waiting for the lights to change, Themba and Sifiso walk to each driver's window, offering their goods for purchase. While observing Themba and Sifiso, I also noticed that there are two or three other men that sometimes occupy the other traffic lights of the four-way intersection. These men were beggars asking for money or food, or they sold other items like license disc holders, key holders or kids toys. They were less consistent than Themba and Sifiso in occupying the road.

This anecdote is representative of a country-wide phenomenon in South Africa that intersections are, in general, prime locations for informal traders and beggars to generate their livelihoods. Phrased differently, intersections are public spaces that are claimed for

[10]All participants, except town planners and members of organizations, that are named in this article were given pseudonyms to protect their identity.

private gain by individuals or a syndicate with a common interest to source food or earn an income. Working at intersections is a place-making practice based on the need to make a living. It is a precarious act to be standing at a busy intersection between vehicles that consistently stop and go, sometimes at speed. Still, it is noteworthy that a practice like this creates an exclusive use of public space. For personal safety it is not legal for pedestrians to step into roads not allocated for pedestrian crossing. However, in South Africa this practice is permitted as traffic regulations go unenforced and with a constrained formal economy many people source livelihoods informally and in unlawful, precarious ways. Intersections, such as in Norwood, have become public spaces of relational place-making as people with varying needs and political identities interact with the flow of traffic.

6.1 Introduction: A conceptual shift in public space from understanding how a southern place is made.

Public spaces in African cities have become a subject of interest by global institutions like the United Nations that are invested in creating “inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” space (Goal 11 of the Sustainable Development Goals, 2021). The redesign of public spaces has, in recent years, also become central to urban research and city development in South Africa (National Development Planning Commission, 2011). Yet, what types of spaces are genuinely public; how are such spaces made; and who is and is not permitted to do what in these spaces, remains the subject of much debate as I discuss in Chapter 2 section 2.7.2.1. I outline this discussion, in relation to some of the findings of my research next.

Much of the literature on public space assumes a level of regulation and a generally accepted structure of governance by society that prescribes the way public space ought

to be used. Directly or indirectly, governing entities and their associated regulatory measures also determine who can use various kinds of public spaces (Blomley, 2012; Qian, 2014). However, my data collection in Johannesburg shows that public space is used differently to how it is intended by institutionalized regulatory systems and neighborhood management bodies. In many instances, these alternative uses result in an exclusive claim to public space for private gain.

My findings show that people and other entities operate within an urban system that allows for rules to be broken for a set of logics not often documented in literature or considered by formal governance structures. I therefore argue that what public space is and how it ought to be used, should not be assumed. Some southern scholars have researched the multiple ways in which public space is used and the assertion of creating disorder as a means to protest against discriminatory systems of exclusion from public (Houssay-Holzschuch and Thébault, 2017). However as stated by Qian (2020 and 2014) who and what forms part of 'the public' and how public space becomes privatized remains unclear in cities of the Global South.

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. Through my empirical research, the first is to identify entities in Norwood that use public space for place-making and examine the actions, behaviors and logics behind these practices. Again I focus my attention on marginalized individuals but study the practices and logics of more privileged entities in relation to how they impact the marginalized. In researching public space in a Global South city from a southern urban theoretical perspective I query the conceptual roots of public space in dominant northern literature. I pay special attention to scholars that have theorized about public space in a Global South context and leaned into discourse on

power and political relations of place that threaten the intended sharing of public space. The second is therefore to examine the occupation of public space empirically and analytically as ways to achieve spatial justice or to assert power.

In my analysis I make use of relational place theory and how it could be mobilized responsibly in Norwood, from the viewpoint of postcolonial and southern urban theory. I make use of permissions as a concept that explicitly considers urban phenomena like the transgression of by-laws that result in the exclusive use of public space. Through the study of three place-scenarios I show that these entities are differently empowered and claim public space reasons such as protecting personal property or attaining livelihoods. The theoretical intervention and empirical evidence of this dissertation offers a critique on normative RttC discourse and claims to space that is often perceived through a singular spatial justice lens. It contends that permissions need to be considered when place theory and relational place-making travels south.

6.2 Findings and analysis of place-scenarios

This section analyzes three place-scenarios of claims of public space that results in excluding others from using that space: car guards claiming parking bays; businesses claiming streets by placing security guards on sidewalks outside their shops; and residential property owners claiming the sidewalks by erecting wendy houses on street corners. Such activities are only useful if conducted in public and it is the actions of others in public that prompt such activities. These scenarios also show the way in which permissions manifest power of differently empowered people. Business- and homeowners assert their power differently than car guards do and though it is evident

that car guards and security guards are economically marginalized, they can successfully make claims that business- and property-owners could not. In this context, I describe what follows as the exclusive use of public space, for the benefit of private use or for private gains through transgressing some rules and norms and acquiring permissions in place.

6.2.1 Place-scenario 4: Car guards and the street politics to claiming public space

Grant Avenue, the high street of Norwood, is the only street with street front businesses. These businesses include restaurants, grocery stores, hairdressers, laundromats, electronics, household and hardware products and niche outlets for solar equipment, filtered water, antiques and boutique clothing stores. The top end of the side streets that connect to Norwood also have businesses, but these are specialized such as medical services, photography and catering. These businesses have either converted residential homes to home offices, or form part of an office block. This differs from the building design of Grant Avenue, as shops form part of multi-storey mixed-use buildings where the top floors are residential apartments or businesses. This mixed activity reflects the busyness of Grant Avenue and the range of activity that attract customers, workers, business and property owners, and residents.

Grant Avenue experiences both a lot of foot and car traffic. Drivers often arrive on the street and park, stop briefly to run an errand or spend a few hours dining at a restaurant or stay the whole day to work. For car guards, the parking bays along Grant Avenue and adjacent streets are prime real estate. Car guards are mostly black, low-income earning men that are, largely, self-employed and have taken up the initiative to earn a living by

guarding cars. Car guards who were consistently in the same space reported that they had claimed the parking bays in that section of the street for between five and fifteen years (Fieldwork notes, 06/30/2021). Self-appointed car guards take control of the legal and illegal parking bays: they signal to drivers who are passing by that there is an available space to park their car. When a driver decides to take the available space, a car guard often helps them enter and leave the parking space. Once a car parks and the driver steps out, the car guard will tell the driver that they will watch their car and at times asks whether they can wash their car. At this point the driver will either ignore the car guard or accept their services. Upon the driver's return the car guard is ready to assist the driver maneuver their car out of the parking space to leave; a payment is expected for these services.

Interactions between the driver and the car guard can either flow smoothly or contentiously (Fieldwork notes, 06/30/2021). This depends on the levels of insistence by the car guard for the driver to park in the space that they have taken control of, and their negotiation with the driver to offer various services ranging from parking, washing and watching the car, and assisting with putting groceries in the boot. It simultaneously depends on the driver's willingness to accept the services on offer and to engage with the car guard. This willingness on the part of the driver depends on a number of factors. How long they intend to stay; how dangerous they perceive the vicinity to be; how difficult it is to find parking; if they have enough cash/small change on hand to give; the attitude of the car guard and if they feel inherently obligated to employ the car guard. During the exchange the drivers are the customers and have the power to accept the service and pay the car guard or not. There is no law that obligates them to pay car guards. Car

guards are usually in precarious positions with limited other employment options and some are rough sleepers.

However, car guards have some agency, using their right in the new democratic and non-racial South Africa to access the historically whites-only suburbs freely. They also use the national concern, fears and experiences with crime to sell their services to keep cars safe; as well as the collective movement of car guards in cities across the country to justify it as an ordinary and legitimate form of employment. Drivers do regularly pay for these services, demonstrating tacit understanding and acceptance of the car guards' claims to space.

Yet, such activities must also be understood as transgressions. The Public Road and Miscellaneous By-laws (City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality, 2004b, p. 5-6) state that loitering and car guarding by touting or solicitation is illegal unless permission from Council is provided. Further, many of the places that car guards point drivers to are not legal parking spaces: they are sidewalks or have "no stopping" traffic signs. There is an ad hoc traffic police presence along Grant Avenue and its adjacent side streets that may ticket cars parking in illegal spaces (see Figure 4 below). However, enforcement is not regular and there appears to be a general sense that this does not deter car guards from illegal solicitation or drivers from parking unlawfully.

Disagreements occur when car guards disagree who can claim a parking space, when there are disagreements over the shift schedule per parking space, or when a car guard accepts a tip from a driver that is not their allotted parking space (Fieldwork notes, 04/16/2020). As one car guard explained, "I come here in the afternoon around 2pm for the late shift, until the shops close at 9pm. Others will come in the morning for the morning

shift. You must make sure you arrive on time so you can get your parking spots and make sure no other guy takes them" (S. Ledwaba, personal communication, April 16, 2020). When I asked why the car guards sometimes fight, he said "you see, sometimes the guys are taking other guys' tips from their parking spots, and they get very angry and fight. So, you have to always know what's happening in your spots. It's very tough" (*ibid.*).

Another car guard, Mangaliso Nwgenya (personal communication, August 17, 2021), shared with me that he's been working the same street segment of Grant Avenue for eight years. Depending on where along Grant Avenue car guards situate themselves, they will get more drivers frequenting the shops nearby, with a quick changeover of customers to earn more money (i.e. a grocery store has a quicker changeover period of customers than a restaurant). However, the more popular street segments with more parking bays are also more competitive with more tension and fighting between car guards taking place (Fieldwork notes, 06/30/2021).



Figure 6.1: Traffic policeman ticketing illegally parked cars on Grant Ave (Facebook: Love Norwood, 2021).

Shopkeepers at times work with the car guards in front of their shops to assure that their customers and their cars are looked after. Some shopkeepers pay car guards a small fee or give them food in exchange for sweeping the pavement in front of their shop, as is the case with Jackson Dumisani. However, at times shopkeepers may get frustrated with car guards that fight amongst each other, especially when customers are entangled in the tension. Some car guards have built a rapport with shopkeepers and building owners overtime. They agree to keep the street clean, keep their belongings against a building wall clear of foot traffic, or in a pot plant near their public workspace. They also sit on paint buckets or plastic garden chairs when they need to rest. This reduces tensions, as shopkeepers report becoming frustrated with certain car guards.

People, and particularly men who appear to be low-income and non-white, need to prove that they are responsible, reliable and socially acceptable to be able to occupy and work in public space. Otherwise, they may be chased away by business owners and security guards that monitor the streets. They need to consistently be present and maintain fairly routine hours of occupying a specific public space in order to claim it as their space to earn money, such that they are not perceived as less desirable loiterers. The negotiatory tactics required to claim public space for private gain reveal that (despite the suggestion from Figure 4) laws are rarely or randomly enforced, prioritizing permissions instead to get things done and place-make. Having mutualistic relationships with those with legal rights matters, but so too does, being present, relatable and at times defending one's turf. Together, these examples show how claims to space are negotiated to enable parking and car guarding as notable place-making practices.

6.2.2 Place-scenario 5: Securing public space

Private securitization of property is common practice in South Africa. Homes in Norwood are typically heavily secured with alarm systems, high walls and fencing that can range from spiked palisade, electric and/or barbed wire (see Figure 5 below). Dogs, cameras and sensors are also used on some properties, with the cameras used as surveillance in front of the driveways or along the outside boundaries of the property.



Figure 6.2: Typical suburban street in Norwood, with walls and electric fencing to secure houses (Photo by Le Roux, 2021).

Communal forms of private security are also instituted. This includes street security with security guards sitting in wendy houses on sidewalks, monitoring street activity. They walk up and down the streets that form part of their designated watch area, and they watch over residents who arrive home and are waiting for their garage doors to open and close as they enter their properties and park their vehicles (Fieldwork notes, 12/11/2020). Whole neighborhoods are also sometimes cordoned-off with palisade fences and/or boom gates at entry points to the neighborhood from main access routes (see Figure 6 below).

There are both mild and intensive levels of security that operate in cities, depending on the variety of demands. Private security companies are hired both to station security guards at specific physical locations and have large vehicles that drive along certain roads where they have been appointed to monitor street activity and answer alarm calls from properties. The security guards in these vehicles are usually armed with weapons and drive slowly (approx. 12 miles per hour) unless they are chasing a potential criminal situation (Fieldwork notes, 12/11/2020). This private security is hired as a quicker armed response to that of the South African Police Service (SAPS). Generally, the South African public do not trust that the police will arrive at a dangerous scene quickly enough and believe that they will handle a situation ineffectively and in corrupt ways (Egwu, 2021; Mabasa and Olutola, 2021).

The private security industry in South Africa has grown significantly in recent years (Diphoorn, 2016). When security companies respond to calls of criminal activity, they are known to be brutal when they capture the suspect. Ruth, a domestic worker living in Norwood, retold the story of two men that were caught next door to where she lives trying to steal a car parked on the street outside the house (R. Mthembu, personal communication, April 16, 2021). She explained that the security guards beat the men so bad they could hardly stand up anymore. These companies work with the police when necessary, handing the suspect over to them once caught by the security guards (A. Costoglou, personal communication, September 7, 2021). Wendy house security guards that monitor the streets are not allowed to carry any weapons. They have panic buttons that they press, which alert private security companies and their bosses (the residents of

the houses), of any suspicious or criminal activity (D. Nkosi, personal communication, June 23, 2021).

On Grant Avenue, businesses hire security guards independently or collectively appoint a security company to monitor their section of the street, or the block where the businesses are located. In the first few months of my observational research along Grant Avenue, I noticed two young men with whips walking up and down Grant Avenue (Fieldwork notes, December 11, 2020). There are security guards posted at the entrance of the Spar (a prime grocery store in Norwood) and at two street corners in the middle of the commercial strip along Grant Avenue. While most have visible uniforms, the latter do not; even though I had walked up and down the street for over a year I only became aware of their role as security guards once I was told by a shopkeeper whose business is on the same block (Fieldwork notes, December 11, 2020). These guards blend in with the crowd and their role is to monitor the street for any 'unsavory-looking characters' and chase them away.

Shopkeepers and business owners I have spoken to say that hiring security can maintain order along Grant Avenue, getting rid of people that 'make their customers feel uncomfortable' and make the pavements look dirty (D. Mutsipa, personal communication, May 24, 2021). It was unclear whether they meant these people are dirty or whether they litter but it was something they were unhappy with. I was also told by Dakarai (D. Mutsipa, personal communication, May 24, 2021) that businesses located next to each other will sometimes partner to appoint a security company to manage their block or section of the street.

The most recent public space surveillance present in Norwood are cameras that have been put on poles on street corners to film street activity (see Figure 6 below). While by-laws discuss restrictions on securing property with walls and fences (City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality, 2004b), with infrastructure facing sidewalks not allowing barbed or electric wire or walls with spikes and other sharp protrusions to obstruct or endanger pedestrians, little has been instituted regarding surveillance of public spaces and behaviors of private security guards (Basimanyane and Ghandi, 2019). For as long as there are no regulations put in place by the state on camera surveillance of public space, security companies will enact permissions to gain private benefit on the exclusive use of street corners. Of course, even if laws and regulations are established, their enforcement is not standard practice and private companies may still have the ability to claim this public space and public surveillance footage.



Figure 6.3: Security cameras on poles on street corners installed to capture footage of public space activity (Photo by Le Roux, 2021).

The various methods for securing private property that are mentioned in these examples all encroach on public space. The entities that have installed surveillance cameras, boom gates, wendy houses and that have employed security guards to monitor the streets are claiming public space for their exclusive use. With regards to the surveillance cameras, this includes occupying airspace. These methods of security move between regulatory systems of the law, such as by-laws, and unregulated or unlawful practices - rendering them permissions. In this case, however, the methods are not hidden or happen quickly. They are in plain sight and a constant, permanent feature of the affluent suburbs in Johannesburg. This visibility is not only telling of the power that residents, security companies and neighborhood associations hold. It also shows that permissions such as these (those that claim public space for the exclusive use of securing private property) are privileged above marginalized people that equally claim public space for private gain.

6.2.3 Place Scenario 6: Private street security claiming sidewalks

Wendy houses are typical security structures that are erected on the sidewalks, either on street corners or in front of houses. If they are placed in front of a house, it is often in the middle of the block to allow the security guard to easily monitor the whole street. Because wendy houses are affordable and movable they can easily be removed. However, as confirmed by one of the first security guards in Norwood who started working on Frances Road in 2000, he had been in the same wendy house since he began (B. Menziwa, personal communication, August 18, 2021).

The legality of the wendy houses are important to consider here. These units occupy the servitude between the residential properties and the street. This space is

owned by the state and may not be built on because this is where the water and sewage pipes and the electrical cables are situated (D. Weakley, personal communication, August 12, 2021). Homeowners will often decorate with landscaping and greening, and such activities are permitted as long as permanent structures are not built in the servitude that will make it difficult for the CoJ to access the pipes and cables. In an interview with CoJ official, Dylan Weakley (personal communication, August 12, 2021), he said that although it is unsafe and therefore unlawful for security guards to be in wendy houses, working permanently in the servitude under the electric cables and above water pipes, there has been little to no objection to erecting these security posts (D. Weakley, personal communication, August 12, 2021).

It is not uncommon for land use regulations such as these to go unenforced in South African cities, unless neighbors or residents of a community raise the breaking of a regulation or law to be an issue with the city council. The rationale in the case of street security is that crime such as theft of property through muggings, hijackings and burglaries, which are sometimes accompanied with violent assault, is an ongoing concern in South Africa and it is generally accepted that people should be able to protect themselves.

In this context, wendy houses are unlawfully allowed to be placed on sidewalks indefinitely and occupied not by ‘loiterers’ but by private employees working in public space. In this case it is affluent residents who are ignoring land use regulation by permanently placing a wendy house, with security guards working around the clock, on public space that should be kept reasonably clear. As such, it has become permissible for residents to claim this public space and pay employees (the security guards) to occupy

these structures. This exclusive use of public space for private gain shows the ways in which permissions, the enactment of power for political and economic interest, can be asserted by property owners. In this case, the unlawful claim to public space is not hidden or elusive. While wendy houses are non-permanent structures that can easily be removed, these structures have been part of Norwood's urban landscape for over twenty years. They are permanent claims to the exclusive use of public space and play an important role in place-making in Norwood.

6.3 Conclusion

> The facts of political exclusion – of colonial peoples, slaves, women, and those without sufficient property to exercise either suffrage or real political power – over the past three and a half centuries must be allowed to embarrass the universalistic claims of liberalism (Mehta, 1990, p. 448).

With a grounded theory approach to develop my research project, public space proved to be a key urban concept that needed critical analysis because I was trying to understand place-making practices of marginalized people who work and/or live outside. Theoretically, I aimed out to understand how place theorists make sense of public space, particularly within the analytical frame of relational place-making. Public space, in its early Western conception was a symbol of democratic and civic involvement in the decision-making of the state (Mitchell, 1995). Yet it was intrinsically oppressive to women, black people, slaves, colonial peoples and people from foreign countries who were not considered citizens in the eyes of the state because they had no rights (Young, 1990; Ruddick, 1996). Mehta (1997) argues that very inclusionary pretense generated from liberal theory that all people are free and rational beings, needed to politically exclude

colonial peoples, slaves, women and people without property who were in reality not free. Place theorists have intentionally pushed the boundaries on who and what makes a place, and what it means for multiple entities each with their own trajectories and political interests to share public space (Pierce, 2019).

In this chapter, I set out to explain and analyze my empirical findings on the use of public space in the context of three different place-scenarios. Public space in my case study area included everything that was not clearly demarcated for private use. This included sidewalks, streets and road reserves, and parks. Public infrastructure found in public also formed part of my categorization of public space as it can be claimed by the general public for reuse or for multipurpose use if kept in place. With my findings I show that public space can be and should be redefined when conceptualized in a southern place. I now provide an overview of my main findings and analytical conclusions below.

The boundaries of using public space for exclusive, private gain was either easily or agonistically transgressed, depending on differently empowered people and entities. In other words, residents that owned property and were the affluent cohort of people living in Norwood, and the entities that were formed to support residents and ratepayers, could bypass the law and forgo land use management regulations to protect their property and claim public space under the banner of ‘safety and security’ or for the purpose of recreation. Marginalized people who work and live on the streets, namely rough sleepers, informal traders, car guards and other low-income earners also bypassed laws and regulations for the purpose of acquiring livelihoods, finding places for sleep and ablution, and for recreation. While claiming- and exclusive use of public space for private gain still happened, it was agonistic and sometimes hidden. From interviews with city planners,

the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipalities and the Norwood Police, relied on objections and complaints from citizens to enforce laws. These came from the affluent and their supporting entities evidently against the marginalized who were monitored and apprehended by the police, private security and the Norwood Neighborhood Watch.

It is from this data that I began to query spatial justice literature on the Right to the City (RttC) that has been used to theorize the claiming of space to achieve urban equity. The contextual underpinnings of this literature neither speaks to the difference and complexity of identity politics outside of its place and time of origin; nor to the logics of extra-legal spatial practices prevalent in southern cities like Johannesburg. Instead, I expand on a southern urban concept 'permissions' introduced by Lawhon et al (2018) to explain spatial practices that exist in the liminal space of legal/illegal, formal/informal and acceptable/unacceptable. Such practices are defined by logics that are not beholden to a written code of laws and ethics, but to a set of socio-political parameters defined by influential people and entities of a place. In the case of claiming of public space for private gain, permissions to do so are determined through ongoing struggle and staying power, or through maintaining economic power and upholding democratic laws that protect private property rights.

In everyday urban practices, as shown in my research, even in the legal sharing of urban space, such as public space, exclusion still happens; and the power to exclude by permission and through monitoring behaviors, can and does at times (in certain contexts) supersede regulation through legal rights. In public spaces, more powerful people often successfully claim space for their personal interests, while simultaneously being protected from what is often termed "anti-social behavior" (Mitchell, 1995). From my research rough

sleepers, informal traders and jobseekers occupying public space are sometimes criminalized because powerful entities categorize their behavior as anti-social. Examples from South African literature show that traditional non-Western ceremonies with animal slaughtering in public spaces are prohibited and criticized by powerful groups of people living in the suburbs for being uncivilized and cruel to animals (Ballard, 2010). Yet, my findings show that many affluent residents as property owners are not penalized for breaking bylaws and are able to successfully claim public space for their exclusive use and comforts. I herewith argue that “being given permission” by the state to transgress laws to enact power in place largely depend on people’s identity and positionality (Ruddick, 1996). Ruddick (1996) calls for the reconceptualization of public space to include the impact of identity on its use. Acknowledging and understanding identity and positionality better may redefine what is considered anti-social behavior and make public space less exclusionary.

Chapter 7. The making of a southern place: A critical review of my research project.

> Ordinary, low-income citizens' decisions are the creative heart of African urban forms, and the dismissal by planners and mainstream urban scholars alike of the systems of knowledge that inform these decisions has been fundamental to the failures of the state and of planning institutions to improve the quality of life for the majority of urban dwellers. (Myers, 1994, p. 196)

As a technocrat, a planner experiences the tensions between the institutional apparatus of the state to manage society and using what they know about society to inform their practice. As technical experts given authority to inform the functioning of a city, my experience as a planner in South Africa was that I fell short on two accounts. The first is that the governing tools at my disposal (i.e. plans, policies and laws) were written doctrines and codes that could only, ever at best, materialize ad hoc and temporarily. The second is that the political make-up of the South African society is sorely dismissed. This is despite the crippling evidence that state apparatus is being dismantled by the logics of everyday urbanism. As Myers (1994) argues, it is this dismissal of local creativity to urban formations and systems that is the failure of governing bodies to do what they are appointed to do which is to prove a society's quality of life. I began this doctorate after ten years of being a planner to learn what I knew I did not know about political dynamics of city planning in an African context. As I work to complete my research project I am humbled but the wealth of existing geographic and social theory that inform the planning practice. I am simultaneously overwhelmed by the limited understanding of postcolonial, southern and African urban societies. As a descendant of European settler-colonialism who call's South Africa her home country, I also query what my place is in producing

knowledge about the very land and people that are in the throes of postcolonial struggle. I hope that, during the course of this conclusion I am able to chip away at the answer to this question. In this chapter I discuss the major findings of my research, the contribution to scholarly disciplines, the limitations and the future directions my work. I frame this discussion as a critical review of a research project that explores what it might take to understand making of a southern place.

7.1 Contributions and associated challenges

7.1.1 Provincializing northern place theory but missing southern African thought.

While I am confident that a grounded theory approach for my project was the appropriate research response, I am left with a gnawing feeling that I only scratched the surface of place-making. It is in and of itself only a representation of actually existing urbanisms in South Africa. This approach achieved one goal of my doctoral journey which was to excavate the Western, colonial influences that produce the knowledge we as urban scholars and planning practitioners in the Global South use to frame our understanding of African cities. Through a process of theory unbundling and empirical research I was able to decipher and critically evaluate theory developed in the Global North against a Global South context. Choosing a body of literature, namely place theory and a specific analytical framework, namely relational place-making, that had not been used extensively in urban research of Global South cities, gave me two opportunities. The first was that I could test out burgeoning scholarship in academia in South Africa and other Global South countries called southern urban theory. Secondly, I am able to contribute to the

postcolonial project in academia that works to uncover the universal claims and assumptions made by northern scholars, who are embedded in Western intellectual thought and whose theories travel across the world through the dominant EuroAmerican knowledge industry. Scholars like Gayatri Spivak (1988) confront how northern scholars represent themselves in their work and what truth claims they make about what they know. Although I support this body of work by Spivak I do not, through this project, call on northern-based scholars to qualify their ontological and epistemological framing. Rather, I attend to the call by postcolonial, subaltern, and southern scholars like Akiwowo (1988), Chakrabarty (1992), Comaroff and Comaroff (2012), Connell (2007) and Roy (2009) to theorize from the south. As explained by Lawhon and Truelove (2020) this is not only in terms of locality, as in the Global South, but also with a postcolonial and southern frame.

Where my research project fell short was to understand southern African philosophical, cultural and societal ideas, norms and logics that influence urban life and place-making. As a white student from a colonized country that was liberated from the Apartheid regime less than thirty years ago, the task of unlearning is a deep personal and intellectual project. Mastering dominant geographic and social theory taught in the United States for a doctoral degree, while also being able to unravel and critique it is a mammoth task. In selecting place-scenarios in Norwood I identified several place-making practices with associated logics, permissions and power relations. After my findings and analyses on each of these place-scenarios, I realized that even focusing on only one scenario might have helped me reach my second goal. For instance, had I only studied car guards in Norwood, their operating systems, logics and politics, I might have understood the

philosophical ideas and the social and cultural norms that influence their place-making. This can be a future direction for research. In not reaching my second goal I realize that mastering and critiquing existing theory (of which northern scholarship takes center stage) left little room for southern African intellectual thought that would have enriched my work. It is a subject matter I will surely wrestle with in future scholarly research projects. None the less my focus on northern-derived place theory is a necessary basis to cover for future research projects on southern place theory.

7.1.2 Major conclusions and academic reach

Broadly, the contribution of this research project is that it cautiously advances place theory for a southern urban context, whilst pointing to its limitations if not adequately provincialized. I do this through the process of theory unbundling, a method used by postcolonial and southern urban scholars. I develop a feminist research methodology to undertake my ethnographic study, augmented by interviews and desktop research.

By studying the negotiatory tactics of how public space is used and claimed, and how marginalized people's behaviors in public space are controlled, the data revealed that power relations are different to how they are discussed in northern literature. A close reading of relational place theory identified that the framing of power a) assumes the presence of democracy, and b) does not consider that the weighting of power between entities may tip the scale to where the state is significantly less powerful and less present in the everyday making of a place, than how it may be experienced in northern contexts.

Part of this theoretical and empirical examination was that the scope of democracy which is embedded in power and how it is framed, as a key dimension of relational place theory, needs widening if it were to travel elsewhere. Northern-based place scholars

argue for the need to achieve urban democracy through the relational place-making analytic (Pierce et al, 2016). Yet, as noted by Watson (2009) the theorization of democracy rooted in the north is based on the assumption that civil society can adequately represent constituencies to progressively realize a shared vision of justice. While there may be some sense to the notion of consensus and agreement in some places, the radical diversity of southern cities challenges the idea that 'real democracy' might produce fair, consensual and just outcomes. This can be seen through my expansion of permissions, which I discuss next. The lack of consideration for what democracy might look like elsewhere, how it may come about, or whether it ought to be considered an achievable outcome of relational place-making, demonstrates the need to unbundle theory before it travels.

In my research I use and expand the southern urban concept permissions, which was introduced by Lawhon et al (2018) in their theorization of agonistic transgressions in the context of Johannesburg. Permissions refer to claims to urban space that is allowed or permitted, whether this is through legal systems or socio-spatial processes. Permissions speak to the agreements made by society through cultural norms and relational coexistence that allow what happens in urban spaces. It makes room for what is permitted that is not only enshrined in institutionalized, legal, formal rights-based systems. Permissions are urban practices, such as activities, behaviors and systems that exist in the liminal space between formal and informal, legal and illegal, acceptable and unacceptable. To be allowed, permissions depend on power dynamics, political interests, and the everyday claim to place asserted through a range of negotiatory tactics. They can also be understood as enactments of power.

Northern place scholars have not written about contexts where the democratic order of the state and rights as a key function of that order is not a given. Permissions fall outside of state law and order, and without necessarily having the support of big capital. Instead, permissions in place reveals actually existing spatial practices and logics of making place in southern cities, where power is more elusive and dispersed. It also explains how place is claimed, not from a rights-based approach or a justice position. Rather it is claimed through negotiatory tactics of presence, political agency and control over public space.

I see three related aspects of academic reach arise from the research: Firstly, I argue that advancing the language of permissions is a critical shift in place-making for the Global South (whether as a practical or theoretical intervention). Secondly, it is an important shift for spatial justice scholarship for southern cities because it recognizes the political plurality of claiming space. In my case study we see that permissions in public space are enacted by the marginalized and privileged for private gain. While we can argue the merits of which permission enacted is more just (e.g. exclusive use of public space for securing livelihoods over securing property), claiming space through permissions rather than rights leaves room for the plural and un-regularized use of urban space. Thirdly, I suggest that claiming place is a more poignant concept for a southern urban setting, than claiming space is, as used in the 'right to the city' (RttC) discourse. Its foundations are built on plurality and multiple trajectories with their own political interests invested in the making of the urban landscape (i.e. a place). It also does not take away the aspects of political struggle and contestation around urban land.

7.1.3 Other limitations of the work

The fieldwork for the research was meant to be conducted and completed in 2020, however, it was extended to July 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It brought unexpected challenges in two major ways. The first is that my fieldwork had to be conducted periodically over 18 months as South Africa had a hard lockdown of approximately five months from March - August 2020 and then another less severe lockdown from January - March 2021. These lockdowns disallowed citizens to leave their homes except to buy groceries and other essentials, for medical reasons or assisting family members in need. Unless people worked in essential services, their movement patterns were heavily curtailed. Although this allowed the data to surface organically and I observed obvious changes in the urban landscape which revealed behavior patterns I might have ordinarily missed. Had the streets not been as quiet, it might have been easier to maintain a data collection routine. The periods in which it was prohibited to be in public space and the weariness of interacting with others in person made in-person interviews shorter and less comfortable. It also limited the number of formal interviews I could have with planning professionals as many were struggling with work-from-home pressures and/or were suffering from physical and mental health issues.

The other limitation I experienced was my inability to understand most African languages. Unfortunately, I did not have funding available to work with a research assistant that could understand a variety of African languages. While most people in Johannesburg can speak English, and many in South Africa as a whole can speak my mother tongue Afrikaans, other African languages were spoken amongst people on the streets of Norwood. At times when I was particularly interested in hearing what people

were discussing or arguing about during an incident taking place in public, I was frustrated by my limited comprehension. For future research projects on street politics and place-making in South Africa, I would recommend assistant researchers who are able to understand various local languages.

7.3 Future Directions

This research has possibilities for future directions both in terms of more empirical studies and theoretical advancement. The first is to deepen the inquiry of democracy in place theory. As argued in this dissertation, place theorists have only used a narrow conceptualization of democracy as a political ideology necessary for relational place and place-making. This conceptualization is predicated on northern demonstrations of democracy in urban settings, through for example land use and governance. Little research has been done to explore different ways in which democracy manifests in place when the order of the state, the economy and the society are different. Further research could challenge the assumption that democracy is critical to the framing of power in place. This not only destabilizes democracy as the governing ideology implicit in theorizations on power in place, but it will consider what other values are attached to sharing space and place-making.

Lastly, during my fieldwork period, I realized that the streets and public spaces of South Africa have many practices and systems in place, each with their own logics. My research was centered around Norwood as a specific neighborhood and physical location in Johannesburg. For place-making I considered it most useful to focus on a chosen area and within this frame I discovered several scenarios, of which each gave insight into place

claiming in Norwood. However, in retrospect, I could have identified only one practice or system and studied how it differs across Johannesburg. In this case, I would home in on the practice or system rather than the location as a specific place. I was particularly interested in pockets of car guarding with clear systems of occupying public space for private gain. It seemed as if syndicates of car guarding existed in prime commercial locations of the city. The same became apparent for beggars and traders at select intersections with traffic lights. These street operations for private gain and livelihoods were evidently a part of the urban landscape in Johannesburg, but little research has been done on them.

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